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**TE WHATU KĀKAHU:  
ASSESSMENT IN KAUPAPA MĀORI EARLY  
CHILDHOOD PRACTICE**

A thesis  
submitted in fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree  
of

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by  
**LESLEY KAY RAMEKA**



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
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## IHO/ABSTRACT

Through the exploration of Kaupapa Māori assessment approaches, I examine the reclaiming and reframing of Māori ways of knowing and being within early childhood practice. Assessment is the vehicle for reclaiming and reframing while Kaupapa Māori theory is the fuel that ignites and drives the vehicle.

The effects of successive education policies remain today with Māori children, and their families continuing to disengage from education and consistently receiving disproportionately lower outcomes, opportunities and benefits. Reclaiming and reframing Māori ways of knowing and being within early childhood assessment thinking and practice is a means of addressing the cultural and educational disparities faced by Māori children within an education system that upholds western cultural and educational superiority, privilege and truths. Key questions in this process of reclaiming and reframing are: Who has the power to define? Whose truths are being reflected and how are these truths constructed?

The metaphor of whatu kākahu or weaving of clothing has been used to frame this thesis. The process has involved weaving the Kaupapa Māori theory elements of conscientisation, resistance, transformative praxis and Māori ways of knowing and being, across and within historical, cultural and educational paradigms and understandings, to fashion assessment kākahu that afford comfort, warmth and flexibility in a contemporary early childhood context. This research case studies the progress of three Māori early childhood services and kōhanga reo towards the development of Kaupapa Māori early childhood assessment understandings and

framings (kākahu), that reflect their particular ways of knowing and being, context and aspirations for children. This thesis has been about their assessment journeys. These journeys are a work in progress and that work continues.

A qualitative, Kaupapa Māori research methodology was used to gather, collate and analyse data in this research. In accordance with Kaupapa Māori research aspirations and expectations, this research focuses on areas of importance and concern for Māori, and involved retrieving space for Māori voices to be heard. This research can be seen as a means of privileging Māori approaches, perspectives and ways of knowing and being in early childhood assessment practice.

Kaupapa Māori assessment is an important agenda for early childhood. It builds upon Māori philosophical and epistemological understandings that express Māori ways of knowing and being. Kaupapa Māori assessment is able to contribute significantly to children's learning and potential growth and is an important tool in constructing educational outcomes for Māori children. It is therefore an important agenda for early childhood.

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**Ko Tararua te Maunga**

**Ko Ohau te Awa**

**Ko Tanui te Waka**

**Ko Ngāti Raukawa te Iwi**

**Ko Ngāti Tukorehe te Hapū**

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# TE AHO TAPU - THE RESEARCH

Kaiwhatu	<b>Kaupapa Māori Theory</b> - Ngā Āho	<b>He Whenu</b> - Māori Education	<b>He Whenu</b> - Māori Identity	<b>He Whenu</b> - The Child	<b>He Whenu</b> - Assessment	<b>Te Tapa/ Taniko</b> - Findings	
<p><b>Case Study 1</b></p> <p><b>Case Study 2</b></p> <p><b>Case Study 3</b></p>	<p><b>Conscientisation</b></p> <p>Critique of dominant discourses</p>	<p>Defined by educational failure</p> <p>Māori educational failure impetus for change and search for appropriate assessment approach</p> <p>Recognition that ece services can make a difference to Maori failure rates</p> <p>Māori perspectives not always visible in mainstream ece</p>	<p>Defined by failure, cultural, social, economic, linguistic and educational deficiencies</p> <p>Forced Identities</p> <p>Work required indepth analysis of what made them Māori, and different to mainstream services, and how expressed in practice.</p>	<p>Historical assessment frame Māori children as deficient &amp; retarded</p> <p>Māori image of child not visible</p> <p>Do you know the child? -Whakapapa, whanau, who and what they bring with them</p> <p>Child in need of remediation</p>	<p>Defined by deficit paradigm</p> <p>Search for right way to assess - being right assessment.</p> <p>Looked for a template, mainstream assessment approaches</p> <p>Lack of fit, discomfort with assessment – fear &amp; uncertainty underpins practice</p> <p>Trial and error</p>	<p><b>Kaupapa Maori Assessment</b></p> <p>KMA not a rejection of Western resources but is recentering of Māori values, beliefs, thinking</p> <p>No guidelines to follow</p> <p>What does it look like?</p>	<p><b>Case Study 1</b></p> <p><b>Case Study 2</b></p> <p><b>Case Study 3</b></p>
<p><b>Case Study 1</b></p> <p><b>Case Study 2</b></p> <p><b>Case Study 3</b></p>	<p><b>Resistance</b></p> <p>Resistance to dominant discourses</p>	<p>Determination to make a difference for Māori children.</p> <p>Searching for own solutions however easy to default to western thinking and practices</p> <p>Aspiring to the best of both worlds – more</p> <p>Don't have to prove anything. It's okay to be who you are.</p>	<p>Rejection of negative framing of Māori identity</p> <p>Reclaiming right to be Māori and pride in being Maori</p> <p>Maintaining Māoriness in Pakeha world</p> <p>Recognition of heterogeneous nature of Māori people</p>	<p>Resistance to negative framing of Māori children</p> <p>Move from negative view of child to positive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- naughty to expressive</li> <li>- insolent to leaderful</li> </ul> <p>Recognition of culturally Māori appropriate behaviours</p>	<p>Dominant discourses remain the default setting.</p> <p>Who is being assessed? Who is it for? Who benefits?</p> <p>No right way to do assessment, it is culturally constructed and value laden</p> <p>Spirituality missing from Western understandings of assessment</p>	<p><b>Kaupapa Maori Assessment</b></p> <p>Recognition KMA is different,</p> <p>No 'one size fits all' approach possible</p> <p>Time, energy ongoing commitment, drive and visions needed</p>	<p><b>Case Study 1</b></p> <p><b>Case Study 2</b></p> <p><b>Case Study 3</b></p>
<p><b>Case Study 1</b></p> <p><b>Case Study 2</b></p> <p><b>Case Study 3</b></p>	<p><b>Transformative Praxis</b></p> <p>Transformation of dominant discourses</p>	<p>Established ece centres to support aspirations. Recognition that ece had a critical role to play in transforming deficit positioning of Māori learner.</p> <p>Celebration of uniqueness of being Māori</p> <p>KM theory provides vehicle for change.</p> <p>Te Kōhanga Reo. Māori ece services</p>	<p>Defined by Māori however issue of essentialism and being right Maori and being Māori enough.</p> <p>Te Reo Māori important.</p> <p>Positioning of historical and contemporary Māori ways of knowing and being. Urban services not bound by tribal expectations and norms important.</p>	<p>The wonder of their children seen</p> <p>Parent - You know my child   'Wow! My child did that!'</p> <p>The free, trustworthy child</p> <p>Competent and capable</p> <p>Whakapapa connects child to the Māori world and being Māori.</p>	<p>Writing for whanau changed the assessments – more accessible</p> <p>Māori eyes, heart and lens important</p> <p>No one right to do assessment.</p> <p>Benefits driver for documentation and assessment work</p> <p>KMA recognises spirituality locatedness of the child</p>	<p><b>Kaupapa Maori Assessment</b></p> <p>Māori ways of knowing and being at heart of KMA.</p> <p>Addition of Spiritual plane of analysis required.</p> <p>KMA fits and makes sense to Māori</p>	<p><b>Case Study 1</b></p> <p><b>Case Study 2</b></p> <p><b>Case Study 3</b></p>
<p><b>Case Study 1</b></p> <p><b>Case Study 2</b></p> <p><b>Case Study 3</b></p>	<p><b>Maori Ways of Knowing and Being</b></p>	<p>Defined by Māori however legacy of colonisation, urbanisation, de-tribalisation continues to impact.</p> <p>Traditional views of teaching and learning basis for change.</p> <p>Recognition of Māori images of the learner, knowledge and education</p>	<p>Defined by Māori for Māori</p> <p>Allows for diversity and difference.</p> <p>Comfort with being Maori differently, in own way, in this place</p> <p>Seeing through Māori eyes</p> <p>Māori interpretive systems include spiritual elements</p>	<p>Recognition what children bring with them: Invisible roopu</p> <p>Traditional views of child basis for assessment understandings and approaches</p> <p>Recognised the spiritual traits inherited from ancestors – mana/tapu, mauri, wairua.</p> <p>Balance and harmony important</p>	<p>Comfort in assessing from Māori perspectives using Maori ways of knowing and being</p> <p>Hoki whakamuri; Traditional narrative, whakatauki, whakapapa to guide assessments</p> <p>Recognition of who children are: whakapapa, iwi, hapū and whānau; tūrangawaewae;</p>	<p><b>Kaupapa Māori Assessment</b></p> <p>Spiritual plane important feature of KMA</p> <p>Being Māori differently here, doing assessment differently here.</p> <p>KMA is culturally located, in this place.</p>	<p><b>Case Study 1</b></p> <p><b>Case Study 2</b></p> <p><b>Case Study 3</b></p>



# CHAPTER ONE

## HE KŌRERO TĪMATANGA - OVERVIEW

### 1.0 He Kupu Whakataki/ Introduction

When Māori arrived in Aotearoa, New Zealand, from the Pacific, they found an abundance of space and natural resources that would allow them to flourish. The climate, however, was much cooler than their tropical homelands and therefore clothing that offered both warmth and protection in the cooler climate was essential. Utilising technology and knowledge brought with them from their homelands, including knowledge of whatu (finger weaving) kākahu (cloaks and clothing), early Māori explored and experimented with the vast array of available resources to develop appropriate new clothing.

I utilise the metaphor of whatu kākahu to frame this thesis. The weaving of the kākahu or thesis garment involves weaving service case studies, Kaupapa Māori theory, Māori ways of knowing and being, technologies and knowledge, across and within historical, cultural and educational discourses and paradigms. These paradigms are described by L. Smith (1999a) as sites or terrains of struggle. As she puts it:

Kaupapa Māori is a social project; it weaves in and out of Māori cultural beliefs and values, Western ways of knowing, Māori histories and experiences under colonialism, Western forms of education, Māori cultural aspirations and socio-economic needs, and Western economic and global politics. Kaupapa Māori is



concerned with sites and terrains. Each of these is a site of struggle... They are selected or select themselves because they have some strategic importance for Māori. (pp. 190 -191)

Whatu techniques have remained the same over the generations, while materials, styles and designs have changed. Puketapu-Hetet (2000, p. 6) explains that “Styles and presentation of Māori weaving have never been rigidly fixed. There has always been room for originality and invention“. Thus just as early Māori made use of available materials such as harakeke, kiekie, pīngao and ti-kāuka, in weaving this thesis kākahu I have utilised available resources to develop contemporary patterns and styles. These include technology (digital cameras, computers, memory sticks, emails), literature and online materials, whānau and communities, Māori academics, kaumātua and supporters.

This thesis was not initially intended to be a thing of beauty like a kahu huruhuru, or feather cloak, to be used mainly for ceremonial occasions. Rather I viewed it more as a functional hieke or rain cape, which served as protection from the elements and doubled as a bed cover. Like the hieke, the thesis kākahu will provide appropriate protection from contemporary elements. It needs to be: strong (able to withstand the critique of early childhood education and Māori); warm (making sense to Māori); flexible (allowing growth, movement and diversity); and able to hold its shape (highlighting and maintaining its Māori-ness).

The thesis kākahu does, however, have decorative aspects that highlight the beauty, strength and variety of the elements utilised in its creation. These can be likened to the tāniko borders often found on kākahu which are used to retain the shape and purpose of the kākahu. Te Rau Matatini (2010) states “The tāniko tells the story of what you learnt while you were

weaving” (p. 43). The decorative tāniko borders of the thesis kākahu have a similar purpose: highlighting the patterns of the weavers, while reflecting their learning; and helping to retain the form of the kākahu, to create a coherent, robust, versatile final garment. Again, as Te Rau Matatini (2010, p. 42) states, “Sometimes you start the journey then realise you need to go in a different direction. Sometimes other things in your life change or you end up with other materials” – and thus the final kākahu may emerge with a different pattern from what we originally expected.

### **1.1 Background to the Research**

My early childhood journey began in 1984 when I was elected, in absentia, to the position of Treasurer for a yet to be established te kōhanga reo, planned for our marae. Despite pleas of financial ignorance, incompetence and in truth lack of desire to be Treasurer I was not able to resign from the position. Over the next nine years I went on to hold almost every position within the then firmly established kōhanga reo, including Secretary, Chairperson, Administrator, Kaiawhina. For seven of the nine years I was Kaiako/Kaiwhakahaere. In 1994 I took up a position as a professional development coordinator and Project Director for the Early Childhood Development’s professional development contract. Although I worked across the range of early childhood services much of my work was with kōhanga reo and Māori early childhood services. Six years later I joined the lecturing team at the School of Education, Waikato University in the Early Childhood Department. Throughout the nine years I spent at the university I continued, in a number of different forums, providing professional development for Māori early childhood services and kōhanga reo.

In 2001, my friend and colleague at the University of Waikato, Margaret Carr, approached me to be a coordinator on the Early Childhood

Exemplar project, soon to be Kei Tua o Te Pae: National Early Childhood Learning and Assessment Exemplar project. The role involved working with Māori early childhood services on bicultural assessment exemplars. I accepted this invitation and commenced work in 2001 with five Māori early childhood services/kōhanga reo and one Samoan Language Nest (which was a new and enjoyable experience for me).

Part of my role on the project included the establishment and facilitation of a Māori advisory group, to guide and support the project on Māori and bicultural issues. This group, Te Rōpū Kaiwhakangungu, was made up of Māori academics and Māori early childhood/kōhanga reo professionals. Involvement in Te Rōpū Kaiwhakangungu allowed the group the space to critically reflect on, debate and articulate aspects of early childhood assessment theory and practice. Through this process it became apparent that the Kei Tua o Te Pae project focused on bicultural assessment rather than Kaupapa Māori assessment. We concluded that more work needed to be done on articulating Kaupapa Māori understandings of assessment.

In 2002, Margaret Carr and I wrote and submitted a proposal to the Ministry of Education to fund a project aimed at developing Kaupapa Māori exemplars of assessment. The proposal was accepted. I recall feeling overwhelmed, and a little shell-shocked at the enthusiasm expressed by the Ministry staff for the project. Not only was I now the Project Director for the proposed Kaupapa Māori Assessment Exemplar project, but I also had a possible topic for my doctoral thesis. Just after our meeting with the Ministry I posed the question to Margaret – 'Is this my PhD topic?' 'Yes', she replied, and that was it, sorted!

Work began on the project, later named Te Whatu Pōkeka: Kaupapa Māori Learning and Assessment Exemplars project, in 2003 and continued in

different forms until 2008. The goal was to develop a professional support resource, primarily aimed at Māori early childhood services, based on the development of exemplars of assessment from Māori perspectives and contexts.

I also began this thesis kākahu in 2003 with a very general idea of following the journeys of three to five Māori early childhood services, including kōhanga reo, Māori immersion and bilingual services, towards the development of Kaupapa Māori framings of assessments. I wanted to support the development and articulation of assessment understandings, framings and practices that reflected Māori ways of knowing and being within early childhood education.

The patterns and form of the thesis kākahu emerged over time and were developed and shaped by the people involved. As Te Rau Matatini (2010, p. 42), states, “Every korowai [kākahu] has a whakapapa, a story of where it came from and who the people were who brought it into being”. The thesis kākahu articulates the whakapapa or combined stories, histories, experiences and understandings of all the people who worked on it.

Questions that arise when commencing a kākahu include: who is the garment for? And what will it be used for? My ultimate goal for the thesis kākahu is to support the development of Kaupapa Māori assessment understandings, perspectives and framings that can aid all teachers in early childhood services, whether Māori or non-Māori, to weave appropriate assessment kākahu for Māori children. I asked questions such as:

- Whose truths are being reflected? And how are these truths constructed?

- Who are we and what does it mean to be Māori in this place?
- What do we want for our children and who do we want our children to be?
- How can the research help us get there?

I believe the insights reflected in the thesis kākahu patterns may be utilised by others as a basis for the creation of their own Kaupapa Māori assessment patterning and kākahu. These assessment kākahu wrap around the child as they explore their new, developing, global world; much like the kākahu of the first Māori to Aotearoa. Like the kākahu of early Māori these assessment garments need to be not only practical, offering warmth and security, but also dynamic, allowing movement and growth. They also need to be beautiful, reflecting a strong sense of pride and identity. Durie (2004, p. 2), articulates these goals for Māori education:

- to live as Māori;
- to actively participate as citizens of the world; and
- to enjoy good health and a high standard of living.

Spiritual dimensions of weaving need close consideration. Puketapu-Hetet (2000, p. 2) claims that weaving is not just an art or a skill but it is “endowed with the very essence of the spiritual values of Māori people” and the weavers are the “vehicle through whom the gods create”. When involved in the work of this thesis there was a sense of trusting in the universe and believing that if something was meant to happen it would, and if it didn’t happen it was not meant to. This provided a sense of security, confidence and assurance in the appropriateness of the research processes and the research findings.

## 1.2 The Kākahu Structure – Thesis Structure

The thesis kākahu is made up of a number of elements. The first is Te Aho Tapu.

### 1.2.1 Te Aho Tapu – te Rangahau/ the Research

Defining the basic form of the kākahu requires careful consideration. The aho tapu is the first weft strand. It is the most important strand as it establishes and defines the basic form of the kākahu. It provides the basic structure for the thesis while framing the kākahu patterns and styles.

These patterns and styles are built up from a number of elements: Ngā Aho or the weft (horizontal) strands and Ngā Whenu or the warp (vertical) strands. Ngā Kaiwhatu refers to the weavers of the kākahu. Ngā Tapa are the side borders of the kākahu which can include Tāniko or decorative elements (Te Rangihiroa, 1987).

Chapter Two outlines the thesis aho tapu. I establish the thesis aho tapu and rationale, define the research questions, and set out the research structure including the context and processes. In this chapter I present the framing for the research, Te Rangahau, and I introduce my interest in the topic, the research questions and the framing of the thesis. I explain the research design, method, methodology, ethical issues, data analysis and introduce the case studies.

Each of the following chapters represents one of the key elements of the thesis kākahu. These are:

Te Aho Tapu <i>(first weft strand)</i>	Chapter Two	Te Rangahau/ The Research
Ngā Aho <i>(weft strands)</i>	Chapter Three	Te Ariā/ Kaupapa Māori Theory

Ngā Whenu ( <i>warp strands</i> )	Chapter Four	Te Akoranga /Māori Schooling
	Chapter Five	Ngā Tuakiri Te Tangata/Māori Identities
	Chapter Six	Te Āhua o te Mokopuna/The Child
	Chapter Seven	Aromatawai/ Assessment
Ngā Kaiwhatu ( <i>weavers</i> )	Chapter Eight	Case Study One Findings
	Chapter Nine	Case Study Two Findings
	Chapter Ten	Case Study Three Findings
Ngā Tapa ( <i>side borders</i> )	Chapter Eleven	Summary of Findings

### 1.2.2 Ngā Aho – te Aria/ Kaupapa Māori theory

Each row of weaving has at least two aho strands which are twisted around the whenu binding the kākahu together as a wearable garment. There can be a number of structural and colour elements that make up the aho strands, however only the active strands are visible on the front of the piece at any one time. Others, the passive strands, are not visible. Kākahu patterns are the result of fore-fronting active aho strands at certain points in the weaving and back-grounding others to achieve the desired patterning, strength and form (Te Rangihiroa, 1950, Mead, 1999).

Chapter Three examines the literature on Te Ariā/Kaupapa Māori Theory, the aho strands of the thesis. Ariā translates as a notion, idea, theory or concept. It is the theoretical and methodological framing for the thesis – Kaupapa Māori theory. I introduce Kaupapa Māori theory focusing specifically on each of the thesis aho – Māori ways of knowing and being, Conscientisation, Resistance and Transformation Praxis – and highlight their importance in terms of Māori development and aspirations for the future. My objective in this chapter is to establish a theoretically coherent

analytical tool to investigate the thesis blocks or whenu, and seek alternatives to dominant educational cultural discourses.

### **1.2.3 Ngā Whenu – thesis blocks**

The whenu of the kākahu descend from te aho tapu which are woven across the whenu blocks binding the garment together. There are four main whenu chapters incorporated into the body of this thesis – Te Akoranga/Māori Education, Ngā Tuakiri o Te Tangata/Māori Identities, Te Āhua o Te Mokopuna/ the View of The Child, and Aromatawai/Assessment. Each explores a key area of significance that continues to impact upon Māori children, early childhood education and assessment theory and practice.

Chapter Four, Te Akoranga/Māori Schooling, is the first whenu. ‘Ako’ can be translated as ‘to learn’ and ‘teach’ and ‘ranga’ to ‘weave’. Akoranga therefore provides an analogy of weaving teaching and learning, and relates to school or subjects of learning. This chapter explores the literature on Māori early childhood education. It considers historical and contemporary Māori early childhood education and describes an alternative contemporary Kaupapa Māori educational initiative. My intention in this chapter is to provide a critical overview of Māori education, and in so doing to highlight the discourses that continue to impact upon contemporary educational policy and practice.

Chapter Five, Ngā Tuakiri o Te Tangata/ Māori Identities, is the second whenu. Tua can be translated as ‘beyond’, or ‘on the other side’ and kiri as ‘skin’. Tuakiri therefore literally means ‘beyond the skin’ or identity. Tangata is a word for person or people. This whenu examines the changing views of ‘being Māori’. It firstly provides a brief overview of identity theory, focusing on personal, social, cultural and spiritual



identities. It then explores historical Māori identities and what contributed to constructs of identity, including wairuatanga, whakapapa, whānau, hapu, iwi, whenua and reo. Next it discusses contemporary Māori identities, highlighting the complex and increasingly diverse nature of 'being Māori' in contemporary Aotearoa/New Zealand and its importance to assessment. Identity is integrally linked to assessment theory and practice. Identity, or ideas of being, and who the learner is, impact upon assessment theory and practice, just as assessment impacts upon identity.

Chapter Six, Te Āhua o Te Mokopuna/ Views of the Child, is the next whenu. A 'moko' is a tattoo and a 'puna' a 'spring' of water. Mokopuna is a term that relates to a spring of the people and translates as 'grandchild' or descendent. Āhua means shape, appearance or likeness. Te Āhua o Te Mokopuna therefore is a term that relates to the appearance or view of the child. This chapter describes traditional Māori perspectives of the child and learning, before contrasting this with changing European perspectives of the child's learning. My intent in this chapter is to describe structures and practices that have pathologised the Māori child in the past and continue to influence how teachers view and engage with the Māori child today. In order to understand assessment it is critical that one understands how the learner is constructed, the historical, social and cultural factors that impact upon constructs of the child and the ways these constructs shape teaching, learning and assessment theory and practice.

Chapter Seven, Aromatawai/Assessment, is the final whenu block. Aromatawai is a term used for assessment. Aro means to 'take heed of', 'pay attention to' and matawai refers to 'looking closely at'. Aromatawai infers a process of focusing on the learner as opposed to the product of the learning or the content. This whenu examines literature on educational

assessment and learning. It firstly explores traditional Māori ideas of teaching, learning and assessment. It then discusses the different European theoretical perspectives of learning and purposes for educational assessment that have emerged over the last century. It examines sociocultural assessment purposes, narrative assessment, formative and summative assessment understandings, then considers contemporary Kaupapa Māori assessment theory and practices. Finally, implications for early childhood assessment discussed. My objective in this chapter is to highlight the power of assessment to shape educational experiences and therefore its importance as a contemporary educational, social and cultural tool in early childhood education.

#### **1.2.4 Ngā Kaiwhatu - Weavers/the Case Studies**

Ngā kaiwhatu or the weavers of the kākahu refers to the case study services and their findings. Kai is a word that expresses a kind of human action. As previously mentioned whatu means to weave. Kaiwhatu thus means the person doing the weaving or the weaver.

The process involved case study services weaving the Kaupapa Māori theory aho across the four whenu, engaging in their own way with the whenu, making sense of, critiquing, questioning, and looking for fit. The study required that kaiwhatu grapple with assessment understandings and articulate Kaupapa Māori assessment, framings and practices for their particular service. In the process they were able to deepen their understandings of, and comfort with Kaupapa Māori, being Māori and more specifically being Māori in early childhood education. Competence and confidence in assessment understandings ran alongside competence and confidence in being and reflecting Kaupapa Māori in the services. The weaving process was not always a conscious action and in some cases only became evident upon reflection.

Although whatu kākahu is a linear process, the patterning requires that elements are engaged with at different times throughout the process. This is also the case with the thesis kākahu, with services creating patterns by foregrounding particular thinking and perceptions at certain times and back grounding others. This I saw as the spaces between the weave, the unsaid topics, the topics or issues that may relate but were not engaged with, yet may be picked up and woven through at a later time.

For larger kākahu the work would often be stretched across two pegs or turuturu that were stuck into the ground. This freed up the weavers hands and allowed more than one person to work on the kākahu at a time, one from the front and the other from the back. As the researcher my contributions are inextricably woven through the kākahu. My role as a weaver is multidimensional, sometimes to the fore, and at other times working from the back in a more supportive role: asking questions, discussing, debating, theorising, but not necessarily visible. My role was to strengthen the kākahu, ensuring the edges were straight, and maintaining the shape and integrity of the final garment.

The findings of the three Case Study services are outlined in Chapters Eight, Nine and Ten, structured under the following sections for each of the services:

- Te Tīmatanga - Introduction and Background: the introduction and background to the service.
- Te Akoranga - Māori Schooling: This section provides a brief background to each service's rationale for establishment, its philosophy and its history before commencing the research.

- Ngā Tuakiri o Te Tangata - Māori Identities: The importance of 'being Māori' and utilising a Māori 'lens' on children's learning is emphasised in this section.
- Te Āhua o Te Mokopuna - The Image of the Child: This section discusses each service's changing views of the child.
- Aromatawai – Assessment: This section outlines important aspects of the development of each service's assessment understandings and practices.
- Te Haerenga - The Assessment Journey: This section outlines some of the issues that influenced, constrained or supported the progress of each service.
- Te Whakapiki Whaakaro – Emergent Thinking: This section outlines each service's emergent thinking on their assessment framings.
- Te Tāniko –The Assessment Framing: This section gives a brief outline of each service's assessment framing.

### **1.2.5 Te Tapa - Taniko/ Kaupapa Māori assessment framings**

The Tapa or side borders of the kākahu not only frame the kākahu but often include decorative elements or tāniko patterning. Chapter Eleven, the thesis Tapa, is informed by the earlier reflections and summarises the research findings. It provides a brief personal reflection, a final summation on the weaving of the thesis kākahu. Māwhitiwhiti is a term that refers to a weaver's understandings gained from the weaving process. This section outlines my māwhitiwhiti.

## CHAPTER TWO

### TE AHO TAPU

Te Aho Tapu						

## TE RANGAHAU - THE RESEARCH

In this chapter I outline the thesis aho tapu or the first weft strand of the kākahu. This establishes the structure for the thesis kākahu styles and patterning within a Kaupapa Māori research paradigm. I begin with a brief overview of past research on Māori, and highlight ongoing concerns with western research. Next I discuss the research and the emergence of my interest in the topic, before introducing the case study approach utilised in the research. I conclude with an explanation of the research design, procedure, methodological and ethical considerations, and data analysis.

### 2.0 He Kupu Whakataki/Introduction

The word itself “research” is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous vocabulary... The ways in which scientific research is implicated in the worst excesses of colonisation remains a powerful remembered history for many of the world’s colonised peoples. (L. Smith, 1999a, p. 1)

Research, as L. Smith (1999a, p.1) argues, has been intimately connected to European colonisation and imperialism. Researchers from Western

imperialist colonising powers have collected and classified the knowledge of indigenous peoples and then represented it back “through the eyes of the West to those who have been colonised”. This is the history of Western research of Māori.

## **2.1 Research Of Māori**

Research on Māori began soon after first contact with Pākehā and has been an ongoing feature of the colonisation process since. In fact it is claimed that Māori are one of the most researched peoples in the world (Bishop, 1997). L. Smith (1999a) argues that western research and theory has legitimated colonial practices both in New Zealand and elsewhere. Research of indigenous peoples has effectively silenced minority voices while emphasising the voice of the powerful coloniser. The power to define is evident in the weight of literature on Māori, written mostly by non-Māori, with Māori positioned as research subjects, ‘guinea pigs’ to be studied (Berryman, 2008; Mutu, 1998). As L. Smith (1999a) states:

It is a history that still offends the deepest sense of our humanity. Just knowing that someone measured our “faculties” by filling the skulls of our ancestors with millet seeds and compared the amount of millet seed to the capacity for mental thought offends our sense of who and what we are. (p. 1)

This research has served the needs of non-Māori interest groups and academics, some of whom have claimed Māori knowledge as their own, and have built their reputations upon becoming ‘experts on Māori’. In the process however, few gains were made for Māori. Furthermore, these so-called experts on Māori have all too often described Māori lives and experiences in ways that are completely foreign to Māori understandings and realities.

It appals us that the West can desire, extract and claim ownership of our ways of knowing, our imagery, the things we create and produce, and then simultaneously reject the people who created and developed those ideas, and seek to deny them further opportunities to be creators of their own culture and own nations. (L. Smith, 1999a, p. 1)

Berryman (2008, p. 70) suggests that “Western methodologies have continued to privilege Western ways of knowing while perpetuating a pathological focus on the negative issues and circumstances faced by Māori”. The research methodologies, methods and ethics used have been based on western cultural constructs. The result is research findings that simultaneously uphold western cultural superiority and privilege, while attacking the validity of Māori cultural integrity, and positioning Māori in a subordinate ‘other’ category (Berryman, 2008; Bishop, 1997; Bishop & Glynn, 1999; A. Durie, 1998; Mahuika, 2008; Mutu, 1998; G. Smith, 1992; L. Smith, 1992; 1999a).

Within these research paradigms few opportunities have been offered for Māori to construct meaning from their own cultural worldviews, experiences and understandings. All too often research continues to reinforce non-Māori stereotypical views of Māori primitiveness and inherent inferiority, and western ideas of cultural superiority and virtuousness (Berryman, 2008; Bishop, 1997; A. Durie, 1998; Mahuika, 2008; L. Smith, 1992; 1999a; G. Smith, 1992). An example of this re-writing of indigenous histories is seen in the works of the nineteenth century anthropologists Percy Smith and Elsdon Best (King, 1994). At least two myths resulted from their work: firstly that Māori arrived in Aotearoa in about 1300 in a ‘Great Fleet’, despite tribal evidence to the contrary; and

secondly that there were people (the Moriori – described as more primitive than Māori, Melanesian, with dark skin and fuzzy hair) in Aotearoa before Māori arrived, who were then wiped out by Māori. By suggesting that this was a Darwinian hierarchy of survival of the fittest, a normal human process, it provided a justification for European colonisation (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; L. Smith, 1999a).

G. Smith (1990) adds that not only have Māori aspirations been ignored or dismissed, and a deficit, victim-blaming orientation been utilised, but research has also been descriptive in nature. Research has focused on posing problems or stating what was already known, rather than encouraging meaningful interventions. Māori were therefore firmly positioned within a 'deficit' or 'problem' paradigm and have tended to remain there (Berryman, 2008; Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Mahuika, 2008; Pihama, 1993). Walker (1985) confirms the devastating impact on contemporary Māori of this type of research, stating that it is a common complaint amongst indigenous peoples, with research on the one hand telling them what they already knew, and on the other hand attributing their positioning in society to their own inherent inferiority. Walker comments from long personal experience:

Māori education [has] become the hunting ground of academics as neophytes cut their research teeth on the hapless Māori. It has the advantage that Māori are in the subordinate position with little or no social power to keep out the prying Pākehās. Furthermore, being marginal to the social mainstream, Māori are not in a position to challenge the findings of published research, let alone, the esoteric findings of academic elites. (cited in Mahuika, 2008, p. 1-2)



For example, research in the late 1950s, by Ausubel (1961), concluded that Māori children were "...undoubtedly handicapped in academic achievement by a lower average of intellectual functioning than is characteristic of comparable Pakeha groups" (p. 90). He attributed this "intellectual retardation" of Māori children to "disabilities associated with problems of acculturation" (p. 91). These deficit paradigms emphasised the supposed inability of Māori social and political structures to contend with modern pressures. Cultural deprivation theories were developed to explain the socioeconomic positioning of Māori, and Māori socio-political structures such as whānau, hapū and iwi, were rejected (Bishop, 1997). Western research dismissed Māori knowledge as 'other kinds of knowledge', or informal knowledge with less status than western knowledge. This devaluing of Māori knowledge has led to Māori losing control of Māori knowledge, and Pākehā misuse of Māori concepts (Berryman, 2008; Cunningham, 1998; L. Smith, 1992).

As L. Smith (1999a) comments, this has caused deep cynicism and mistrust about the motives and methodologies of western-type research and its capacity to deliver benefits for Māori. It has not only left participants in the position of powerless victims but the research itself has contributed to the number of deficits and problems attributed to Māori. Little change for the participants has resulted from years of research and Māori are now aware that much of the research has been "simply intent on taking 'or stealing' knowledge in a non-reciprocal and often underhand way". This process is akin to that in the "rape research" critiqued by feminists in that the same stripping of knowledge, mana and self-esteem occurs (L. Smith, 1999a, p. 176).

When Māori knowledge has been recognised as having value in a non-Māori context, it has often been commodified, simplified and

misrepresented for non-Māori comprehension and to fit mainstream education system requirements. The quantifying and packaging of Māori knowledge into marketable goods has led to a redefining of worth with financial rather than cultural value being placed on Māori knowledge. The importance of the knowledge therefore was contingent upon economic conditions and was recognised in generic non-Māori terms instead of specific to the contexts and aspirations of Māori (Bishop, 1997; L. Smith, 1992).

This commodification of Māori knowledge has been associated with the economic and political marginalisation of Māori in New Zealand education and wider society. Māori saw little of relevance within the current education system, and were left with feelings of frustration, inadequacy and failure. The result has been educational under-achievement, and economic and political deprivation (Bishop, 1997). L. Smith (1999b) maintains that “Education and schooling, the academy and intellectuals, theory and research represented what many indigenous communities were up against, that is, the western knowledge machine” (p. 1).

For the reasons outlined above, it was crucial for the research project in this thesis that Māori aspirations and self-identified needs were at the heart of the research; that the research focused on areas of importance and concern for Māori; that Māori aspirations, philosophies, and processes provided the foundation for intervention strategies; and that the research resulted in meaningful interventions and transformations, by and for Māori. Without a strong methodological and epistemological aho tapu the research had the potential to warp and in so doing default back to western research priorities and perspectives.

## **2.2 Introduction To The Research**

I began work on this doctoral research in 2003. In its initial stages, Phase One in 2003 – 2005, the doctoral research ran concurrently with the Te Whatu Pōkeka: Kaupapa Māori Learning and Assessment Exemplars project (2009). The research questions were taken from discussions and questions raised earlier at meetings of Te Rōpū Kaiwhakangungu (the advisory group set up for the Kei Tua o Te Pae exemplar project) – questions such as: ‘If we’re agreed that current assessment framings don’t fit or suit Māori, what does?’ ‘What does Kaupapa Māori assessment look like?’ ‘Who says?’ ‘What difference is it going to make?’ ‘For whom?’ ‘What should Kaupapa Māori assessment include?’ ‘Who says?’ From those discussions I condensed these questions into three main research questions:

- Why is Kaupapa Māori assessment important? Why should we do it?
- What does Kaupapa Māori assessment look like?
- How can Kaupapa Māori assessment promote and protect Māori interpretive systems within contemporary early childhood contexts?

I return to these questions in Chapter Eleven, Ngā Tapa Summary of Findings.

### **2.2.1 The case studies – ngā kaiwhatu (the weavers)**

I worked over a five year period with three Māori early childhood services (Māori immersion/ bilingual services and kōhanga reo) as the kaiako grappled with the development of assessment understandings and practice. The thesis case studies focus on each service’s understandings of ‘being Māori’ within their early childhood and community context; and

how this can be reflected in assessment thinking and practice. Each case study reports on the specific setting, context and background and explores the development of the kaiako assessment understandings and Kaupapa Māori assessment framings in early childhood. Each service's context was unique as was their journey and their emerging understandings and practices.

Case studies aim to develop in-depth understandings of a particular research site by studying phenomena, relationships and interactions as they occur within real life settings (Berryman, 2008; Stake, 2005). Yin (1984) describes the case study as “an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context especially when the boundaries between phenomena and context are not clearly evident” (p. 13). Yin, (2003) claims that “the distinctive need for case studies arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena; the case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events” (p. 2).

There are three types of case studies (Stake, 2005). The “intrinsic case study” is a study that is undertaken where the researcher wants to understand a particular case. This type of study is where the case itself is of particular interest rather than developing understandings of an “abstract construct or generic phenomenon” (Stake, 2005, p. 445). The second type of case study is termed the “instrumental case study”; and involves studying a case to gain insights into a specific issue or to redefine a generalisation. The case itself is secondary to the interest. Stake (2005, p. 445) describes the instrumental case study as having “several interests, particular and general. There is no hard-and-fast rule distinguishing intrinsic case study from instrumental, but rather a zone of combined purpose”. The third type, the “multiple case study” where the interest is

even less in any particular case, rather numbers of cases are studied to examine more general populations, phenomena, or situations and conditions.

The present research can be viewed as utilising a combination of both the instrumental and the multiple types of case study, in that it involved the study of particular and general interests whilst looking across cases at particular phenomena and conditions. Each case study service developed framings that reflected their service philosophies, their understandings of assessment, Māori values and knowledge, and learning that strengthened being Māori in their early childhood education context. Typical questions for service staff were:

- What does 'being Māori' mean and how is it reflected in practice?
- What makes Māori services different from mainstream early childhood services?
- What are valued learnings for Māori in early childhood services?
- What is Kaupapa Māori assessment?
- What could context-specific Kaupapa Māori assessment framings look like?
- How can assessing learning outcomes promote and protect Māori values and knowledge?
- How can assessments make valuable statements about learning, progress and Māori values and knowledge?
- Can assessment models be developed that strengthen being Māori?

The case study supports the exploration of issues in depth and the following of leads into new areas, and new constructions of theory; thus the theoretical framework at the beginning may not be the same one that survives to the end. Stake (2005, pp. 459-460) notes there are major

conceptual responsibilities of the qualitative case study researcher which include:

- a) Bounding the case, conceptualising the object of study;
- b) Selecting phenomena, themes or issues (i.e., the research questions to emphasise);
- c) Seeking patterns of data to develop the issues;
- d) Triangulating key observation and bases for interpretation;
- e) Selecting alternative interpretations to pursue; and
- f) Developing assertions or generalisations about the case.

My role as a researcher involved all of the above responsibilities. It must be stated, however, that most of it was done in collaboration with service kaiako and so it was more a co-constructive process. Stake (2005, p. 460) further describes stylistic options which must be considered by case study researchers:

- I. How much to make the report a story;
- II. How much to compare with other cases;
- III. How much to formalise generalisations or leave such generalisations to readers;
- IV. How much description of the researcher to include in the report; and
- V. Whether or not and how much to protect anonymity.

I considered such stylistic options as the research proceeded. To be robust I wanted continuous triangulation of the descriptions and interpretations over the research period (Kohlbacher, 2006). Triangulation is the process of using information from different sources and multiple perspectives in order to verify interpretations. At the same time, case studies require a

balance between rigour and sensitivity, in that rich data is essential, but in gaining it researchers need to also recognise the influence of their presence in the study (Edwards, 2001).

In conclusion, the case study approach to the research was congruent with the research objectives in that there was no requirement or expectation that findings would be generic; rather the focus was on each service developing their own contextually embedded understandings, theory and practices.

### **2.2.2 Recruitment of case study services**

Prior to beginning the research I already had well established personal and professional relationships with key people in all the services. This supported recruitment and ongoing participation in the research and provided a strong trusting foundation for further work. I was therefore able to contact each service personally to gauge interest and invite participation.

- Case Study One – is an urban early childhood service located in South Auckland. It is a Māori/English bi-cultural, bilingual early childhood service. (Outlined in Chapter Eight).
- Case Study Two - is an urban early childhood service located in West Auckland with a strong bilingual, bicultural, Christian foundation. (Outlined in Chapter Nine).
- Case Study Three - is an urban kōhanga reo located in Hamilton with a strong focus and commitment to te reo and tikanga Māori (Māori language and culture). All teaching is in te reo Māori only. (Outlined in Chapter Ten).

### **2.2.3 Research participants**

The participants differed depending upon their particular service. In one service only the supervisor and manager participated, with minor contributions from the other ten members of the teaching team. In another service the entire teaching team of five attended monthly meetings and contributed to the research, and in one service monthly meetings were held only with the supervisor and sometimes the manager, although comments and stories from the whānau were sometimes included.

In each case study there were key kaiako who took the lead role in the research. They held leadership roles within their respective services and had many years experience working in early childhood and/or kōhanga reo. Each was a trained early childhood practitioner, holding either a diploma or degree in early childhood education. In the research their roles included: taking responsibility for collating and documenting service work; motivating and encouraging kaiako and whānau participation; meeting monthly with the researcher to discuss progress and emergent thinking; attending twice yearly 'kaimahi' cluster meetings with other kaiako.

### **2.3 Research Procedures**

In late 2002 I visited two services to explain the research rationale, questions, approach, what involvement would entail and invite participation. I later provided further documentation on:

- what the study was about;
- the proposed research procedure;
- how their information would be used;
- issues participants needed to consider before agreeing to participate in the study;



- contact details.

Further face to face meetings were held in early 2003 to answer questions and provide written documentation. One service joined the research in 2005. It was already part of the Te Whatu Pōkeka project so when approached about the doctoral research, they already had well-developed understandings of Kaupapa Māori assessment. The research offered this service the opportunity to tell their story, and further theorise their understandings of Kaupapa Māori assessment.

### **2.3.1 Research phases**

The research involved three distinct phases of work between 2003 and 2010.

- Phase One: 2003-2005
- Phase Two: 2006-2008
- Phase Three: 2009-2010

#### **2.3.1.1 Phase One: 2003-2005**

The initial phase of the research took place between 2003 and 2005. There were two aspects to this phase of the research. The first involved services working independently on documenting assessments of children's learning. The documentation included: written observations, narratives, transcripts of events or activities, children's work, adults and children's comments, and photographs. This documentation provided the basis for discussions at monthly meetings, the second aspect of this phase of work.

Over the three year period monthly meetings of 1-2 hours duration were held between the researcher/te Whatu Pōkeka project coordinator and the services. There were between 10 and 30 meetings depending on the service. The foci of these meetings were firstly capturing each service's

journey including: successes and achievements, what had happened over the month, any issues that may have arisen, what was supporting or inhibiting work, problems, and emerging assessment and Kaupapa Māori understandings. The meetings focused secondly on collaboratively interpreting, reinterpreting, exploring, making sense of and further representing the assessment materials that had been developed. Thirdly, the meetings planned what might be worked on in the upcoming month. Notes were taken of key discussions and emergent thinking (Research Notes). Discussions included:

- How best to articulate and document evolving understandings of children's learning, progress, assessment and Kaupapa Māori;
- In-depth, ongoing dialogue on what 'being a learner' meant for tamariki within Māori early childhood education settings;
- Reconnecting and reconciling traditional Māori knowledge, values, world-views and epistemologies with service philosophy and practice and how these could be effectively expressed in contemporary contexts;
- Critically analysing assessment and early childhood theory and practice;
- Developing models of assessment that promoted and strengthened 'being Māori', acknowledging the uniqueness of Kaupapa Māori in Aotearoa in early childhood education settings;
- Documenting examples of children's learning including the voices of kaiako/whānau/tamariki;
- Developing service principles of assessment;
- Documenting assessment journeys. Discussing what was happening for the service and kaiako. What had been achieved? What hadn't? Why?

#### 2.3.1.2 Phase Two: 2006-2008

The second phase of the research took place between 2006 and 2008, and involved one or two follow-up meetings a year with kaiako (3 – 6 meetings over the period). These meetings involved firstly, discussing and highlighting issues related to each service's journey; their thoughts about the journey; what had been achieved; how and why; outcomes of the work; and how this had impacted on thinking. Secondly, the kaiako aimed to flesh out understandings of issues, patterns, thinking, and developments on Kaupapa Māori assessment from the documentation developed in the first phase of the research. Depending on circumstances, these meetings took the form of either taped interviews that were later transcribed, or informal discussions where notes were taken.

#### 2.3.1.3 Phase Three: 2009-2010

The final phase of the research occurred between 2009 and 2010. This involved: writing up of case studies and frameworks; presenting these to services for feedback; making amendments; and presenting final copies to services for approval. Although kaiako approval was fundamental to the content of the case study, a collaborative process was utilised to decide what was included and what was left out.

The research took a participatory approach to working with participants. A participatory approach breaks down the distinctions between the researcher and participants and involves: collaboration between the researchers and the participants; a reciprocal process of educating one another; and a focus on the production of local knowledge to improve interventions (Macaulay, Delormie, McComber, Cross, Potvin, Paradis, Kirby, Saad-Haddad, & Desrosiers, 1998). It involved participants and the researcher co-creating understandings, and collaboratively planning the process. The collaborative interpretation of the data added not only

contextual information but supported increasingly meaningful conclusions, resulting in multiple and shared benefits and outcomes. Bishop contends that this differs from traditional western research on Māori. “For researchers, this approach means that they are not information gatherers, data processors, and sense-makers of other people’s lives”, rather participants are able to make sense of their own lives (2005, p. 120). It can be viewed therefore as a co-creation of a shared reality.

## **2.4 Support Structures**

The support processes previously instigated for the Te Whatu Pōkeka project were also able to support the doctoral research. These included:

- Kaumātua support and mentoring
- Te Rōpū Kaiwhakangungu Advisory Group – which met two or three times a year throughout the initial three year period, Phase One, of the study to support and guide development.
- Kaimahi Advisory Group – This group met twice a year in the initial three years to present work, discuss progress, issues and successes, gain feedback and access support.

As Irwin (1994) argues, for research to have validity for Māori it must be:

...research which is culturally safe, which involves the mentorship of kaumātua, which is culturally relevant and appropriate, while satisfying the rigour of research and which is undertaken by a Māori researcher, not a researcher which happens to be Māori. (p. 28)

Not only was I able to discuss emergent thinking and ongoing development with the kaumātua working on the Te Whatu Pōkeka

project, Te Ariki Morehu and Waiariki Grace, I also met informally with kuia/ koroua and knowledgeable others including colleagues from the University of Waikato, School of Education, the early childhood and Māori communities and Māori academics from around the country.

I also gained much support from the Te Rōpū Kaiwhakangungu Advisory Group, which was established to support the Kei Tua o Te Pae project and was retained to guide the Te Whatu Pōkeka project. This group met two or three times a year throughout Phase One of the research. It was made up of approximately fifteen Māori academics and early childhood professionals. Minutes were taken of these discussions and, although no specific comments or opinions expressed in the meetings have been utilised in the thesis, themes from the discussions provided the basis for further dialogue with case study participants during monthly meetings.

Another support mechanism was the Kaimahi Advisory Group. This group, which met twice a year in the initial phase of the research, included two kaiako from each of the five services participating on the Te Whatu Pōkeka project. Again, minutes were taken of these meetings but have not been directly utilised in the thesis; rather they have provided the basis for further discussions with case study participants.

Each service also had its own mostly informal support structures in place over the research period from within their own, or wider service whānau. Others accessed already existing support structures such as iwi, hapu, community or church people.

## **2.5 Methodological And Ethical Considerations**

A qualitative, Kaupapa Māori research methodology was used to gather, collate and analyse data in this study. That is to say it took an emergent

methodological approach which located participants in their environments or settings, and was concerned with meaning making, multiple interpretations/perspectives and collaborative endeavour.

### **2.5.1 Qualitative research**

L. Smith (2005) describes qualitative research as an important tool for indigenous communities because:

it is the tool that seems most able to wage the battle of representation; to weave and unravel competing storylines; to situate, place and contextualise; to create spaces for decolonizing; to provide frameworks for hearing silence and listening to the voices of the silenced; to create spaces for dialogue across differences; to analyse and make sense of complex and shifting experiences, identities and realities; and to understand little and big changes that affect our lives. (p. 103)

Qualitative research methods are especially well suited to Māori in that they support more equal conversations, where power dynamics can be negotiated (Barnes, 2000). Such research involves several theories, paradigms or methodological practices; and involves the collection and study of empirical materials including case studies, personal experience, life stories, interviews, artefacts, cultural texts and productions, observations, historical, interactional and visual texts, which describe and make meaning of individuals' lives. These approaches have the “potential to respond to epistemic challenges and crises, to unravel and weave, to fold in and unmask the layers of the social life and depth of human experience” (L. Smith, 2005, p. 103).

Qualitative research explores the qualities of entities, and emphasises the social construction of reality. It is a situated activity that utilises interpretive practices to make the world visible (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), where researchers study things in their natural settings, trying to make sense of what is happening with regard to the meanings people bring to them. A qualitative research approach that supported participants to construct their own social and cultural realities was crucial for this study in that it located participants in their own settings and services, while supporting them to make sense of events in a way that affirmed and legitimated their realities.

I was positioned within the context of the research as an active contributor and supporter. I did, however, endeavour not to unduly influence each service's direction and emerging understandings. As Reinharz (1985) states, "Since interest-free knowledge is logically impossible, we should feel free to substitute explicit interests for implicit ones" (cited in Lather, 1991 p. 50). To this end I worked closely with the kaiako/whānau in the services to support the development of assessment approaches that reflected our collective values, beliefs and understandings. The research has been co-constructed with participants and researcher collaborating to create understandings. In this way the experiences and understandings of all involved were affirmed, with connectedness and reciprocity being stressed.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. 4) the qualitative researcher may be described as using multiple methodological practices. These methodological practices can be viewed as a 'bricolage' – a quilt or montage – and the researcher as the 'bricoleur', the maker of quilts. A bricoleur works by "adapting the bricoles of the world" and the bricoles relate to the "odds and ends, the bits left over". "The quilter stitches, edits

and puts slices of reality together. This process creates and brings psychological and emotional unity – a pattern – to an interpretive experience” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p. 5). There are many types of bricoleur including: interpretive, methodological, narrative and political.

Lee (2009) introduced the idea of an “Indigenous bricoleur”. She explained that “The development of Indigenous scholarship and projects based on decolonising methodologies [L. Smith, 1999] can be viewed as a bricoleur approach already used by Indigenous academics and researchers” (p. 7). Lee adds that as an “Indigenous bricoleur” she tinkered with research methods in order to best engage with the research topic.

The metaphor of the weaving of a research kākahu is similar in some respects to that of research as a process of bricolage. Firstly each service’s kākahu patterning was an emergent construction that changed form as different ideas, methods, representations and interpretations were added to the piece. Secondly, a range of methods were utilised to gather data, including recorded interviews, informal chats, phone conversations, individual meetings, small group and large group meetings, written material and digital images. This data was woven together to create the service’s kākahu. Finally each case study is unique, based on what each of the services, whānau and communities bring to it and there has been no attempt to develop uniformity or a standardised interpretation of assessment for Māori.

### **2.5.2 Kaupapa Māori research and ethical considerations**

Kaupapa Māori research focuses on areas of importance and concern for Māori. Māori aspirations and self-identified needs provide the basis for the research. Bishop (1997) raises a number of questions with regard to



research of Māori. I use these questions to guide my data collation and analysis, and ethical considerations. Bishop asks:

1. Initiation - Who initiates the research? Whose concerns, interests and methods of approach determine/define the outcomes of research?
2. Benefits - Who benefits from the research? Who will gain directly from the research?
3. Representation - Who is the other? Can researchers speak authentically of the experience of other? Whose research constitutes an adequate depiction of social reality?
4. Legitimacy - Are the findings faithful to the context? What authority do I claim over the information?
5. Accountability - Who are the researchers accountable to? Who has control over the initiation, procedures, evaluations, construction and distribution of newly defined knowledge?

Initiation - Kaupapa Māori research should be initiated in conjunction with Māori communities as partners in research (Bevan-Brown, 1998; A. Durie, 1998). As previously stated, this research arose when the need for further development of Kaupapa Māori assessment was identified by te Rōpū Kaiwhakangūngū. It therefore was initiated by Māori, with participants having an established sense of ownership and commitment, ensuring the continued focus on their specific concerns and understandings (Bevan-Brown, 1998).

Benefits – G. Smith (1990) and L. Smith (1991) raise a number of questions with regard to benefits that were significant for me at the beginning of the research and have remained so throughout. They are the big ‘so what’ questions:

- What difference is this research going to make for Māori?
- What meaningful interventions are going to result?
- How does this research support culture and language aspirations?
- Are you telling us what we already know?

Representation and Legitimation - It is important not to assume that research of Māori is generic. Māori are not a homogeneous group; in fact, Māori are now more socially and culturally diverse than at any other time in history (Cunningham, 1998). Māori are as different from one another as any other people or ethnicity (Berryman, 2008). Therefore research carried out with one group cannot be generalised in order to represent the lived realities and understandings of all Māori (Bevan-Brown, 1998). No attempt was made to standardise or generalise findings and develop a 'one size fits all' Kaupapa Māori assessment framework. Instead each service worked on developing their own, locally constructed, contextually embedded, understandings and frameworks. In essence we acknowledged and celebrated 'being Māori differently' which created a sense of confidence and freedom for all associated with the research.

Accountability – This is a critical issue in Kaupapa Māori research. Research must not only promote Māori ways of knowing and being, it must be able to stand up to academic critique. It is my responsibility as the writer of this thesis to ensure it adheres to the highest academic standards. I consequently am responsible and accountable to my research participants, services, whānau, and communities, and myself. It is a responsibility I do not take lightly.

Bevan-Brown (1998) maintains that Kaupapa Māori research includes obligations and commitments that extend beyond the research period and

across time. I agree wholeheartedly with this claim and feel a strong commitment to the services and research participants. Having stated this I am also cognisant of Bishop and Glynn's (1992) argument that developing and maintaining relationships is not just about making and being friends. They argue that there must also be self-awareness on the part of the researcher of power relationships and positioning, including the power dynamic between the giver and taker of knowledge, and how these can be mitigated. Recognition of power dynamics within the research process was essential when interacting with participants. As L. Smith (1999a, p. 176) states, researchers:

...have the power to distort, to make invisible, to overlook, to exaggerate, and to draw conclusions based not on factual data, but on assumptions, hidden value judgments and often downright misunderstandings. They have the potential to extend knowledge or perpetuate ignorance.

In Kaupapa Māori research, researchers do not hold the tuakana or knowledgeable elders' position. Rather it is more a mutual recognition of supporting roles and relationships. My role in the research was flexible depending on the situation and context. I was sometimes a friend; sometimes an outside professional, providing professional support or broader perspective of the work; sometimes a collaborator and colleague; mostly I was an interested other who understood assessment, curriculum development, Māori world-views and education, as well as the early childhood context. I could therefore provide a supportive sounding board for emerging ideas and understandings, which I believe was an important factor in decreasing kaiako feelings of working in isolation.

I was also accountable to participants to ensure the accuracy of data recording and to upholding the integrity of the service. I therefore have added explanations where required and omitted details that I felt impacted negatively on participants. This moral and ethical responsibility is highlighted by Bevan-Brown (1998), who argues that people come first, and that the researcher's key responsibility is to the people they work with.

## **2.6 Ethical Obligations**

Research that is designed and conducted by people who have no understandings of Māori obligations and ethics can be very problematic. Bevan-Brown (1998) claims that if research is to support Māori educational aspirations, the people who conduct it firstly must be committed to Māori development and secondly must possess the necessary knowledge, skills and expertise, including understandings of: tikanga; whanaungatanga responsibilities, obligations and duties; reo; subject and context knowledge. As a Māori researcher with over 25 years experience working in Māori and early childhood education I am committed to supporting Māori educational success and development. The second requirement however, begs the question of what degree of knowledge and understandings is acceptable? A response in the affirmative may sound boastful, however responding in the negative may lessen the validity of the research and not do justice to the work of the research participants. What I can say is that I have been supported by knowledgeable and wise people who have guided me and the research. In addition I am aware of the issues surrounding the topic that are of concern to Māori, and have an understanding and knowledge of the contexts in which the research is located and the wider socio-political issues related to those contexts (G. Smith, 1990).

According to A. Durie (1998), cultural understandings, knowledge and values are important contributing factors to thinking around ethics. These values are the foundations for ideas of ethicality along with the universal concerns for social sensitivity, protection from harm, informed consent, and confidentiality. Arguably one of the most important ethical concerns is the identification and negation of possible harmful consequences of the research for participants. As A. Durie (1998) states, Māori concepts of ethicality and obligations are paramount when working in a Māori context. I am therefore personally and professionally responsible for ensuring that no harmful consequences result for participants and services from the research.

A. Durie (1998) notes three concepts related to 'mana', 'prestige', or 'power', that have particular significance for this study. The first is the concept of 'Mana Tangata' which is linked to individual and group rights and the respect and dignity with which they should be treated. It is also related to the mental, emotional, cognitive, social and personal safety and care of groups and individuals and the mutual benefits received by those involved. The issue of safety and wellbeing is important when one understands that Māori communities are small, and I am not an outsider coming in to do research. Rather, I am part of the communities being researched and have a vested interest in ensuring that the wellbeing and safety of all participants is maintained.

The second concept relating to mana set out Durie (1998), 'Mana Whakahaere', is associated with collaboration and balance between the rights and perspectives of individuals and groups. It encompasses the idea of control and authority over research direction, processes and outcomes. G. Smith (1990, p. 6) articulates the need for control over research of Māori, stating that "Māori people want more control over research to

ensure that their interests and integrity are protected and to ensure that such research is carried out in culturally appropriate ways, and for the right reason”.

Collaboration and acknowledgment of individual and group rights were fundamental requirements for the research with the services.

Acknowledging and valuing what each person brought to the setting was basic to the concept of ‘Mana Whakahaere’. It meant ensuring that the mana of each person and group was enhanced throughout the research process, and that processes were open, providing for power sharing and the development of a sense of ownership.

The third concept set out by Durie (1998), of ‘Mana Motuhake,’ is to do with outcomes and benefits that may further shape understandings of Māori development and progress. Bishop (2005) describes this as the “operationalisation of self determination (tino rangatiratanga) by Māori people” (p. 114). This position is congruent with the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi (New Zealand’s founding document, signed by representatives of the British Crown and Māori tribes) in that it emphasises Māori ownership, participation and active control of our future. Jackson (1996) states:

[W]e have to accept that the Treaty did not submit us to the research methodologies and ethics of somebody else. The Treaty affirmed our right to develop the processes of research, which are appropriate for our people, and to do that, the only people we have to seek permission from are our own. (cited in Milne, 2005, p. 7)

These ideas seem so normal, so common-sense, yet I have come to realize that they are neither normal, nor common-sense for many researchers. As

stated earlier, research of Māori has not served the needs of Māori well, adding little to Māori development, and positioning Māori firmly in a 'deficit' or 'problem' paradigm (Pihama, 1993; Simon, 1990). It was imperative for me therefore that the principles of partnership, participation and protection be acknowledged and upheld in the research and that the research result in positive outcomes for Māori.

In order to cater to the aspirations of Māori for Māori development, research that results in no change, or a continuation of the status quo, is unacceptable. Research must aim at the best outcomes for Māori (A. Durie, 1998). The objective of Kaupapa Māori research, therefore, must be that initiatives result in positive outcomes for Māori, such as improved services, more effective use of resources; more informed policy development and increased knowledge. "By taking a position that challenges norms and assumptions, Kaupapa Māori research involves a concept of the possibility and desirability of change" (Barnes, 2000, p. 5).

Fundamental to the issue of best outcomes for Māori, is the question – best outcomes for which Māori? I am Māori: should the benefits be mine or should they be reaped by others? I would argue it must be benefits for all involved in the study as well as those that are not. Durie (1996) asserts that "Research which enhances the standing of Māori so that they are empowered or at least enabled, not only justifies the activity in Māori eyes, but discourages research which is primarily for personal aggrandisement" (cited in Bevan-Brown, 1998, p. 237).

For the purposes of this project, I have located myself within a Kaupapa Māori research paradigm. My background and experiences embed me within a Māori context and within the cultural values and understandings

integral to that context, much of these unspoken and often unconscious. As a Māori woman researching Māori kaiako, tamariki and whānau, being Māori and our experiences as Māori are central to the theoretical base.

As L. Smith (2006) argues, Māori researchers who work with Māori communities and are themselves from the marginalised communities, experience the multiple layers and multi-dimensional aspects of marginalisation. She adds “When Māori researchers research ‘with’, ‘for’ and ‘as’ Māori we are working within this multi-layered, multi-dimensional dynamic” (p. 5). Smith describes this as being “socially interested”, as having a “standpoint,” undertaking “insider” research (p.6). Kaupapa Māori research can be viewed as socially interested research. “Māori language, knowledge and culture are valid and legitimate, and has a standpoint from which research is developed, conducted, analysed, interpreted and assessed” (pp. 6-7).

There are a number of ethical and methodological issues that arise from this type of insider or socially interested research. Issues include the potential for a lack of distance and objectivity which can involve “the potential to see the trees but not the forest, to underplay the need for rigour and integrity as a researcher and to mistake the research role with an advocacy role” (L. Smith, 2006, pp. 7-8). I agree that there is potential for advocacy to become the focus for researchers such as myself. L. Smith (2006) describes insider research as a “misnomer” as the researcher has ethical and professional responsibilities to establish and maintain their role as a researcher. It is also important to understand that this is not always easy to do, especially with competing responsibilities and obligations. However, in order to uphold the integrity of the research and give power to the voices of the participants, it is critical that the role of the researcher be defined and maintained.



## 2.7 Data Analysis

Grounded theory provided a theoretical frame for the gathering and analysis of research data. Grounded theory methods involve simultaneous data gathering and analysis in an iterative process (Charmaz, 2005).

Strauss and Corbin (1994) describe grounded theory as an approach to theory development that is grounded in the systematic collection and analysis of data and involves the “continuous interplay between analysis and data collection” (p. 273). It involves developing increasingly abstract ideas about the “participant’s meanings, actions, and worlds and seeking specific data to fill out, refine, and check the emerging conceptual categories” (Charmaz, 2005, p. 508).

Welsh (2002) proposes three qualitative data analysis approaches that can be broadly defined as ‘literal’, ‘interpretive’, and ‘reflexive’. The literal approach focuses on the precise use of particular language or grammatical structure. The interpretive approach focuses on meaning making. The reflexive approach focuses on the ways the researcher contributes to the data creation and analysis. My research utilises both the interpretive and reflexive approaches in a thematic analysis. Through the thematic analysis I was able to concentrate on identifying themes or patterns from the data in order to support meaning making and understandings. The research has utilised a fluid, intuitive, inductive approach to the analysis, one that endeavours to avoid preconceptions about what the findings would be but works closely with the data to identify emerging theory (Patton, 1990). This has sometimes required modification of the line of inquiry in response to developing understandings and emergent thinking (MacNaughton & Rolfe, 2001).

Yin (2003) identifies five techniques for analyzing case studies: pattern matching, explanation building, time-series analysis, logic models, and cross-case synthesis. The analysis of the case studies in this thesis incorporates elements of all five techniques.

- Pattern matching: In terms of this research, patterns tended to be more obvious to me as an outsider or occasional visitor, looking in on the case, than to the service kaiako themselves who were intimately involved in the particular activity or event. My role was therefore to highlight issues or patterns that I noticed as a result of interacting with participants, and/or reviewing documentation. These patterns were then the basis for further collaborative theorising, interpreting and patterning.
- Explanation building: This technique was an important aspect of the data collation and analysis process. At monthly meetings we engaged in in-depth discussions and theorising to support our understandings and articulate our thinking in a manner that had meaning for ourselves and others.
- Time-series analysis: This aspect of the case studies tended to be mostly my responsibility as I had the space and the distance to review thinking, identify the changes understandings and developments over time and highlight key issues. I was then able to document the issues, changes and developments I had identified over time and present these findings back to the services to review feedback and amend if desired.
- Logic models: Again this was a collaborative process as we discussed our perspectives on topics such as Māori world views,

Māori pedagogies, Kaupapa Māori theory, being Māori, and how they related to and were reflected in Kaupapa Māori assessment and early childhood services. Through this process we were able to develop our own theoretical and philosophical perspectives and truths.

- Cross-case synthesis: This technique can be seen as happening in two ways. Firstly during cluster meetings when participants from different services had the opportunity to discuss their progress, thinking and issues together, which allowed them to see the similarities and differences between services. Secondly as the writer of the thesis I was able to compare and contrast the case studies throughout the data gathering as well as analysis processes.

## **2.8 He Kupu Whakatepe/Conclusion**

As previously stated Te aho tapu is the first and most important weft strand, in that it establishes and defines the structure of the kākahu and the thesis. It defines the kākahu patterns and styles just as it does for the thesis. In this chapter I have defined the scope of the research and its methodological and epistemological aho tapu and rationale. I introduced my interest in the topic, discussed the research questions, and set out the research structure including the context, processes and the case studies.

The next chapter, Chapter Three – Te Aria/Kaupapa Māori Theory, explores the literature on Kaupapa Māori theory and research, the methodological framing for the thesis. It is also the foundation for the aho strands of the thesis kākahu.



2008). “Kaupapa Māori speaks to the validity and legitimacy of being Māori and acting Māori: to be Māori is taken for granted. Māori language, culture, knowledge and values are accepted in their own right” (G. Smith, 1992, p. 15).

According to Penehira, Cram, and Pipi (2003), the term Kaupapa Māori has emerged from ancient knowledge, to become a contemporary, bona fide theory of transformation which involves Māori defined philosophies, frameworks and practices. Kaupapa Māori relates not only to Māori philosophies but also to actions and practices derived from such philosophies. Kaupapa Māori theory therefore is not new, nor is it a refurbished, refined, version of western theories. What is new is the terminology of ‘Kaupapa Māori’ research and theory. Nepe (1991) describes the background to Kaupapa Māori:

Māori society had its own distinctive knowledge base. This knowledge base has its origins in the metaphysical realm and emanates as a Kaupapa Māori “body of knowledge” accumulated by experiences through history, of the Māori people. This Kaupapa Māori knowledge is the systematic organisation of beliefs, experiences, understandings and interpretations of the interaction of Māori people upon Māori people, and Māori people upon their world. (cited in Pihama, 2001, p. 77)

Māori have struggled to have rights with regards to language, culture and land acknowledged and legitimated since colonisation. Kaupapa Māori in the present form came out of growing political consciousness in the 1970s and 1980s arising from Māori dissatisfaction with the effects of the rapid urbanisation after World War II (Berryman, 2008). Added to this was a raised consciousness and discontent with the prevailing western

theorising and the positioning of Māori in a deficit paradigm. The late 1980s and 1990s saw the growth of the Māori revitalization movement which focused on Māori cultural philosophies, preferences, aspirations, and practices (Bishop, 2005; Mahuika, 2008). Kaupapa Māori approaches have developed rapidly over the past 20 years as a preferred research methodology amongst Māori academics and researchers (Mahuika, 2008). These methodologies accommodate Māori ways of knowing and being, while remaining academically rigorous and robust. Mahuika (2008) explains:

Arguably the ultimate goal of kaupapa Māori research, like much of the scholarship from indigenous and minority peoples, is to challenge and disrupt the commonly accepted forms of research in order to privilege our own unique approaches and perspectives, our own ways of knowing and being. (p. 4)

Kaupapa Māori research defies an exact definition (Powick, 2002). The difficulties in definition are due to the complex and multi-faceted use of the term, the different contexts in which it is utilised, and to the interwoven nature of matters related to it (Mahuika, 2008). It encompasses both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies while cutting across disciplines, fields and subject matters. Kaupapa Māori can simultaneously describe theory and practice, research methodologies, methods and culturally appropriate ethics. For example, in this thesis I am using Kaupapa Māori in the following ways: as the methodological frame for the research; to guide the research method and ethics (discussed in the previous chapter); as the theoretical underpinnings from which to explore the literature and the case study findings (discussed in this chapter); and as the foundation for the development of kaupapa Māori assessment theory and practice in early childhood (discussed in Chapter Seven,

Aromatawai/Assessment, and Chapter Eleven, Ngā Tapa /Summary of Findings. Kaupapa Māori is therefore extremely complex.

Milne (2005) argues that Kaupapa Māori methodologies are “unapologetically subjective” and are firmly embedded “within whānau, hapū, iwi waka traditions“. Kaupapa Māori research including the participants and the researcher are also located within these “systems, structures and ways of being” (p. 8). Pihama (2001) concurs, claiming that Kaupapa Māori is “Configured within the living ancestry of iwi, hapū and whanaungatanga, the dynamic foundation concepts” (p. 103).

I have therefore firmly positioned the research within a Kaupapa Māori research paradigm. Kaupapa Māori has also been described as “an attempt to retrieve space for Māori voices and perspectives” (Tolich, 2001, p. 40). This research can also be viewed as a means of retrieving space for Māori perspectives and voices.

Kaupapa Māori theory can be regarded as a local version of critical theory. Critical theory is founded upon Marxist/socialist understandings and is aimed at challenging and transforming oppressive structures such as Western perspectives of knowledge. It originated in the Frankfurt School, in 1923, with key theorists Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, and Jürgen Habermas (Stewart, 2007). Critical theory holds that the social context is shaped by the conflict between the powerless and the powerful, the excluded and the included, the colonised and the coloniser.

Transformation is required to expose, confront and challenge these disparities, injustices and inequalities. The objective of critical theory therefore is social, economic and political transformation, through developing understandings of the unequal power dynamics and relations, and empowering people to liberate themselves from these structures. A

critical theory focus is one of “human agency, of people being actively involved in the construction of ‘facts’ and the concepts through which we see the world”, (Pihama, 1993, p. 39). In essence it is a theory for social change and Kaupapa Māori refers to a “Māori philosophical approach to a field of practice or theory that focuses on challenging well-established Western ideas about knowledge” (Eketone, 2008, p. 1).

According to Pihama (2001), despite its coherence with critical theory, Kaupapa Māori theory that does not rely on critical theory for its existence, in the same way that critical theory does not rely on Kaupapa Māori theory for its existence. Kaupapa Māori theory is located within the land, the history, the culture and the people of Aotearoa, New Zealand. It is “firmly entrenched on this land, on Papatūānuku and that holds Kaupapa Māori theory as a distinctive framework” (Pihama, 2002, p. 110). She adds that “Kaupapa Māori theory is driven by whānau, hapū, iwi, Māori understandings. Critical theory is driven by European sourced philosophies and understandings” (p. 103).

Eketone (2008) views Kaupapa Māori more in terms of resistance to critical theory, arguing that the emancipatory goals of critical pedagogy have failed to eventuate. He claims that Kaupapa Māori theory can therefore be viewed as “modifying the philosophical basis of traditional critical theory, limiting its scope, and hence strengthening its emancipatory potential” (p. 8). Kaupapa Māori can expose underlying assumptions that obscure power dynamics in the ‘common sense’ beliefs of New Zealand society that maintain power structures and inequalities, including the continued oppression of Māori.

Kaupapa Māori, according to G. Smith (1997) is both theory and transformative praxis. It has evolved from Māori communities and has



succeeded in supporting fundamental structural changes in educational interventions. Kaupapa Māori theory has become an important and coherent philosophy and practice for raising Māori consciousness, supporting resistance and encouraging transformative action and reflection (praxis) in order to progress Māori cultural capital and learning outcomes within education. G. Smith (2003) refers to it as a revolution that involved a mindset shift of Māori people “away from waiting for things to be done to them, to doing things for themselves; a shift away from an emphasis on reactive politics to an emphasis on being more proactive; a shift from negative motivation to positive motivation” (G. Smith, 2003, p. 2).

G. Smith (1997) proposes three key strands that are integral to Kaupapa Māori and social change, and are integral to the Case Studies in this thesis: (1) Conscientisation; (2) Resistance; and (3) Transformative praxis from existing power structures and societal inequalities. These strands do not necessarily manifest themselves in a linear manner, but can be more cyclic in nature. In fact, G. Smith (2003) argues that all three strands may occur simultaneously, with engagement possible on one or more fronts. Individuals or groups may enter the process at any stage, and not necessarily start with ‘conscientisation’, which means it is possible to be involved in Kaupapa Māori transformative praxis unconsciously and unintentionally. This chapter adds a fourth strand, Māori ways of knowing and being.

### **3.1 Conscientisation**

Conscientisation requires ‘freeing-up’ one’s mind, imagination and thinking. It involves Māori consciousness-raising about needs, aspirations and preferences (G. Smith, 2003). Conscientisation is informed by both theoretical knowledge and practical experience. It requires the

deconstruction of the hegemonic powers that marginalize Māori knowledge and people. This process not only involves challenging dominant colonising influences and ideologies, but also confronting 'ourselves', 'freeing ourselves' from our previous thinking and motivations. It is an 'inside – out' model of transformation, which challenges hegemonic values, concepts and discourses, that we may have taken on as our own, that have become 'common sense' and therefore have maintained the status quo (Jackson, 2008; G. Smith, 2003). Confronting such discourses requires examination of what G. Smith (2003) calls 'distractions'; and 'self-abuse' perpetrated by 'Māori against ourselves'.

Hegemony is a way of thinking – it occurs when oppressed groups take on dominant group thinking and ideas uncritically and as “common- sense”, even though those ideas may in fact be contributing to forming their own oppression. (G. Smith, 2003, pp. 2-3)

Jackson (2008) maintains that hegemony operates at every level of society, is ideological in nature and continues to privilege the powerful. Jackson explains that hegemony involves the powerless taking on as their own the values, languages, discourses, and ideologies of the powerful. Tolich (2001) makes the point that the 'common sense' of societies often goes unnamed and unchallenged and that when critiqued, what is found is that one particular cultural perspective is being expressed. The focus of Kaupapa Māori is two-fold: it provides a critique of existing structures, and seeks transformative strategies, thus creating space for other cultural perspectives to be recognised, and validated. This involves centralising the position of Māori knowledge, moving it from its marginal position of 'abnormal' or 'unofficial knowledge', to an equal status to Western knowledge. According to Barnes (2000) "Kaupapa Māori begins as a

challenge to accepted norms and assumptions about knowledge and the way it is constructed and continues as a search for understanding within a Māori worldview” (p. 4). This process of critical reflection, reclamation and reconciliation was a fundamental feature of the development and implementation of Kaupapa Māori assessment understandings and practices in each of the thesis Case Studies.

### **3.2 Resistance**

Resistance involves “a conscious collective will to make change of existing circumstances” and requires a resistance to cultural loss and oppression (G. Smith, 1997, p. 485). This involves Māori reacting and responding to oppressive and exploitative structures; a proactive action to realise Māori aspirations and visions for the future. L. Smith (1999a) claims that this process requires Māori to re-imagine ourselves in a world where we have self-determination and autonomy. She states that:

Part of that re-imagining has been to develop our own priorities, generate our own questions, seek solutions from within ourselves as well as from the world at large and develop the kinds of approaches that are ethical, respectful, useful and achievable. (p. 2)

### **3.3 Transformative Praxis**

Transformative praxis moves from resistance to seeking solutions, and moving forward through applying learnings. It provides for flexibility and movement with new and emerging challenges. Kaupapa Māori therefore provides a dynamic theoretical and practical basis that can critique and re-constitute the ideas of “conscientisation, resistance and transformative praxis” in different ways depending upon circumstances. G. Smith (1997) claims that Kaupapa Māori initiatives support interventions and transformations at the level of the institution, through

the development of alternative structures, and by determining alternative pedagogy, practice and administration.

Mane (2009) stresses the point that there is a fundamental connection between Kaupapa Māori principles and action. Kaupapa Māori is action based and must include Māori practices as well as theory, in fact it is claimed that a “Kaupapa Māori approach cannot exist without practice”. Mane refers to Sheilagh Walker’s (1996) argument that Kaupapa Māori praxis is a more appropriate term than Kaupapa Māori theory as it includes the notion of practice and transformation and that “theorising is seen as a luxury not afforded to Māori in the struggle against the many global influences that undermine the basic human rights of Māori as indigenous peoples” (Mane, 2009, p. 2). The research provided the thesis Case Studies the space from which to theorise and critically reflect on early childhood theory, pedagogy, practices, and curriculum and develop strategies and interventions that were more congruent with their aspirations and philosophies.

Kaupapa Māori praxis focuses on areas of importance and concern for Māori. Māori aspirations, philosophies, pedagogies and processes provide the foundation for intervention strategies that result in positive transformations (Eketone, 2008; Mane, 2009; Tolich, 2001). Kaupapa Māori theory, according to G. Smith (2003) is able to fulfil a number of functions. It not only affirms and validates Māori language, knowledge and culture, but it makes political space for the legitimacy of Mātauranga Māori studies, conducted in Māori modes and mediums. It addresses Māori economic social and educational crises, because of its ability to afford positive transformations, through identifying processes and structures that support Māori success. It promotes Māori advancement through challenging structural inequities, and reclaiming and reframing Māori

language, knowledge and culture in educational contexts. Kaupapa Māori theory recognises and validates diversity – diversity in terms of Māori identities, perspectives, fronts or sites of struggle and transformations. Furthermore it highlights the importance or centrality of whānau to Kaupapa Māori knowledge, pedagogy, and curriculum and therefore to transformative praxis (Smith, Fitzsimmons & Roderick, 1998; G. Smith, 1997; 2003).

Kaupapa Māori praxis informed by Māori world-views are likely to provide beneficial outcomes for Māori (Bishop, 2005; Cunningham, 1992; A. Durie 1998). Kaupapa Māori moves beyond surface issues to dealing with structural inequalities resulting from the unequal power relationship position of Māori (G. Smith, 1992). Deconstructing western constructs does not necessitate the rejection of western theory and practice, it is not one or the other; rather it requires the repositioning of Māori theory, knowledge and world views (Penehira, Cram & Pipi, 2003). G. Smith (1993) states that Kaupapa Māori:

... is not a rejection of Pākehā knowledge and or culture; however it does understand the critical factor of how knowledge can be controlled to the benefit of particular interest groups. Kaupapa Māori advocates excellence within Māori culture as well as Pākehā culture. It is not an either or choice – Māori parents want full access to both cultural frameworks for their children. (p. 5)

Mahuika (2008) concurs claiming that:

Kaupapa Māori is not about rejecting Pākehā knowledge. Instead, it is about empowering Māori, hapū and iwi to carve out new possibilities, and to determine in their own ways, their past, present

and future identities and lives. Finding the correct balance and configuration within which iwi, hapū, Māori and even non-Māori knowledges and influences might be harnessed most effectively remains one of the major challenges for Māori and Māori scholars. (p. 12)

Key to finding the correct balance is recognizing that within the dominant Western context it is Māori cultural capital, knowledge and understandings that are mostly unavailable, denied or excluded. Accordingly, as Penehira, Cram and Pipi (2003, p. 6) state, “at the core is the catch-cry 'to be Māori is the norm' ”. Kaupapa Māori is about re-claiming the right to be Māori within the wider New Zealand society by firstly retrieving space for Māori voices and secondly supporting social change, based on Māori processes and practices, philosophies and aspirations (Tolich, 2001).

### **3.4 Māori Ways Of Knowing And Being**

Kaupapa Māori is about re-entering being Māori and the Māori world within today's context. This does not mean that everything from the past, or historical ways of being Māori, could or should be re-entered or reclaimed, nor does it mean disregarding what is available in the present it is more “about reconciling and reprioritising what is really important about the past with what is important about the present” (L. Smith, 1999a, p.39). It follows, therefore, that ideas of what could or should be reconciled in early childhood contexts today are subjective and therefore are going to differ depending on the specific individual, group and community. Mahuika (2008) endorses this view stating that:

Kaupapa Māori theory... provides a platform from which Māori [can] articulate their own reality and experience, their own personal

truth as an alternative to the homogenization and silence ... required of them within mainstream New Zealand society. Inherent in this approach is an understanding that Māori have fundamentally different ways of seeing and thinking about the world and simply wish to be able to live in accordance with that specific and unique identity. (p. 4)

Kaupapa Māori theory requires a Māori cultural frame. For this reason it is more likely to reflect Māori truths, articulated and endorsed by Māori. There is no one truth that can be generalized across all communities, rather there are multiple 'truths' that can be generated and defined by specific communities based on their cultural, historical, political and economic factors. This is evident in the thesis Case Studies, in that there was no attempt to generalise findings or create an essentialised truth, or way of seeing the world, rather participants expressed their own truths, and thinking, defined and generated from within their whānau and communities. Key questions therefore are whose truths are being reflected? And how are these truths constructed?

Kaupapa Māori speaks to the validity and legitimacy of being Māori and acting Māori: to be Māori is taken for granted. Māori language, culture, knowledge and values are accepted in their own right. (G. Smith, 1992, p. 13)

Kaupapa Māori is "the philosophy and practice of being Māori" (G. Smith, 1992, p. 1). These philosophies, frameworks and practices are derived from "distinctive cultural epistemological and metaphysical foundations" (G. Smith, 1992, p. 1) and kaupapa Māori expresses the way in which these ideas and practices are framed and organised. It relates to perceiving the world from a Māori epistemological perspective, of assuming the

normalcy of Māori values, understandings and behaviours (G. Smith, 1992). Marsden (1992) states:

The route to Māoritanga through abstract interpretation is a dead end. The way can only lie through a passionate, subjective approach...Māoritanga is a thing of the heart rather than the head...analysis is necessary only to make explicit what the Māori understands implicitly in his daily living, feeling, acting and deciding ...from within the culture...For what is Māoritanga? Briefly, it is the ...view that Māori hold about reality and meaning. (p. 17)

### **3.5 Multiple Perspectives**

Tensions have arisen, however, due to the rapid growth in popularity of Kaupapa Māori theory. The tensions relate to the danger of Kaupapa Māori theory creating a “totalizing narrative” of what it means to be Māori (this is discussed further in chapter 5, Ngā Tuakiri o te Tangata/Māori Identities). There is no one reality but a diversity of Māori identities, Māori perspectives, practices, contexts, tribal affiliations, and academic disciplines (Mahuika, 2008, p. 3).

The illusion of an uncomplicated and homogenous Māori people is a common criticism of kaupapa Māori. While this totalizing narrative of “Māoriness” makes claims for legitimacy and authenticity more authoritative, it binds us into the dichotomy of Māori/Pākehā, or insider/outsider. Such binaries not only fail to problematise notions of insider and outsider, Māori and Pākehā, but they prevent us from truly articulating ourselves, of sharing our ways of knowing and being and experiencing the world, with all their inherent contradictions. (Mahuika, 2008, p. 9)



An example of this is reflected in the way Māori may be interpreted in Kaupapa Māori. Mahuika (2008) claims that principles and frameworks, viewed as inherent in Kaupapa Māori theory and practice, have sometimes been universally and unproblematically applied. Mahuika questions whether the recurrence of similar concepts and principles in the literature indicates the significance of these ideas to Kaupapa Māori theory, or whether they have just become cliché and in fact detract from their true cultural meaning and significance. Finding a concise and definitive explanation of Kaupapa Māori theory is difficult. This is illustrated in the variety of ways in which the theory is utilized. "This multi-faceted use of the term has made definition and discussion somewhat more complicated as it is not always clear how the term is being used in a particular context" (Mahuika, 2008, p. 5).

Fundamental to the existence of Kaupapa Māori, however, is recognition of Māori rights as indigenous peoples. As stated by Mane (2009):

Māori cultural practices and views of the world (tikanga Māori) are crucial to the survival of Māori indigenous identity. With rights consistently diminished by majority culture interests, the need to voice and action treaty rights is an integral element of Kaupapa Māori. (p. 1)

### **3.6 Reconciling The Differences**

Eketone (2008) questions how Kaupapa Māori theory can come from an authentically Māori world-view if it must stand in opposition to the powerful other, locating Pākehā as the 'norm' and positioning Māori as the 'other'. He maintains the main purpose of Kaupapa Māori theory and practice is Māori development, utilizing Māori knowledge, values, and

processes.

Rather than competing, Ratima (2008) argues that critique, resistance and transformative practice are, in fact, complementary to Māori ways of knowing and being. One approach works at the 'macro level' – often the level of the academy – and deals with oppression, transformation and emancipation. The other approach works at the 'micro level'. This approach relates more to community initiatives or specific social constructs. These two approaches therefore work at different levels rather than contravening or competing with each other. Furthermore, not only are these two Kaupapa Māori approaches complementary but they can be viewed as integral to each other. Transformative praxis mostly involves the integration of Māori ways of knowing and being within the context; while working from a Māori cultural base (of Māori ways of knowing and being) often involves acts of transformation. In this way the two perspectives are integral rather than separate or competing binaries. The integrated nature of the approaches is apparent in the thesis Case Studies.

### **3.7 He Kupu Whakatepe/Conclusion**

Despite the difficulties in definition and application, Kaupapa Māori theory provides a culturally relevant frame from which to examine the themes of the research. For the purposes of this research I argue that it is transformative praxis involving integration of Māori ways of knowing and being within contexts, while working from a Māori cultural base, (of Māori ways of knowing and being). Kaupapa Māori is utilised in an emancipatory way in order to reclaim, reframe and reconcile the Māori ways of knowing and being within contemporary early childhood assessment practices.

For the thesis Case Studies the research provided the opportunity to engage in the Kaupapa Māori strands of conscientisation, resistance and transformative praxis, within their early childhood contexts. Kaupapa Māori theory provided the space to theorise. It was the basis for recognising and challenging dominant educational ideology, theory and hegemony and acknowledging it as culturally laden. It supported the development of pro-active interventions and strategies, to counter the poor educational outcomes for Māori and to not only celebrate Māori educational success but normalise it. It created spaces to reclaim and reframe Māori ways of knowing and being through affirming the validity and legitimacy of Māori language, culture and knowledge within early childhood contexts. It promoted increased control over decision making in regard to pedagogy, curriculum, assessment and Māori education. This involved defining our own priorities, generating our own questions, and seeking solutions from within ourselves. It raised awareness of the heterogeneous nature of Māori, the diversity of Māori identities, the multiple sites of struggle and strategies for transformation, and the centrality of whānau, past, present and future, to Kaupapa Māori theorising. Finally, just as early Māori voyagers utilised the technology and knowledge they brought with them and integrated it into their new environment, Kaupapa Māori theory validated the reclamation and use of what was important from the past and adapting it to use with the contemporary resources and environment of today.

The weaving of the kākahu or thesis garment involves weaving service case studies, kaupapa Māori theory, Māori ways of knowing and being, and technologies and knowledge, across and within historical, cultural and educational discourses and paradigms. In the following chapters the Kaupapa Māori strands outlined in this chapter are utilized as a lens to critique dominant educational and cultural assumptions related to Māori

education, Māori identity, constructs of the Māori child and Māori teaching, learning and assessment understandings. As stated previously, the Kaupapa Māori strands do not necessarily manifest themselves in a linear manner and can in fact occur simultaneously. For this reason there has been no attempt to follow a single, standard pattern; rather the strands are engaged with as the material dictates. Te Akoranga/Māori Education is the first of the whenu blocks.

## CHAPTER FOUR

		He Whenu – Te Akoranga Māori Schooling				

### HE WHENU

### TE AKORANGA - MĀORI SCHOOLING

**Te manu i kai i te miro, nōna te ngahere**

**Te manu i kai i te Mātauranga nōna te Āo**

**The bird who partakes of the miro berry owns the forest**

**The bird who partakes of education owns the world**

This whakataukī illustrates the value that Māori have always placed on education and learning. Learning and education was valued by pre-European Māori. Learning was viewed as beginning before birth. An individual's learning added to the value of the whole community. It was crucial that children acquired the appropriate skills, knowledge, and attitudes to enhance the community and to guarantee not only their own and their community's survival, but that of future generations as well. Children's learning was therefore not left to chance, but rather was a dynamic process that required the involvement of the learner, the teacher, and the community.

Chapter four, the first of the whenu blocks, explores the literature on te Akoranga/Māori Schooling. It firstly provides an introduction to Māori ideas of knowledge, knowing and knowers, and then explores traditional Māori education processes. Next it examines the history, goals and legacy of schooling for Māori from the arrival of Europeans to the present day, including the ideologies and practices that continue to perpetuate Māori educational underachievement. It then describes educational practices for young children in pre-European Māori society and the provision of early childhood education and kōhanga Reo. Finally it discusses implications for early childhood education and this thesis. My aims in this chapter are to provide a critical overview of Māori education, and in so doing highlight the power of Kaupapa Māori theory and practice. The chapter reclaims Māori knowledge, understandings of teaching and learning and cultural practices and reframes them within contemporary early childhood contexts.

#### **4.0 He Kupu Whakataki/Introduction**

As discussed in Chapter One, early Māori explorers to Aotearoa brought with them knowledge, belief systems, and technologies that enabled them to adapt to the new environment and supported the development of highly specialised knowledge systems (King, 1997; Orbell, 1985). Māori knowledge systems are based upon Māori world-views that have evolved through experiences over centuries (Durie, 2003), and Kaupapa Māori praxis is the vehicle by which they can be reclaimed and reframed in contemporary contexts.

#### **4.1 Māori Perspectives Of Knowledge, Knowers And Knowing**

Knowledge is the key to power, according to Mutu (1998), and has the ability to control a person's life and that of others. Major differences exist between the Māori and non-Māori perceptions of rights to knowledge.

Non-Māori attitudes to knowledge hold that individuals have inherent rights to knowledge and it should be universally available. However, for Māori, knowledge is perceived as a taonga, passed down from ancestors, therefore to be taken seriously, treated with respect and preserved intact. Knowledge does not belong to individuals, rather is the property of the hapū and iwi. Individuals are the repositories of the group's knowledge, and have the responsibility to use it for the benefit and mana of the group and not for personal gain (Bevan-Brown, 1998; Tolich, 2001).

Shirres (1997) provides an example of this holistic, outward-looking perspective of Māori knowledge that is intimately connected and continually developing. He presents these as a double spiral on three levels. The first level is the level of the human person, where we move from nothingness through different stages and experiences into the night, then the world of light, to a state of oneness with others. The second level is the level of the cosmos. This movement and unfolding from the 'nothingness, to the night, to the world of light' on this level symbolizes the unfolding of the cosmos and the universe. The third and final level, that of Io, (the supreme god), is the core, the source of all energy. He states (p. 119):

To be a full human being is also to be at the centre of the universe, beyond space and beyond time.

To be a full human being is to be one with the human race, the people of the past, as well as the people of the present.

To be a full human being is to be one with the universe and to take part in the whole movement *i te kore, ki te po, ki te ao mārama* 'from the nothingness, to the night, to the full daylight'.

To be a full human being is to be one with Io, be it in the 'dark night' or in the 'dark light' at the centre and at every part of the universe.

Marsden (1992) makes clear links between this unfolding and continuously evolving world to the growth of a plant "te pu, te more, weu, aka, rea, waonui, kune and whe meaning primary root, tap root, fibrous roots, trunk, tendrils, massed branches, buds and fronds", (p. 134) and the conception, gestation, and birth of a child. The child is viewed as moving from "te kore, ki te po, ki te ao mārama", from nothingness or potential, to the world of light, from conception to birth. Robinson (2005, pp. 307-308) states:

The miracle of childbirth was equal in importance to the creation of the world to our tohunga mystics. The power of the child being born in our tradition cannot be stressed enough. The child is Tāne, a very real representation of Tāne, the god who brought light into the world. The child follows the entire path of Tāne during the Night ages, from its conception, its occupation in the heated darkness or womb, to the struggle for daylight during childbirth. Therefore the whole Māori scheme of creation actually coheres to the process of a child being born.

Shirres (1997) maintains that this understanding of the universe and the evolution from the "te kore, ki te po, ki te ao mārama" "the nothingness, into the night, into the world of light" relates strongly to the unfolding of consciousness and thought as well as an unfolding of matter. A. Durie (1997, p. 144) states "Ideas about development of the physical world parallel those about the emergence of patterns of human thought". According to A. Durie (1998, p. 144) the creation traditions are effectively



“representative of the genesis of Māori thought”. This concept of creation and the gradual development of full awareness and understanding are expressed in the following whakapapa, as translated by Taylor (1855).

Na te kune te pupuke	<i>From the conception the increase</i>
Na te pupuke te hihiri	<i>From the increase the thought</i>
Na te hihiri te mahara	<i>From the thought the remembrance</i>
Na te mahara te hinengaro	<i>From the remembrance the consciousness</i>
Na te hinengaro te manako	<i>From the consciousness the desire</i>

(cited Shirres, 1997, pp. 24-25)

Māori Marsden (1992) describes how the creation whakapapa provides a three dimensional perspective of the world. The first dimension or realm is te Korekore, the realm of potential being and energy. The second, te po, the realm of becoming, and finally te ao mārama, the realm of being. There are two key ideas expressed in Marsden’s explanation of the unfolding world. The first is that of continuity, where the world is continuously being created and recreated. This relates strongly to children’s learning, and therefore assessment, in that like the universe, children’s ideas and understandings are continuously being created and recreated, defined and redefined. Like the universe there is no end point to children’s learning, thinking and understanding rather it is an ongoing life long process.

The second key point made by Marsden is that the universe is dynamic. He maintains it is a stream of processes and events that are lineal rather than cyclical. He does however point out that the lineal movement is a two way process, making reference to the “the spirits of the departed descending to Hawaiki and that which is in the process of becoming ascending to the world of light” (p. 135). This idea also strongly links to the dynamic nature of knowledge acquisition and learning, and the two

way traffic of ideas, thinking and understandings. Some knowledge and understandings ascends from potential being, into the world of becoming where it challenges and stretches thinking, into the world of being, of enlightenment and clarification. Other knowledge and understandings descend from the world of being, from a place of knowing and certainty, to a world of becoming, or uncertainty. It is here that once firmly-held views and opinions may be challenged and interrupted, and if unable to stand up to the critique of becoming, are relegated to the world of potential being, or nothingness. In this way learning is not just an accumulation of ideas and understandings but a dynamic process of continuous germination, cultivation and pruning.

#### **4.1.1 Realms of learning**

The realms of 'te korekore, te po, te ao mārama' provide a frame from which to view Māori learning and assessment, one that is deeply embedded within a Māori world view, and which expresses Māori ways of knowing, being, and doing.

- *Te Korekore –potential being*

Te korekore is the realm of potential being, between non-being and being. This realm is where the “seed-stuff of the universe and all created things gestate” (Marsden, 1992, p. 134), where there is endless potential for learning and growth. This is a time of potential and possibilities, a time of openness to new ideas and growth. It is the seed-bed of learning and development.

- *Te Po - becoming*

Te Po is the period of becoming, of stretching, challenge and growth. There are many sub-realms within Te Po. Marsden (1992, p.135) refers to four: “te Po te kitea, te Po tangotango, Po whawha, Po namunamu”,

meaning “the night of unseeing, the night of hesitant exploration, night of bold groping, night inclined towards the day”. These nights provide an insight into the realm of Te Po, which is marked with uncertainty, hesitancy, apprehension and negotiation. It does however also have a sense of stretching and swelling, and unfolding potential and consciousness. This is the growth period of the seed of learning and development. Learning can occur simultaneously on different levels; on different topics or subjects; on different planes including physical, emotional, spiritual; and in different intensities. Like the contractions of birthing a child, the birthing of ideas and understandings is challenging, very rarely without pain, and comes in waves, surging and ebbing.

- *Te Ao Mārama - being*

Te Ao mārama is the realm of being, the realm of realization, enlightenment and clarification. It is not, however, viewed as the end point, but rather as part of a continuously unfolding stream. Marsden (1992) makes the point that “the universe is not static but is a stream of processes and events”. Furthermore Māori did not develop the idea of a goal of history so not only was there no end point there was no final objective or goal. Each element is an integral part of the whole and “each man is an event within the one procession of nature and so is each created object” (p. 135).

Hence to know something is to locate it in space and time and knowledge of whakapapa is essential to this. (Whitt, Roberts, Norman, & Grieves, 2003, p. 5)

## **4.2 Traditional Māori Education**

Before the arrival of Europeans, teaching and learning within traditional contexts were supported by highly sophisticated knowledge structures,

educational practices and principles. It involved a mixture of processes aimed at maintaining and extending knowledge and developing understandings of harnessing, sustaining, and extending resource bases (Berryman, 2008; Hemara, 2000; Salmond, 1983). Jones, Marshall, Matthews, G. Smith & L. Smith (1995, p. 34) describe the processes as:

... a complex oral tradition and a dynamic ability to respond to new challenges and changing needs. The traditional system of education, while complex and diverse, was also fully integrated in that skills, teaching and learning were rationalised and sanctioned through a highly intricate knowledge base. The linking of skills, rationale and knowledge was often mediated through the use of specific rituals.

Heuer (1969) suggested education for the young Māori child began with the tōhi rite, or the dedication ceremony, where the parents decided upon the atua (god) that would support the child in life (Jenkins, Harte & Ririki, 2011). There were oriori or lullabies composed for the child which were inspirational and motivational, highlighting behaviours to be emulated. Oriori would not be understood by the child immediately, but acted as a socialising tool. They reinforced the spiritual nature of the child, who would gradually develop understandings of the meaning and intent of the oriori (Hemara, 2000). Oriori contained information about mythology, tribal history, and whakapapa and, according to Heuer (1969, p. 466):

Their purpose was primarily educational, to provide the basic knowledge with which the child would need to be familiar. They were sung to the crying child, particularly at night, and in later years repeated to the child so that he would be familiar with his oriori.

Oriori were also socialising tools, intended to reinforce in the minds of listeners the spiritual nature of the child. They were sung repeatedly, embedding within listeners the child's whakapapa and qualities, and emphasising the appropriate ways the child should be treated. As Jenkins and Harte (2011, p. 12) explain, "They were a poetic and repetitive way to fix personal, whānau and cultural messages in the minds of the listeners".

Te Rangi Hiroa (1987) and Makareti (1986), state that the young child's education was primarily within the whānau. Living and sleeping in an intergenerational environment allowed the transmission of important knowledge from the old people to the young – knowledge of history, stories, legends and their environment. Te Rangi Hiroa (1987, p. 358) explains that "Much, if not most, of the personal instruction in early years, was received from grandparents as a convenient result of three generations of the family living together in a common household". These elements of a classical education in family and tribal history continued on through adolescence. Makareti (1986) describes how:

From the old people, the children learn much in the way of folklore, legend, genealogy, and tradition...The old man would teach them their line of descent from that ancestor, and from other noted ancestors back to the time of the arrival of the great fleet...They told the children how dear their home and lands were to them...they taught the names of birds of the forest, and the different tree and shrubs and plants...and wonderful stories of the mountains, rivers, and streams...They talked of these and many other things until the little people fell asleep. And so they grew up with the stories and deeds of their ancestors. (pp. 151-152)

Hemara (2000) adds that skills and abilities were recognised early and teaching focused on extending and developing further those strengths. Ngoi Pewhairangi (1992) describes similar learning experiences;

They don't actually teach you. They select you and place you in a situation where you absorb knowledge. When you're asleep on your own, they're singing waiatas or reciting genealogies in the next room. As you're lying in the dark, you absorb everything that's going on. And before you realise what you're doing you've learned the words of a certain song... But you don't realise that they're putting you into a situation to learn. (p. 10)

Te Rangi Hiroa (1987) adds that further teaching was given by the old people in their particular areas of expertise. He states that "the experts of the family were always ready to teach, and nothing pleased the old men more than to give instruction to the youth anxious to learn" (p. 360). Te Rangi Hiroa provides an example of this learning;

A friend of mine, little older than myself was brought up by a Grand-uncle who still thought that young chiefs should be trained to become successful military leaders. They slept in the same room in separate beds. In the early mornings, the old man went outside to satisfy certain needs. On his return, he slapped the sleeping child and went back to his bed muttering his disappointment. This went on for some time, until one memorable morning the now apprehensive child heard the old man leave the room. When he returned to slap the sleeper, the child gazed up at him with wide open eyes. A pleased look came to the old man's eyes and he returned to his bed saying "Now I have a grandchild who will be a bulwark of defence to his tribe". After that they played a game.

Some mornings the man got up earlier, others later, but always the child gazed up at him wide awake. The training had had its effect, and the child roused at the slightest sound. This was as it should be, for no warrior must be caught napping. (Te Rangi Hiroa, 1987, p. 359)

Education of the Māori child was therefore related to preparing the child for living, to actively participate in Māori society. Learning experiences had immediate practical application. As the child matured the tasks became more complex. As Berryman (2008, p. 11) states, “learning within these traditional contexts included a variety of cognitive, oral, auditory and visual processes aimed at maintaining and extending cultural mores and knowledge”.

Learning processes for the child took many forms including imitation, play and intentional instruction. Stories, games, whakapapa, waiata, karakia provided the child with information about the world, and their place in it (Heuer, 1969; Jenkins, Harte & Ririki, 2011; Pihama, Smith, Taki, & Lee, 2004). Melbourne (2009) maintains that, “The myriad of games that were such a favourite pastime of traditional Māori societies all served a purpose of challenging the intellectual, physical, emotional and metaphysical attributes of children (p. 74).

Children absorbed cultural mores by following adults, and learning through observation, imitation and practice. All aspects of life were open to the child, including public assemblies. There are a number of early accounts of sons of chiefs, of about four or five, being present at important meetings. They sat with the chiefs, listened attentively, asked questions and had their questions answered considerately by the adults. In this way

the child learnt valuable lessons about the roles and responsibilities of being a chief (Jenkins, Harte & Ririki, 2011). Firth (1959) states:

Quite small children were admitted to the tribal assembly at the side of their parents on occasions of importance, and appeared to take an intelligent interest in the proceedings. They often asked questions of their elder, which were gravely answered...By this means the children were initiated at an early age into the rules of etiquette and tribal custom. (p. 188)

Metge (1983) summarised five important educational principles evident in historical Māori education. The first principle was 'Ako', a term that means to teach and to learn, with little distinction between the two roles. It assumes a power sharing relationship between the teacher and the learner. Knowledge was co-constructed; learning was interactive, a "unified cooperation of learner and teacher in a single enterprise" (Metge, 1983, p. 2). The second principle was 'story-telling', and was a means of transmitting complex information about history and genealogy. Stories came in many forms: prayers, songs and carvings. 'Memory and rote learning' was the third principle. From a young age children experienced a range of oral recitals relating to important information and knowledge, which were added to as the child matured and grew. Learning through exposure' was the fourth principle and involved modelling or being exposed to a wide range of formal and informal rituals, and experiences. It involved the active engagement of the learner in experiences under the mentorship of the more experienced teacher with the expectation that the learner would take over responsibility for teaching when the time was right. The final principle was learning in groups. Group learning was a way of integrating new learners into pre-existing groups of experienced members and learning occurred through the role modelling around them.



### **4.3 Formal European Schooling For Māori**

The history of schooling for Māori has been one of cultural dislocation, deprivation and subjugation. Much has been researched and written on it by writers such as: Barrington; Beaglehole; Belich; Binney; Bishop; Consedine; King; Simon; Smith & Smith; and Walker. The missionaries believed Māori lived in a state of 'barbarism', with inferior intellect, language, and culture, thus in order to save their souls, Māori needed to be civilised and Europeanised (Belich, 2001; Harris, 2007; Hokowhitu, 2004; May, 2003; 2005). The aim of the early mission schools therefore was to interrupt the transmission of Māori culture, language and world-views and replace them with what was perceived as the far superior and civilised European ones, and to transform Māori into "Brown Britons" (Belich, 2001). Māori were schooled to provide a ready supply of workers but not to participate in higher education or access further employment opportunities. This limited curriculum was based upon the argument that Māori were "suited by nature to manual work" (Simon, et al., 1998, p. 11).

This two-tiered system of schooling was maintained over time and continued to be the source of cultural conflict and oppression for Māori children (Harris, 2007). Walker (1991, pp. 7-8) claims that "this institutionalisation of racism within the Education Department and its schools explains the existence and entrenched nature of the education gap between Māori and Pākehā. These deficit perspectives of Māori have continued to inform and justify successive education policies. "State controlled education resulted in Māori being educated within a system that not only devalued them as a people but emphasised the negative features of Māori knowledge and culture" (Berryman, 2008, p. 33).

Urbanisation in the 1940s and 1950s resulted in up to 70% of the Māori population migrating from the rural tribal areas to urban environments and schools, and Māori educational disadvantage became increasingly visible (Hokowhitu, 2004). In 1961, the Department of Māori Affairs, 'Hunn Report', provided for the first time statistical evidence of Māori disadvantage in the areas of health, housing, employment and education. It identified the impact of the two-tiered schooling system and the subversion of Māori culture on Māori educational achievement, reporting what has been called a “statistical blackout” in higher education (Walker, 1991, p. 8). Blame for any “statistical blackout” was placed squarely with Māori parents and culture (Hokowhitu, 2004). The focus of successive education policies and practices was to rectify the ‘Māori problem’ and overcome perceived cultural inadequacies of Māori children (Fleras, & Spoonley, 1999; Simon, 1986). The effects of these policies are still evident today with Māori children disengaging from the education system, and consistently achieving disproportionately lower results on national averages (Smith & Smith, 1990). Hook (2007) adds that this dissociation has resulted in a “dichotomy of existence for Māori, alienation of the minority, disengagement from the education system, loss of language, and loss of culture” (p. 2). Ka’ai (2004, p. 212) agrees, stating “Mainstream education is not an equaliser because its curriculum, methods and ethos are derived not from the generalised culture of a society, but from the culture of the dominant group within that society”.

#### **4.4 Early Years Education In Aotearoa/ New Zealand**

The first European-style infant school in New Zealand was reported in 1832, at Paihia. In 1833, Captain W. Jacobs visited the infant school which taught around 26 young children, some European but mainly Māori. He was impressed with the moral culture of the school as much as the school itself (May, Kaur & Prochner, 2006). This is congruent with the aims and

objectives of the British Infant School Society, established some eight years earlier, to save children from the 'deprivation' of their home environments and to 'civilise' them. May, Kaur & Prochner (2006) highlight the similarities in the rhetoric used to describe both British young street children and Māori young children. "An infant school education, whether it was to remove young children from the British gutters, or their Māori 'kaingas', would save them from their uncivilised and disorderly worlds" (pp. 3-4).

William Yates' (1835) account of early New Zealand also highlights his perspective on the need for such remedies. He states:

Formerly, a [Māori] parent would never correct a child for anything it might do; it was allowed to run riot in all that was vile, and have its own way in everything. The evil of this was palpable: in New Zealand, as in every other country, a spoiled child is a great plague; but if the pest was in any one place more severely felt than in another, it was here. Brought up in evil, and without restraint of law in their youth, it could be no great wonder if, as men, they indulged in every vice. (p. 241)

In 1889 the first New Zealand kindergarten, for children under 5 years of age, was established in Dunedin. Kindergartens were charitable institutions for Pākehā urban poor, established by middle class Pākehā philanthropists. The aim, according to Pihama (1993, p. 72), was to provide a "vehicle by which to assimilate working class mothers into middle class value systems, particularly in relation to domestic life".

The first crèche was established in 1903, in Wellington by Mother Aubert. It and the Wellington Citizen Day Nursery, which was established in 1916,

provided a charitable service for people such as deserted wives and widows, unmarried mothers, and illegitimate children (May, 1985; Pihama, 1993).

In the second part of the twentieth century a major transformation occurred in early childhood care and education services. Changing social, political and educational opinions impacted on western views of child rearing and the education of young children. May (2002, p. 118) explains that “in New Zealand by the 1950s those children not attending preschool came to be regarded as unfortunate; by the 1960s, disadvantaged; by the 1970-80s, disenfranchised; and by the end of the century ‘at risk’.

The migration of Māori families from the rural tribal areas to urban environments in the 1940s and 1950s resulted in Māori children becoming increasingly visible in urban primary schools and raised issues for both primary and early childhood education. It also coincided with intelligence and language research of the time and the ideas of cultural deficits, which positioned Māori children as both intellectually and linguistically deficient (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Harris, 2007). Urban teachers were unprepared for the influx of Māori children, and often identified them as failures, lacking the basic experiences of Pākehā children (May, 2005). The Māori child was therefore viewed as outside the norms of development and in need of remediation. In 1946 the anthropologists Ernest and Pearl Beaglehole argued that there was a “need to bring to bear upon the Māori child a somewhat different technique of infant and child training” so that they would “fit more clearly into the patterns of Pākehā civilisations. By the time the child comes to Pākehā school it is already too late” (cited in May, 2005, p. 72).

In 1961 the Māori Women's Welfare League conference and then in 1962 the Annual Report of the Māori Education Foundation both emphasised the importance of Māori participation in early childhood education and the possible benefits for Māori children. Alex Grey was appointed by the Māori Education Foundation as a preschool officer to establish Māori-run services, mainly playcentres that were run by Māori women. Family preschools and family play groups developed from these playcentres, and involved children and mothers attending regular sessions. The aim of these groups was to retain the decision-making power related to the education of Māori children with Māori people. However, as Pihama (1993) explains, despite decision-making being retained by Māori, the structures and content of programmes in these preschools and family play groups differed little from other early childhood services. Furthermore the cultural compensatory focus remained.

Prior to the 1960s there was little involvement of Māori children and families in early childhood services. McDonald (1973) states that in 1966, Māori made up 5.2% of children in kindergarten and 9% of playcentre enrolments. According to Pihama (1996), Māori involvement in early childhood education in the late 60s and early 70s can be seen as a direct consequence of the deficit paradigms of the 1960 Hunn Report and the prevailing educational views of the time. Early childhood education was adopted by policy-makers as a means of compensating for the cultural deficits of the Māori home and culture identified in the Hunn Report, thus providing the cultural capital required for school, and alleviating possible deprivation and disadvantage.

Central to this focus on providing the appropriate cultural capital for school was the required disconnection with the cultural deficits of the Māori home and culture, and the imposition of Eurocentric cultural values and education (Hook, 2007). As Ka'ai (2004, p. 212) comments, "Historically the reality for Māori children is that there has been a discontinuity between home and school, between the academic knowledge of the school, and the common sense everyday knowledge of the home and community".

#### **4.5 Cultural Discontinuity**

Key to understanding the discontinuity for Māori children between home and school or early childhood service is the issue of cultural norms and non-cultures. Delpit (1995, p. 151) argues that, "We all interpret behaviors, information, and situations through our own cultural lenses; these lenses operate involuntarily, below the level of conscious awareness, making it seem that our own view is simply 'the way it is'. Metge (1990) explains that because of this Pākehā not only accept their culture to be normal or natural; they are unaware of its influence, not only on them but also on institutions such as education. The consequence of this normalisation of culture is that many Pākehā educators fail to appreciate the ways in which the education system reinforces their cultural values and beliefs. As Metge (1990, p. 15) states, "Whereas members of the minority group have their own ways thrown into relief in their encounter with others, Pākehā people take theirs for granted as the norm".

Furthermore, culture shapes the way we think and interpret information, and so impacts on teaching and learning. Mahuika and Bishop (2011, p. 6) explain that "In a very real way our culture acts as a kind of blueprint for the ways we interpret information and the importance we attach to various types of information". If the learners' own culture is congruent

with the culture of the learning environment they are then able to make meaning of new ideas and information by building on existing cultural understandings and experiences. Such congruence of culture allows learners to “bring who they are to the classroom in complete safety and where their knowledges are acceptable and legitimate” (ibid, p. 14).

Another discontinuity for Māori children between home and school or early childhood service is the distinction between individualistic and collectivist societies. Schneider (1999) argue that the main English speaking countries, namely, USA, Great Britain, Canada, Australia – and New Zealand – are the most individualistic societies in the world. Children in these countries grow up in a belief system that stresses individuality and the development of individual’s skills, knowledge and understandings. This positions the individual above the collective, which is in stark contrast to the more collectivist Māori cultural orientation. As Fler and Richardson (2004, p. 11) state:

These differences in cultural practices lead to different world views – independence, interdependences, individualism, and collectivist. As such, it is possible to see how Western science and therefore Western developmental psychology has been influential in shaping the way early childhood development has emerged, and why we have tended to focus on the individual in our observations.

‘Positioning’ is another example of discontinuity between Māori and western child rearing and early childhood practices. Rogoff (1990) argues that in mainstream early childhood services young children are positioned as ‘other’ in the day-to-day life of families, and communities, rather than as embedded within them. As Fler (2003, p. 66) states, “we have created an artificial world – with child-sized furniture and home equipment,

materials such as thick paint brushes, blocks and puzzles, and an outdoor area with carefully designed climbing equipment for safety". These isolationist practices are common in western communities, according to Rogoff (1990), in contrast with other cultures. She emphasises that "In societies in which children are integrated in adult activities, the children are ensured a role in the action, at least as close observers. Children are present at most events of interest in the community, from work to recreation to church" (p. 124).

A further implication of these isolationist practices is that children are removed and disconnected from the influence of large sections of the community such as men and old people. Responsibility for the child's learning is left to parents and teachers rather than shared across the community. Fler (2003, p. 67) quotes Laura, a participant in Fler and Williams-Kennedy's (2002) research on indigenous families in Australia, who comments that in her community boys "have a lot to do with babies, they are not afraid to carry newborns, they want to play with them; you don't see it as much in Western ways".

Not only do western cultures tend to isolate children from their community, they tend to compartmentalise and decontextualise knowledge from the real world. This knowledge is then taught in early childhood services, detached from communities. This is in opposition to historical Māori methods of acquiring knowledge, which emphasises direct experiences in the world and holistic learning (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005).

#### **4.6 Kaupapa Māori Early Years Education**

As already stated, Kaupapa Māori education grew out of the growing political consciousness and dissatisfaction in the 1970s and 1980s with the



positioning of Māori in a deficit educational paradigm. Pihama, Smith, Taki, & Lee (2004) describe it as not only a resistance strategy but also to provide strategies for nurturing and revitalising the Māori language and traditions. Benton (1979), in a New Zealand Council for Educational Research publication, stressed how crucial this was when he reported that the numbers of fluent speakers of the Māori language were declining rapidly. Walker (1996) relates what followed that report:

Because of that stark revelation, organic leaders and intellectuals were forced to adopt the radical strategy of seceding from mainstream education. They took control of the education of their own children by setting up a parallel system of schooling. The immediate goal was to rescue the Māori language from extinction. (p. 165)

By the late 1980s and 1990s the raised consciousness amongst Māori communities facilitated a Māori revitalization movement which focused on Māori language, cultural philosophies, preferences, aspirations, and practices (Bishop, 2005; Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Mahuika, 2008). As Walker (1996, p. 156) comments, “After twenty-five years of trying to reform the education system from within to make it more bicultural, Māori leaders realised that the co-operative strategy was not effective”. Māori rejected the deficit focus present in previous educational initiatives and policies, and stressed Māori autonomy. “Kaupapa Māori responded to the dual challenge of imminent Māori language death and consequent cultural demise, together with the failure of a succession of government policy initiatives” (Bishop and Glynn, 1999, p. 62). The Kaupapa Māori approach developed across all education fields including Te Kōhanga Reo, Kura Kaupapa Māori, Wharekura and Wānanga (Bishop & Glynn, 1999).

#### 4.6.1 Te Kōhanga Reo

Te Kōhanga Reo, or Māori language nests, were established as a strategy for nurturing and revitalising the Māori language, culture and traditions and enhancing life opportunities, access to power and equality of opportunity (Bishop, 1998; Consedine & Consedine, 2005; Irwin, 1990; Pihama, Smith, Taki, & Lee, 2004; Mutu, 1998). As Morehu (2009, p. 4) explains:

Kōhanga reo was established to regenerate the Māori language and its culture by conscientising whānau to step up and take power and control of decision making over the curriculum, the day to day operation, the enrolment process and the recruitment and retention strategies for the fledging institution.

The first Te Kōhanga Reo was established in April 1982 (Ka'ai, 1991), and by the end of that year the number had grown to 50. The growth of Te Kōhanga Reo was rapid: three years later there were 377 kōhanga and by 1993, just eleven years after the first kōhanga opened, the numbers had reached 809 (May, 2005; Jones et al., 1995).

Te Kōhanga Reo has three key objectives. The first objective is a total commitment to the Māori language in order to halt the decline of speakers of Māori. Ka'ai (2004, p. 205) states: "the primary objective of Te Kōhanga Reo is summed up in the phrase 'korero Māori' (speak Māori)". This is one of total commitment with absolutely no compromise. In this way there is a bridging of the gap between the bulk of Māori speakers, over 40 years, and the young 0-5 years. Ka'ai (1991, p. 40) emphasises that "this objective embodies the belief that if Māori people are to survive as an identifiable people into the twenty-first century, then their distinct language must survive as well". Furthermore, Te Kōhanga reo would support the

creation of significant numbers of confident, competent, bilingual, and bicultural Māori people who could successfully span both Māori and Pākehā worlds. As the Department of Māori Affairs Annual Report stated in 1983, “We can anticipate with confidence a younger generation intellectually stimulated, more highly motivated and technically qualified in the basis of two world cultures - Māori and Pākehā” (cited in Ka’ai, 1991, p. 41).

The second objective of Te Kōhanga Reo is commitment to the whānau, to ensure that Māori have greater control over their own lives and futures. Ka’ai (1991, p. 41) explains that:

The term whānau is employed in the sense of a traditional extended family arrangement whereby children were socialised in an environment surrounded by the presence of grandparents, relatives and other children. The concept of whānau also includes a cluster of values such as those naturally associated with a family setting and embodying the virtue of ‘aroha’ (love), ‘manaaki’ (caring sharing and empathy) and ‘wairua’ (spirituality). When these meanings are combined, the image of Kōhanga as a whānau centre is a most powerful one which acknowledges the supportive nature of the extended family as opposed to the fragmentation of the nuclear unit.

Kōhanga reo returns in many ways to traditional pedagogical principles related to the intergenerational transmission of knowledge. Children acquire knowledge, skills and expertise through being socialised in the whānau context and participating in whānau activities. In these contexts children are surrounded by whānau including other children, relatives and grandparents, who care for all the children (Ka’ai, 2004).

The third objective of Te Kōhanga Reo, Mana Motuhake (the spirit of Māori autonomy), relates to control over Māori resources. It has been described as a way to control educational content and context for Māori; and as a means of removing Pākehā veto rights over Māori institutions and life (Ka'ai, 1991).

To sum up: the philosophy of Kōhanga revolves around the desire of Māori people to “stand tall” and to overcome adversity by producing an era of bilingual and bicultural children who are capable of interacting in Māori and Pākehā worlds...For the child, the ability to speak Māori is seen as stimulating a pride of race, a growth of personality, character, morals and identity as well as an awareness of a positive self image. (Ka'ai, 1991, p. 43)

Kōhanga Reo has been successful in a number of ways. Firstly as a “politicising and conscientising agent”, secondly, as a “means of exercising organisational and administrative autonomy and self-determination”, and thirdly, as a “successful intervention strategy that has produced Māori graduates who are fluent in te reo Māori, and secure in their identity” (Pihama, Smith, Taki, & Lee, 2004, p. 35). Kaupapa Māori praxis, acting through Te Kōhanga Reo, has been the vehicle for reconnecting Māori with education, discourses and reclaiming the power to determine Māori avenues for educational success. Bishop and Berryman (2006) sum up the aims for:

The aspirations of Māori people, old and young for educational relationships and interactions that respected their aspirations for self determination; for them to be able to be themselves, to be

different, but part of the conversation that is learning and to participate in the benefits that education has to offer. (p. 270)

The establishment of Kura Kaupapa Māori (Primary), Wharekura (Secondary) and Whare Wananga (Tertiary) institutions has meant that Kōhanga Reo graduates can be guaranteed an ongoing educational environment grounded in Mana Motuhake & Te Tino Rangatiratanga principles.

#### **4.6.2 Kaupapa Māori theory and practice**

Ka'ai (2004) distinguishes four key components of Kaupapa Māori education that are different to mainstream education in Aotearoa, New Zealand. The first is 'kaupapa Māori ideology'. Ka'ai (2004) describes this component as:

a philosophical doctrine, incorporating the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of Māori society that have emanated from a Māori metaphysical base. It informs Māori about the way in which they best develop physically, spiritually, emotionally, socially and intellectually as a people. (p. 207)

Kaupapa Māori takes a holistic approach to teaching and learning that locates the learner within the context of Ranginui, the sky father, and Papa-tūā-nuku, the earth mother, their children and their descendents. Whakapapa situates the learner within this world. Learners can place themselves in the world and so are able to relate to any "aspect of life or non-life from the butterfly, to the mountains, to the rain, to the sea, to the pipi (shellfish), and in fact to all creatures and things in this world" (Ka'ai, 2004, p. 207).

The second component of Kaupapa Māori education is Te ara poutama. It refers to the poutama pattern in weaving, a stepped pattern of horizontal and vertical lines. The horizontal line of the poutama relates to the knowledge being transmitted, and the vertical line is the tikanga (culture) associated with that knowledge. All knowledge therefore has aspects of tikanga which must also be learnt (Ka'ai, 2004).

The third component of Kaupapa Māori education, Tuakiri tangata, relates to personality traits and their interconnectedness. "Tuakiri tangata refers to the Māori aspects of the total personality of the Māori" (Ka'ai, 2004, p. 208), which include traits such as: whatumanawa (emotions), hinengaro (cognition), pūmanawa (talents), ngākau (heart), wairua (spirit), mauri (life source), tinana (physical being), and auaha (creativity).

Te tātari i te kaupapa is the final component of Kaupapa Māori education. It refers to the analysis of the subject and exemplifies the interconnectedness of theory and practice; of praxis. This notion suggests that there is a range of opportunities within Māori culture for learners to demonstrate the acquisition of knowledge, that rigorous assessment practices be applied to the learning based upon cultural imperatives, and that when assessment opportunities occur there will be improvements on previous assessments. Ka'ai (2004) makes reference to Tāne-nui-a-rangi who climbed the heavens to attain essential knowledge for Māori:

This knowledge was brought back from the twelfth level of thought, Rangi-tūhāhā, in three separate kete (baskets), providing Māori people with the necessary knowledge and skills to survive. The 12 levels of thought begin at the simplest level and progress to the esoteric domain. Implicit is the notion of critical reflection and

the challenge of completing a variety of tasks throughout life to further develop and extend one's knowledge base, while still retaining traditional values associated with knowledge. (Ka'ai, 2004, p. 211)

#### **4.7 Implications For Early Childhood And This Thesis**

There are a number of implications for early childhood education and this thesis that arise from this review of the literature on te Akoranga/Māori education. The ultimate goal of any education system must be the best educational outcomes for its students and in Aotearoa/New Zealand that includes Māori students. It is unacceptable that Māori students continue to fail in our education system. While teachers want the best for their students, achieving this is a complex process. One of the reasons for this, according to Bevan-Brown (2003), is that teachers are unaware of the importance of culture in making meaning of learning and, therefore, do not know how to address these issues within their teaching practice. Consequently, they continue utilising teaching and assessment practices that do not respond to the cultural needs of Māori students (Mahuika, Berryman, & Bishop, 2011).

This is highlighted in the 2010 Education Review Office (ERO) report, *Success for Māori Children in Early Childhood Services*, which evaluated the provision of education and care for Māori children in 576 early childhood services. The report indicated that many early childhood services:

- stated that they "treated all children the same" and lacked strategies that focused upon Māori children as learners;
- included statements about values, beliefs and intentions in centre documentation that were not evident in practice;

- did not use effective processes to find out about the aspirations of parents and whānau of Māori children; and
- lacked adequate self-review processes to evaluate the effectiveness of their provision for Māori children. (Education Review Office, 2010, p. 1)

These issues are concerning when one considers that of the 38,580 Māori children enrolled in licensed early childhood services, the majority, some 76 percent, attend mainstream early childhood services (Education Review Office, 2010). It is clearly a case of rhetoric not being matched by practice, and without the appropriate practice the educational outcomes for Māori children will not change. More needs to be done if we are to provide early childhood education that ensures the full potential of Māori children can be realised and where we build a culture of success for all children.

Kaupapa Māori theory and practice provides a powerful vehicle to address the educational aspirations of Māori. As Mahuika & Bishop (2011) state, “what has been identified as being essential is the realisation that at an abstract metaphorical level Māori cultural knowledges offer a framework for realistic and workable options for dealing with Māori educational underachievement” (p. 4). It is about affirming and legitimating Māori ways of knowing within wider New Zealand educational contexts. This may involve:

- raising awareness and consciousness among teachers, teacher training organisations, and professional development providers of the discourses that have and continue to impact on Māori educational achievement;



- rejecting the deficit focus of previous educational initiatives and policies and emphasising Māori autonomy over resources, content and contexts of learning;
- recognising the validity of Māori language, culture and traditions, and providing strategies for nurturing and strengthening these in contemporary early childhood contexts;
- implementing Māori pedagogical principles; and
- recognising the power of Kaupapa Māori theory and practice to bring about positive change.

While Kaupapa Māori theory and practice have the potential to end existing educational inequities, Māori must also ensure that further inequities are not perpetuated in the guise of Kaupapa Māori. Another recent report, The Early Childhood Task Force report (2011), raised concerns related to the extremely high rate of ERO supplementary reviews in kōhanga reo. Between 2007 and 2010 over a third of all kōhanga reo received a supplementary review from the ERO auditors. The Taskforce report adds that while there are numerous reasons for these negative statistics, including lack of funding and limited access to appropriate professional development or resources, the situation is unacceptable and needs to be urgently addressed. The report states that “meaningful change is overdue and must be addressed”. It goes on to say that action is required for all children to “have access to quality early childhood education in the form that is most appropriate for them and their community. That is their right” (ECE Taskforce, 2011, essay 9).

Again this is a case of the rhetoric not being matched by the practice. While there is little doubt that most kaiako adhere to the kaupapa of kōhanga reo and the Kaupapa Māori principles that underpin it, more

needs to be done to bridge the gap between espoused theories and theories in practice. This includes:

- i. Critiquing and depathologising our minds of the hegemonic beliefs that lead us to expect and accept lower standards. Educational disadvantage and the associated assumptions of deficiency and pathology have resulted in Māori expecting less and accepting this as a norm. We must no longer normalise nor further perpetuate unacceptable standards of provision.
- ii. Taking responsibility for the problem. This entails kōhanga reo critically appraising pedagogies, programmes, curriculum, and the daily operation, in order to make appropriate changes.
- iii. Placing our children at the heart of kōhanga reo. Reclaiming Māori ideas of teaching and learning, and constructs of the Māori child (discussed in chapter six) and reframing these in our practice. Our children must come first.
- iv. Reclaiming Māori notions of knowing and being and developing ways to reframe them within contemporary contexts.
- v. Developing deeper understandings of the kaupapa of kōhanga reo and ways to reflect it in practice. Continuing to marry Kaupapa Māori theory with daily praxis. This requires critical reflection and transformative praxis.

#### **4.8 He Kupu Whakatepe/Conclusion**

This review of the literature has provided an overview of Māori early years education, from before colonisation through to today, and has discussed some of the factors that have in the past and continue today to impact upon contemporary educational policy and practice.

Before the arrival of Europeans Māori had highly developed, intergenerational teaching and learning systems in place, which were supported by sophisticated knowledge structures, educational practices and principles. Colonisation resulted in these systems being replaced by formal European schooling structures, policies and practices that aimed to interrupt and rectify perceived cultural deficits in Māori children.

The migration of Māori to urban environments led to an influx of Māori children into urban primary schools, emphasising cultural differences. Māori children were identified as both intellectually and linguistically deficient, lacking the basic experiences for school. Early childhood education was viewed as a means of remediation of the identified deficiencies. This remediation required the acquisition of the appropriate cultural capital for mainstream school, which involved disconnection from the cultural 'deficits' of the Māori home and culture, and adherence instead to the Eurocentric cultural values of the school and early childhood service.

This disconnect between home and school/early childhood service highlights how culture shapes the way we think and interpret information, and so impacts on teaching, learning and assessment. Interpretations of behaviors, information, and situations are made through our cultural lenses, which operate below the level of conscious awareness, resulting in a sense of normality or congruency. For Māori this disconnect has resulted in educational incongruencies, where there is a lack of fit or comfort with dominant educational norms and values. This has been a driver for change, and is evident in the thesis Case Studies. Kaupapa Māori praxis, therefore, continues to be a powerful vehicle for reconnecting Māori with education and reclaiming the power to determine Māori avenues for educational success. Key to educational

success for Māori children therefore is the recognition and acknowledgement that Māori children are culturally located. Effective education must embrace their Māoriness. Being Māori is therefore a crucial aspect of education. This is discussed in the next chapter, Ngā Tuakiri o Te Tangata/Māori Identities.

## CHAPTER FIVE

			He Whenu – Nga Tuakiri o te Tangata/Maori identities			

### HE WHENU

### NGĀ TUAKIRI O

### TANGATA - MĀORI IDENTITIES

**E kore au e ngaro, he kākano i ruiruia mai i Rangiatea**

**I will never be lost; the seed was sown in Rangiatea**

This whakataukī emphasises that the speaker has and knows his or her whakapapa (genealogical links) to Rangiatea (the Māori spiritual homeland), so is confident and secure, with a positive future. Not only does the whakataukī stress the importance of a secure Māori identity to the well-being of the individual it highlights an interpretive system that frames Māori world-views and ideas of identity. “All things within a Māori world-view are understood to have spiritual origins and direct connections to Ngā Atua from whence all things were created and have since been developed” (Berryman, 2008, p. 244).

Ngā Tuakiri o te Tangata or Māori Identities, is the second whenu. It examines the changing views of ‘being Māori’. It firstly explores historical Māori identities and what contributed to constructs of identity, including

whakapapa, wairuatanga, whānau/ hapū/ iwi, whenua and te reo. Next it discusses contemporary Māori identities, highlighting factors that have impacted and continue to impact upon Māori identities. My intent in this chapter is to demonstrate the complex and increasingly diverse nature of Māori identities in contemporary Aotearoa/New Zealand. This includes a discussion of the implications this diversity might have in terms of being and acting Māori within contemporary settings. Finally I look at the importance of reclaiming and reframing Māori identities within contemporary early childhood education contexts.

## **5.0 He Kupu Whakataki/ Introduction**

Gee (2000) asserts that fundamental to any interpretation of identity are interpretive systems. He states that:

One cannot have an identity of any sort without some interpretive system underwriting the recognition of that identity...The interpretive system may be people's historically and culturally different views of nature; it may be the norms, traditions, and rules of institutions; it may be the discourse and dialogue of others; or it may be the workings of affinity groups. What is important about identity is that almost any identity trait can be understood in terms of any of these different interpretive systems. (p. 108)

Māori identity can be viewed through a number of interpretive systems. These interpretive systems are not distinct or separate from each other, but rather are inter-related components of a dynamic weaving that encompasses Māori identities both historical and contemporary. The interpretive systems include: whakapapa, wairuatanga, whānau/hapū/iwi, whenua and te reo.

## 5.1 Ngā Tuakira Māori/ Historical Māori Identities

As discussed in the previous chapter, historical Māori world-views, ideas, knowledge and learning can be seen as originating in Māori perspectives of the universe and the creation of the universe. This is also the case for historical Māori identities. The origin of the Māori universe begins with Io taketake, the originator, and evolves through different phases of development. The following is an expression of these phases:

I te tīmatanga, kō te kore - In the beginning there was a void  
Kō te pō - Within the void was the night  
Nā te pō - From within the night, seeds were cultivated  
Ka puta kō te kukune - It was here that movement began – the stretching  
Kō te pupuke - There the shoots enlarged and swelled  
Kō te hihiri - Then there was pure energy  
Kō te mahara - Then there was the subconscious  
Kō te manako - Then the desire to know  
Ka puta i te whei ao - Movement from darkness to light, from conception to birth  
Ki te ao mārama - From the learning comes knowing  
Tihei Mauriora - I sneeze and there is life

(Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 48)

Rangi (sky father) and Papatūānuku (earth mother), the primal parents, were next in line followed by their children. There are variations in the accounts of the numbers of children born to Rangi and Papatūānuku. Te Rangi Hiroa (1987) states, for example, that there were 70 children. However, it is generally accepted that there were six main atua (guardians or gods) who received authority over certain domains of life. They include: Tūmatauenga (atua of war), Tangaroa (atua of the oceans),

Tawhirimatea (atua of the weather), Rongomātāne and Haumia tiketike (atua of food), and Tāne (atua of the forests). Māori trace their lineage to Tāne and therefore back to the creation of the universe (Reilly, 2004).

### 5.1.1 Whakapapa

“Māori cosmology is based upon a whakapapa of creation” (Cheung, 2008, p. 2). Whakapapa denotes the genealogical descent of Māori from the divine creation of the universe to the living world (Berryman, 2008). As Barlow (2005, p. 173) puts it, “Whakapapa is the genealogical descent of all living things from the gods to the present time; whakapapa is a basis for the organisation of knowledge in respect of the creation and development of all things”. Māori are descendents of the heavens and through whakapapa can trace lineage back to the very beginning of time and the creation of the universe (Barlow, 1996; Te Rito, 2007).

Whakapapa informs relationships and provides the foundation for inherent connectedness and interdependence to all things (Cheung, 2008). Whitt, Roberts, Norman and Grieves (2003, p. 5) add that the importance of whakapapa within Māori culture cannot be overestimated. It acts as a “fundamental form of knowing: it functions as an epistemological template”. Furthermore, the literal translation of whakapapa is to place in layers, so there are multiple layers and interpretations that form the basis of Māori values and beliefs (Cheung, 2008; Te Rito, 2007; Walker, 1993). Whakapapa therefore is fundamental to Māori understandings and is at the very core of what it means to be Māori (Barlow, 1991; Berryman, 2008; Cheung, 2008; Rangihau, 1977). It is “firmly embedded in the Māori psyche” (Te Rito, 2007, p. 4). “Traditional Māori conceive of personal identity in terms of whakapapa or genealogy – it is your whakapapa that makes you who you are, literally” (Patterson, 1992, p. 157). A. Durie (1997)



concurr, adding that reciting one's whakapapa is a way of shaping identity:

As whakapapa is told and retold, the interconnections between the living and the ancestors, the deities and the land become clear. From the personification of the pantheon down through the eponymous ancestors, the shaping of the individual and the collective Māori identity is set within the context of the personal, the collective and the total environment (p. 146)

Whakapapa provides a continuum of life from the spiritual world to the physical world, from the creation of the universe to people, past, present and future. Not only does whakapapa permit Māori to trace descent through past generations, it also allows movement and growth into the future. Identity, past, present and future, comes from whakapapa links – to the past through ancestors, to the present through whānau and to the future through children and grandchildren. Whakapapa is not only about personal identity but also connects to whānau, immediate family grouping, as well as hapū and iwi, who share a common genealogy. Through these connections whakapapa establishes personal, collective and whānau identities, positioning and connectedness (Berryman, 2008).

Not only does whakapapa connect one to people past, present and future, but it connects one with the land. Māori can trace genealogy back to Papatūānuku (the earth mother) therefore they not only live on the land but are part of the land (Ministry of Justice, 2001). Wolfgramm and Waetford (2009) explain further that “the dynamic and intimate interrelationships between the spiritual, social and natural worlds and the indeterminacy of evolutionary processes in a Māori worldview are

captured through creation stories which include layers of symbolism and metaphor” (p. 5).

From a Māori perspective people are not superior but related through whakapapa to all aspects of the environment, themselves imbued with spiritual elements. Māori are part of the environment, connected to everything in it; therefore it requires respect.

In Māori cosmology, the gods (ngā Atua) are the origin of species. For example, the offspring of Tāne, Tū, Tāwhiri, Tangaroa, Rōngo, Haumia (and some 70-odd others) eventually populated the universe with every diverse species known. Under this system, humans are related to both animate and inanimate objects, including animals, fish, plants and the physical environment (land, rocks, water, air and stars). Thus there is no separation between the physical and spiritual worlds; in the holistic Māori worldview they are continuous (Cheung, 2008, p. 3).

Spiritual connectedness and spirituality have always been inextricably linked to whakapapa and ‘being’ Māori (Broughton, 1993; Ihimaera, 2004; Moeke-Pikering, 1996; Tse, Lloyd, Petchkovsky & Manaia, 2005).

### **5.1.2 Wairuatanga**

The concept of wairua is derived from Māori cosmology. The term literally means two waters, the spiritual and the physical.

Wairuatanga may be understood as analogous to two streams merging as a flowing river, with associated ebbs, eddies and currents. Self, parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren, descendents, other whānau and groups, the past, present and

future, our relationships with events and the environment may be understood in terms of the flow of the wairua. (Love, 2004, p. 9)

While wairuatanga is an important element of Māori culture it is one of the most difficult to define. A Māori perspective of the world maintains that all things have a spiritual as well as a physical body, including the earth, birds and animals. Foster (2009) states that wairuatanga functions as a “medium in maintaining balance and establishing parallels between the physical and the metaphysical domains that deals with the spiritual potential of human beings” (p. 24). It is an expression of the relationship between the physical and the spiritual, and of the wholeness of life. In its broadest sense wairuatanga refers to the spiritual dimension, which is internalised in the person from conception, “the seed of life emanated from the supreme supernatural influence” (Metge, 1976, p. 15). Berryman (2008) explains that:

Wairuatanga may be described as the spiritual and physical warmth and energy radiating from people, places and objects. Wairuatanga denotes the spiritual life principles of both human and non-human entities and may be experienced as both a natural and an esoteric phenomenon. Some people are considered to emanate wairuatanga. They may be seen to have a unique personal identity involving both spiritual and physical warmth and energy. (p. 223)

Wairuatanga recognises that all aspects of the Māori world have an ever-present spiritual dimension, which pervades all Māori values. According to Nikora (2007), “wairua is not separable metaphysical stuff; it is soul permeating the world of both things and not-things”. She warns that “to

ignore wairuatanga is to reject the Māori sense of respect, wonder, awe, carefulness, and their application to everything in an orderly way” (p. 69).

The spirits of people come from the Rangi Tūhāhā, the twelve dimensions of enlightenment in the company of the gods. This is where the spirits exist until they are required for the physical life of the person and where the spirit returns to after physical death (Barlow, 1991). The physical and spiritual potential of the person are joined at conception, becoming an individual entity endowed with spiritual qualities.

While there are tribal variations and interpretations, there is general agreement that the spiritual and the secular are not closed off or separate from each other. The worlds are intimately connected with activities in the everyday material world coming under the influence and interpenetrated by spiritual powers from the higher world, the spiritual world (Marsden, 2003; Ministry of Justice, 2001; Reilly, 2004; Shirres, 1997). In this way people are inherently connected with the universe, with the world of spiritual powers, the world of the gods. In other words:

The cultural milieu (of Māori) is rooted both in the temporal world and the transcendent world, this brings a person into intimate relationship with the gods and his universe. (Marsden, 2003, p. 137)

It also means that those that have passed on, whilst existing within the spiritual realm, still remain in the physical, alongside the living as well as within the living. Ancestors who have passed on live with their descendents in the everyday world, and this is recognised in the way Māori conduct their lives (Ministry of Justice, 2001). Within this frame the spiritual is integrated into the secular, and spiritual matters are dealt with in the course of everyday matters (Butterworth, nd); Ministry of Justice,

2001; Patterson, 1992). Cody (2004) states that “Māori spirituality is that body of practice and belief that gives the spirit (wairua) to all things Māori. It includes prayer and spirit. It pervades all of Māori culture (Tikanga) and ways of life” (p. 21).

Spiritual beliefs are a central feature of a person’s overall wellbeing and identity. “[T]he spirits of the dead or living are accepted as real phenomena whereas life is seen as a transitory process moving from body-to-body and generation-to-generation. Time has no boundaries; it is both past and present” (Tse, Lloyd, Petchkovsky & Manaia, 2005, p. 183). The past, present and future are viewed as intertwined, and life as a continuous cosmic process. Patterson (1992) argues that from a western perspective the past is behind and one’s goals and aspirations relate to the future, which is ahead. From a Māori perspective the opposite is the case and the past is ahead not behind. It is therefore in the past that one finds one’s models, inspiration and guides.

... past is conceived of being in front of human consciousness, because only the present and the past are knowable. Muri, designating the future, also means ‘behind’ because the future cannot be seen. Thus an individual is conceptualised as travelling backwards in time to the future, with the present unfolding in front as a continuum into the past. (Walker, 1996, p. 14)

This conceptualisation of history, time, of the continuous cosmic movement does not leave the past behind, rather one carries one’s past into the future. The past therefore is central to and shapes both present and future identity. The strength of carrying one’s past into the future is that ancestors are ever present, and one’s place in the kin group is acknowledged and affirmed (Patterson, 1992).

### 5.1.3 Whānau, hapū, iwi

Māori society is traditionally organised and identity expressed in terms of kin-based descent groupings. Walker (1996) maintains that social kin-based connections, and belonging to the social unit, are central to the individual's sense of wellbeing. Identity formation and maintenance within these contexts was a fairly straightforward exercise, founded upon kinship, and living in a community.

There are three main kinship classifications in traditional Māori society. The first is whānau, the basic unit of Māori society. The second is hapū, the basic political unit within Māori society, consisting of groups of related whānau, and the last is iwi. Iwi is the largest unit in Māori society and could be recognised by its territorial boundaries. These social groupings are not completely discrete, with size and function varying in different locations (Barcham, 1998; Hohepa, 1978; Rangihau, 1977).

Whānau means 'to give birth' and is the basic family grouping of Māori society. It functions as the social and economic unit of day-to-day living and activities. Whānau are made up of relatives who are descended from a recent ancestor. The whānau consists of three or four generations of a family, traditionally living and working together. Whānau is often referred to as a pā harakeke (flax bush). The rito of the plant represents the child, while the outer leaves – the parents, extended whānau and grandparents – protect and nurture the inner shoot to allow it to grow and develop. This analogy emphasises common roots and the combined strength of the collective (Metge, 1995; Rokx, 1997; Royal-Tangaere, 1991).

Whanaungatanga relates to the close relationship developed and maintained between members of the whānau as a result of working

together. It connects the individual to kin groups, providing them with a sense of belonging and therefore strengthening each member of the kin group (Berryman, 2008; Mead, 2003; Pere, 1984). Whanaungatanga relates to the kinship ties that bind whānau and hapū together in a “unified network of relationships”. It is about establishing whānau connections and reinforcing the commitment, responsibilities and obligations that whānau members have to each other (Berryman, 2008, p. 223).

Whanaungatanga includes philosophies and practices that strengthen the physical and spiritual harmony and well-being of the group.

[It] deals with the practices that bond and strengthen the kinship ties of a whānau. The commitment of “aroha” is vital to whanaungatanga and the survival of what the group sees as important. Loyalty, obligation, commitment, an inbuilt support system made the whānau a strong stable unit, within the hapū, and consequently within the tribe. (Pere, 1994, p. 26)

The hapū is the basic socio-political unit within Māori society, consisting of a number of whānau. The term hapū also means pregnancy, and reflects the notion of being born from common ancestors, of being “born of the same womb”. ‘The term hapū emphasises the importance of being born into the group and also conveys the idea of growth, indicating that a hapū is capable of containing many whānau’ (Ministry of Justice, 2001, p. 32). Hapū is a dynamic social and political structure, marked by autonomy in the management of its affairs, and being both independent and inter-dependent on the complex web of kin networks for its operation. One of the main roles of the hapū is the defence and preservation of alliances with other hapū and the tribe.

Being born into the hapū stressed the blood ties that united the families for the purpose of co-operation in active operations and in defence...The hapū was responsible for its own defence and its viability was dependent on its capability of holding and defending its territory against others. (Ministry of Justice, 2001, pp. 33-34)

An iwi or tribe is made up of a number of related hapū. Tribes were related groups of people whose defining principle of identity and organisation was based on descent from a common ancestor. The concept of tribe was fundamental to defining who people were (Maaka & Fleras, 2005). The word iwi can be translated as 'bone'. It relates to the bones of ancestors which are sacred. Iwi refers to related hapū who could trace descent from a single ancestor or from their bones.

An important component of the metaphor of bone is that it provides strength. Iwikore, literally no bones, means feeble and without strength. Bones make a body strong and give form to it. Thus bones in the sense of whakapapa and in giving strength to anything is important in understanding the concept of iwi. The important aspect of the word iwi is its function as a metaphor of whanaungatanga and the strength that arises from that fact.

(Ministry of Justice, 2001, p. 34)

Iwi are the largest political and economic unit in Māori society. They are independent units that occupied tribal lands, and defended their lands and political integrity against others. "The basic role of the iwi was to protect, where necessary, the interests of individual members and constituent whānau and hapū and to maintain and enhance the mana of the collective" (Ministry of Justice, 2001, p. 35). Iwi could therefore be



identified by their territorial boundaries, which are of immense social, cultural and economic importance.

Tribal history is recounted through reciting prominent landmarks and the ancestors who lived there. Oral history therefore helped to cement occupancy of iwi land and iwi authority over it.

Whakapapa identifies who I am, where I am from and in doing so identifies a place that I can proudly call my tūrangawaewae. It is this whakapapa knowledge that gives an individual or collective a sense of purpose that... grounds us to Papatūānuku... my whakapapa and iwi affiliations are my biological and kinship credentials that form my Māori identity and by alluding to my tūrangawaewae I have established a connection to my wāhi tapu. (Graham, 2009, pp. 1-2)

Historically, Māori identities and groupings were not static, but rather were in a constant state of transformation, forming and reforming in response to events and relationships (Maaka, 2003). These changes included being absorbed into other groups through marriage, warfare, migration and settlement, or familial discord (Poata-Smith, 2004). As Poata-Smith comments, “the territorial, linguistic, cultural and political boundaries between neighbouring groups were frequently blurred” (p. 173).

#### **5.1.4 Whenua**

Land is fundamental to a Māori identity. The term for land is whenua, which is also used for the placenta. This is important because for Māori the placenta is buried in the land, in a place of significance, and at death the body is buried in the land, also in a place of significance, thus

completing the cycle and completing the symbolic and physical connection to the land. This also provides the basis for the word, *tangata whenua*, or people of the land (Williams, 2004).

Whakapapa identifies who one is, where one is from and thus identifies the place one belongs to (Graham, 2009). Whakapapa connects Māori to the land providing a sense of unity and harmony with the environment. It has been viewed as verification of the continued existence of Māori not only as a people, but also as *tangata whenua* (people of the land) in Aotearoa. It affirms kin ties to *iwi*, *hapū*, and *whānau* and to *tūrangawaewae* (tribal lands). It reifies connections to past generations and those generations to come, and asserts that Māori will continue to exist as long as the land continues to exist (Ministry of Justice, 2001; Williams, 2004).

It is to do with that sense of being essentially at one with nature and our environment, rather than at odds with it. As *tangata whenua* we are people of the land – who have grown out of the land, *Papatūānuku*, our Earth Mother. Having knowledge of *whakapapa* helps ground us to the earth. We have a sense of belonging here, a sense of purpose, a *raison d’être* which extends beyond the sense of merely existing on this planet. (Te Rito, 2007, p. 4)

Land is therefore not viewed as a commodity but is a source of identity, belonging and continuity that is shared with the dead, the living and the unborn.

The land is a source of identity for Māori. Being direct descendants of *Papatūānuku*, Māori see themselves as not only “of the land”,

but “as the land”. The living generations act as the guardians of the land, like their tīpuna had before them. Their uri benefit from that guardianship, because the land holds the link to their parents, grandparents and tīpuna, and the land is the link to future generations. Hence, the land was shared between the dead, the living and the unborn. (Ministry of Justice, 2001, p. 44)

From a Māori worldview the relationship, both physical and spiritual, to whenua cannot be overstated. The physical relationship is about geographical connectedness to important natural features such as a mountain, a river, or a place. The spiritual relationship is an ancestral connectedness through whakapapa back to their mountain and river and to Papatūānuku, the earth mother. Cheung (2008) makes the point that a person’s pepeha, or tribal saying/proverb, serves a number of purposes related to strengthening and reiterating identity:

The first purpose is to identify where a person is from geographically, connecting them physically to the land. Second, the identification of a person’s iwi and waka (ancestral canoe) connects them to their people. Third, the spiritual connection empowers by bringing the tapu and mana of a person’s mountain, river, tribe and ancestors. This is also reiterated in the name Māori call themselves: Ngā Tangata Whenua, the people of the land. (Cheung, 2008, p. 3)

Key factors that facilitate individual and collective identity not only include connections to tūrangawaewae or ancestral land, but also te reo Māori, the ancestral Māori language (A. Durie, 1997).

### 5.1.5 Te Reo

The Māori language is regarded as sacred as it was given to the ancestors by the gods and so it is a means to know the gods (Barlow, 1991). It has a life force, a living vitality and a spirit. Love (2004) adds that te reo Māori is an aspect of wairua which stems from and is integral to the spiritual realm.

Pere (1991, p. 9) states that “language is the life line and sustenance of a culture”. It is both a communication tool and a transmitter of values and beliefs. Language is also a means of transmitting customs, valued beliefs, knowledge and skills from one person the next, from one generation to the next. It reflects the cultural environment and ways of viewing the world. It is a source of power, a vehicle for expressing identity (Barlow, 1991). “Language is the window to a culture, and transmits the values and beliefs of its people” (Reedy, 2003, p. 70). Moorfield and Johnston (2004) explain that:

Tradition, values, and societal mores were transmitted orally from generation to generation...Waiata (song), especially oriori (an instructional chant), and korero pūrākau (myth, legend and historic tales) also played a large part in intergenerational transmission of knowledge and values, as did whakataukī (proverbs about social values), whakatauakī (proverbs that urge particular actions or behaviour), and pepeha (statements of tribal identity). (p. 36)

## 5.2 Ngā Tuakiri Hou/ Contemporary Māori Identities

Before the arrival of Europeans there was no concept of a Māori identity. Māori had no name for themselves except in terms of their tribal connections (Maaka & Fleras, 2005). The term Māori as an identifier of person developed in relation to the arrival of Pakeha and only came into

existence within that particular relationship. The word Māori merely meant normal or ordinary as opposed to the European settlers who were viewed as different (Durie, 1998; Webber, 2008). The aspects that marked group differentiation for Māori related to tribal affiliations and environmental features. Thus "...identity reflected historical, social and geographic characteristics. The original inhabitants of New Zealand did not refer to themselves as Māori; rather they were Rangitāne or Ngāti Apa or Tūhoe or any of the forty or more tribes" (Durie, 1998, p. 53).

### **5.2.1 Colonisation and urbanisation**

Over time, however, as a result of rapid colonisation, Māori soon became a minority population in New Zealand, accounting for only fourteen percent of the total population by 1874 (Durie, 1998). Consequently the term Māori as normal or usual began to lose its meaning (Webber, 2008), and another meaning began to emerge also based upon contrasts with the settler population. The stark cultural differences with the settlers served to emphasise the commonalities of Māori rather than the tribal differences and aided the creation of a generic Māori identity. However, as Durie (1998) explains, this identity was only really evident when interacting with settlers and that it was more obvious to the settlers, and in "truth largely determined by them rather than a true reflection of any sense of homogeneity on the part of Māori" (p. 53). He adds that it was part of the process of colonisation that framed Māori culture so that it could be easily understood by the colonisers.

In the process new myths were created and a new type of Māori identity was forged. Māori, however, were not entirely convinced that they were the different ones; they were perplexed enough trying to understand the peculiarities of western ways and did not

think it necessary to try and decipher their own “normal” culture.  
(Durie, 1998, p. 54)

Walker (1990) explains how the colonisation of New Zealand by the British was predicated upon the ranking of people into higher or lower forms of human existence and “assumptions of racial, religious, cultural and technological superiority” (p. 9). Māori were viewed as morally, socially, culturally and intellectually inferior to Europeans. The racial traits accorded to Māori included being depraved, sinful, idle, dirty, immoral and unintelligent – the antitheses of those traits accorded to Europeans who were viewed as righteous, upright, intellectual, honourable and liberal (Hokowhitu, 2001).

The Māori identity that began to emerge in the nineteenth century was therefore more a result of colonisation and the shifting population makeup, than from a developing sense of Māori nationalism. This identity was further shaped after World War Two with the alienation from tribal lands, because of government land purchasing policies including the Māori Land Court abolitions of individual title, and Crown land purchases and confiscations. It is difficult to gauge how much land was lost but over three million acres were lost through confiscations alone (Boyes, 2006). Alienation from land had a devastating effect on Māori identity, personal, social and spiritual. It severed whakapapa and tangata whenua connections to the land as Māori were forced from tribal lands. It severed the physical and spiritual bond with the land, and with past generations who had lived on the land. It alienated Māori from a fundamental source of identity, of ‘being Māori’. Not only did the loss of land have physical and spiritual ramifications but also economic consequences.

Associated with the loss of land, was the loss of the community's economic base, culminating in large numbers of Māori needing to move to urban environments to find employment. Over 80% of the Māori population moved from tribal areas to the cities and towns (Durie, 1998; Raerino, 2007). Walker (1989) argues that for 70% of urban Māori all ties to the land were lost completely. After the 1970s, few Māori were able to live in extended family environments, with the vast majority living in urban nuclear families – a family structure alien to most. Furthermore, living in urban communities meant that it was not possible to actively participate in and contribute to the day-to-day business of the kin group. Because of this, urban Māori were at risk of losing their cultural identity entirely (A. Durie, 1997).

Some non-Māori saw this as a positive change. Beaglehole (1968), for example, argued that Māori culture and its associated practices needed to change or disappear for good, stating, “aboriginal Māori culture has gone for good, with all its cruelty, its cannibalism, its warfare, its sorcery, its muru, its utu, its cosmogony, its arbitrary chiefly power, its slavery” (p. 352).

Gonzalez (2010, p. 38) argues that there is nothing fundamentally new about Māori relocating “outside of tribal territories and expanding their scales of interaction and their networks of affiliation ... Māori history is one that recognises migration and processes of cultural preservation and transformation”. However, due to the speed of urbanisation, there was little time for Māori to adapt to the new environments. Challenges faced by Māori adjusting to their new urban lifestyles and absence of tribal influences in their daily lives, prompted many Māori to relegate their tribal identity as something private, from the past (Maaka & Fleras, 2005). This dislocation from tribal influences and connectedness resulted in a

new cultural identity being developed, one based simply on being Māori rather than being tribal. “The uncoupling of the tribe as identity and as organising paradigm has been a pivotal development in Māori identity. Tribes transferred from being synonymous with Māori society to but one component of being Māori” (Maaka & Fleras, 2005, p. 72). A. Durie (1997) adds that without the presence and influence of elders to support and advise their whānau, or parents who work to retain their traditional community links, “the younger generation were being deprived of the enriching experience for their self-perception and esteem as Māori” (p. 151).

Māori identity therefore underwent major changes as a result of colonisation and urbanisation, with significant numbers of Māori not being able to fully connect to their tribal roots, nor able to integrate into the mainstream of wider Pakeha-led society (Durie, 1998; Maaka & Fleras, 2005; Raerino, 2007). As McIntosh (2005) describes it:

In Māori society, social standing was and is determined by having both a place in a geographical sense and ties through blood and marriage to achieve a sense of self and community. The dominant paradigm of Māori society argues that that whakapapa (genealogical lines) established place and home. In this sense, urban defranchised Māori who have no knowledge of their whakapapa may find themselves culturally homeless, a potent element of a sensed alienation from both Māori and non-Māori society. For many, homelessness begins as a symbolic state and transforms into an actual state. (p. 42)

Alienation from te reo Māori added to this sense of homelessness. In 1900 the Māori language was banned in schools, which led to generations of



Māori children being deprived of a fundamental aspect of their identity. The decline in speakers of te reo was marked, and by the 1970s there was a danger that the language would become extinct. Ka'ai (2004) maintains that:

[A]lthough te reo continued to remain an emotive force in the lives of many Māori, and even though it served as an important indicator of Māoriness, the viability of te reo Māori as a language of daily communication was in serious doubt". (pp. 204 -205)

Maaka and Fleras (2005) emphasise how urbanisation, coupled with exposure to English-language media, has generated identity problems for Māori youth, who are "caught between cultures - desiring the two, comfortable with neither and rejected by both" (p. 70). This has led to many Māori living at the margins of both Māori and mainstream societies. McIntosh (2005) adds that for many, exclusion or marginality is the norm, with disadvantage experienced from birth. This is reflected in negative Māori educational, health, employment and justice statistics.

Māori are over-represented in the justice system both as offenders and as victims. Māori are four times more likely to be apprehended for violent crime than non-Māori – which, as McIntosh (2005) notes, is concerning not only because of the impact on victims but also because of the high profile these offences receive in the media, which in turn contributes to a Māori identity of criminality.

For too many people, unemployment, illness, psychiatric conditions, poverty and prison life are marks of being Māori...Living with marginal status distorts one's personal perception of identity and reinforces negative outsider

perceptions...The weakness of a forced identity is for the negative perceptions to become internalised and normalised. (McIntosh, 2005, p. 49)

Berryman (2008) claims that a “major contributor to this problem is that the years of colonisation have resulted in the coloniser, and not Māori, being largely responsible for defining what it is to be Māori” (p. 52). ‘Forced’ identities are ones that are formed under conditions of deprivation and have been distorted by the realities of living with a marginal status. They are primarily defined by outsider groups and forced upon others who have little control over the process. The power to describe and define normality has remained with the coloniser as has the ability to marginalise and pathologise others. The loss of intellectual and cultural knowledges, therefore, has been compounded by Māori being “constantly fed messages about their worthlessness, laziness, dependence and lack of 'higher' order human qualities” (L. Smith, 1999a, p. 4).

### **5.2.2 Māori renaissance**

The validity of a universal Māori identity began to be questioned when the realities of urbanisation and de-tribalisation became evident in the last third of the twentieth century (Durie, 1998). Even with huge social and economic upheavals Māori did not completely discard being Māori and being tribal. In some cases the result was a strengthened resolve and commitment to the tribal identity. This was emphasised by John Rangihau (1977), who said:

Although these feelings are Māori, for me they are my Tūhoetanga rather than my Māoritanga. My being Māori is absolutely dependent on my history as a Tūhoe person as against being a Māori person... Each tribe has its own history. And it's not a history that can be

shared among others. How can I share with the history of Ngāti Porou, of Te Arawa, of Waikato? Because I am not of those people. I am a Tūhoe person and all I can share in is Tūhoe history. (p. 174)

For some, the absence of traditional tribal connections led to them creating their own urban social networks and new forms of social institutions, including pan-tribal voluntary associations, church groups, clubs, youth groups and urban marae. These institutions provided a connection between the urban context in which they lived and their attachments from the past. As Barcham (1998) explains, “while urban Māori have lost some of the symbols used in the rural environment to demarcate their ethnic and cultural identity, they have adapted other symbols to help make coherent their life in the modern urban environment” (p. 305).

In the 1970s and 1980s, influenced by the politics of indigeneity and encouraged by government policy on iwi (tribal) management, there was a reaffirmation of tribal identity by many Māori in preference to a generic Māori identity. Māori had argued that resources allocated to them by government should be distributed through Māori/iwi institutions because they were better positioned to effectively distribute funding and resources. In order for this to happen, iwi were required to meet the government’s stringent criteria for funding, in which a more centralised iwi structure was required. This legitimised traditional iwi and iwi structure, and resulted in sectors of Māori society becoming increasingly reconnected with iwi (Barcham, 1998). Durie (1998, p. 55) comments that there was a decade of iwi development with “a resurgence of tribal pride accompanied by new opportunities for second and third generations of urban migrants to learn tribal history, language and song”.

The effect of this re-tribalisation and resurgence of tribal pride was a substantial growth in the numbers of Māori who claimed affiliation to tribal groups. Despite this significant change the 1991 census indicated that 29% of all Māori did not identify with their tribe, and of those that did, many had little or no contact with their tribe or tribal life (Durie, 1998). Barcham (1998) adds that what occurred was a polarisation of Māori society, with those who viewed iwi as the only authentic institutional foundation for identity on one side, and those that argue iwi should encompass multiple realities and modern contexts on the other.

There are two seemingly opposed dynamics of identity with regards to organisation and entitlement. To one side is a largely territorial and descent based identity rooted in tribal affiliation; while to the other is a more inclusive and increasingly de-tribalised identity with its embrace of Māori ethnicity and kinship rather than traditional tribal structures. (Maaka & Flera, 2005, p. 66)

What arose from the processes developed after the passing of the Treaty of Waitangi Amendment Act in 1985 was that only those iwi existing in 1840 at the time of signing of the Treaty of Waitangi were recognized as Treaty partners, able to negotiate with the Crown and claim Government funding. The impact of this was the freezing of iwi as a social structure as they were at 1840, which excluded other more modern forms of Māori social structures. Barcham (1998) states that the indigenous elites also contributed to the freezing of Māori culture, in an attempt to stop further assimilation and cultural loss from colonisation. While traditional culture had previously allowed for evolution and change, the freezing of culture meant that these dynamic features were lost. "Whereas Māori society had previously been inclusive, a shift occurred in which that which was not 'truly' Māori was excluded" (p. 306).

This freezing of culture, combined with the increased centralisation of power of Iwi, are at the base of many of the arguments raised by urban Māori, and the organisations that represent them. The problem we are confronted with is an inability to deal with the inevitable evolution of Māori society. People are afraid to confront the issue, as it appears to challenge the fundamental structure of traditional life, and hence the perceived core of Māori identity. (Barcham, 1998, pp. 306-307)

McIntosh (2005) adds that the freezing of culture has a tendency to “glorify or romanticise” traditional culture and knowledge which can result in an “unanalytical response that tries to locate the individual in a space and time that may be fictitious and unnecessarily rigid” (p. 42). She further recognises the inclusionary features of traditional iwi-based identities in that they allow Māori to find a place for themselves and provide criteria from which to prove one’s Māoriness. Meeting these criteria of Māoriness is not always possible for a significant number of Māori, who struggle to identify or have lost their tribal roots. A further marker of Māoriness or of being an authentic Māori is one’s ability to converse in te reo. McIntosh posits that an inability to converse in te reo not only excludes participation in many Māori settings, but also engenders a sense of shame in people. “The sense of shame experienced by those who are non-speakers is very real” (2005, p. 45).

While not disputing the idea to be Māori means that one would recognise or acknowledge the significance of certain things (for example, whakapapa, iwi, hapū, te reo, kawa and tikanga), identifying as Māori does not mean that one is absorbed into an undifferentiated ethnic mass... To be Māori is to be part of a

heterogeneous identity, one that is enduring but ever in a state of flux. (McIntosh, 2001, pp. 142-143)

Berryman (2008) concurs, adding that “growing up Māori in today’s world means that Māori may have both a traditional and contemporary face”. Not knowing one’s whakapapa or being a speaker of the Māori language, which is the situation of many Māori, does not indicate a lack of desire or rejection of the language and culture.

Durie (1998, p. 58) identifies a number of cultural identity profiles for Māori. The first profile is that of a secure identity, where individuals self-identify as Māori and are able to draw upon aspects of the Māori world such as language, culture and people. The next identity profile is a positive identity, where the individual has less access to the Māori world, culture and language, but has a strong sense of being Māori. Notional identity, the next identity profile, is where the individual sees themselves as Māori, but does not access the Māori world. The final identity profile is the compromised identity where individuals do not describe themselves as Māori whether or not they access the Māori world.

Colonisation, assimilation, land loss, language loss and urbanisation have all worked to transform concepts of Māori identity. This has created a challenge for Māori, about how to maintain a cultural identity within a constantly changing contemporary environment. Māori identity is marked by multiple sites of belonging and identity. Identifying as Māori for many is related to choice, rather than traditional customs, laws and structures. It must be recognised that some Māori choose not to identify as Māori due to negative perceptions associated with being Māori, however the majority of Māori still choose a Māori identity. Put succinctly, “a Māori is a Māori until they reject being Māori or Māori things” (Raerino, 2007, p. 30).

McIntosh (2005) adds another perspective of 'being Māori' when she states, "I maintain that Māori, as a people, have never stopped being Māori. The point rather is that what counts as being Māori has always been problematic" (p. 43).

### **5.2.3 Being Māori differently**

Being Māori today therefore involves dealing with the "primordial/situational dichotomy of ethnicity" (S. May, 2003, p. 107). A primordialist position views ethnicity as inherited, fixed categories of identity, based upon biological kin groups and evolutionary beliefs. This position has been criticised because of its tendency towards determinism, in which individual and group behaviours determine ethnicity, and essentialism, which sees ethnic groups as homogeneous, fixed and rigidly separate from each other. A further issue is that the primordialist position does not account for the ongoing process of cultural change and the role of individual choice. The situational perspective of ethnicity, alternatively, views ethnicity as characterised by sociohistorical relationship with others, and relates to maintaining ethnic boundaries. This perspective of ethnicity can result in a type of cultural and linguistic instrumentalism, with identity being shaped on the basis of relative power. The tensions between these two positions are experienced as conflicting aspects of collective identity and self identity (Stewart, 2007).

Contemporary Māori identity is one of both unity and diversity: on some levels Māori are unified; on others divided by their distinctiveness (Maaka & Flera, 2005). Māori are not a homogeneous group and there is no one single Māori cultural stereotype. Being Māori has different meanings for different groups and "Māori are as diverse as any other people – not only in socio-economic terms but also in fundamental attitudes to identity" (Durie, 1998, p. 59).

Māori live in and between two worlds (at least) – Te Ao Māori, the Māori world, and the world at large. Some choose to situate themselves differently in either world, and some give up trying to live in either world and create their own (e.g., gangs). They are nevertheless, by virtue of descent, Māori. (Nikora, 2007, p. 104)

A further complexity is that living in the modern world requires that Māori develop the ability to operate successfully across two separate cultures, the Pakeha and the Māori, to become effectively bicultural (A. Durie, 1997). While this does not necessarily result in cultural schizophrenia, it does require extra fortitude in the development of strong personal and social identity (A. Durie, 1997, p. 156). Māori are required to negotiate radically different cultural terrains of assumptions, behaviours, values and beliefs about how the world is constituted, and ways of acting and being within the world. As explained some years ago by Salmond (1975):

In European situations, most Māori people follow a dominantly European conception of reality, one they have learned at school and in church. The dead go to heaven, buildings are inanimate, New Zealand is divided into counties and governed by Parliament, and its history traces back to Britain. In Māori situations, however, ...the dead go to 'Te Po' or Underworld to join their ancestors, the meeting-house is addressed as a person, New Zealand becomes Aotearoa, divided into tribal districts, and its history traces back to Hawaiiki. (p. 211)

Within modern urban settings active participation and contribution to the day-to-day operation of the kin group is not possible. "Being able to live



one's own culture is a challenge when all those around are living another's" (Berryman, 2008, p. 52). The focus has therefore of necessity changed to knowledge about the importance of whakapapa, whānau, hapū, and iwi membership (A. Durie, 1997). As A. Durie comments:

Identity formation for Māori now draws from a multiplicity of sources... However, any person wishing to identify themselves through their Māori ancestry is surely Māori. How many other elements from Te Ao Māori a person draws on to add to that single critical factor, can only make the identification stronger. (A. Durie, 1997, p. 160)

Identity formation for many urban Māori is now conceived in a symbolic as well as a physical way. For Māori who have been alienated from tribal and cultural roots, gaining knowledge of whakapapa and reclaiming one's tribal identity offers freedom to choose and develop identity on an intellectual, political and spiritual level. This supports the development and retention of a sense of connectedness to people, place and the wider physical and spiritual worlds, no matter where the individual resides (A. Durie, 1997; Raerino, 2007).

The challenge therefore is to construct an "inclusive supra-Māori identity" that does not exclude either tribal identities or pan-tribal Māori identities, but simultaneously recognises and accommodates the multiple realities that exist within modern settings (Maaka & Flera, 2005, p. 66). As Blank (1998) claims:

My whakapapa means that I am Māori and from there I determine what it means for me. It is an intellectual and political exercise, and I am informed by values and beliefs that circulate outside Te Ao

Māori as well as within it. I feel powerful and free because my definitions are not finite. (p. 225)

#### **5.2.4 Being Māori and spirituality**

Claiming and reclaiming our identity, in a contemporary world, according to our own beliefs and values, is a process of ongoing identity development that many have described as a spiritual experience or a spiritual journey:

Many people, especially those who have been marginalised because of their culture, race gender, class or sexual orientation, experience learning their own history, their own cultural stories, and their move towards new action at the same time that they engage with their own individual stories of spirituality. (Tisdell, 2001, p. 142)

Reclaiming one's identity, or becoming the person one has always been, not only takes time but is often a process of searching, learning and unlearning (Parker, 2000). Reclaiming one's identity is a process of personal and cultural transformation that requires the unmasking of identities that are not one's own. Unmasking identities inherited as a legacy of domination and oppression such as slavery and colonisation are part of this process. These identities include negative attitudes to self which are oppressive and internalised. They also involve mostly unconscious beliefs about the superiority of the dominant culture and inferiority of one's own. Unlearning what has been unconsciously internalised is an important part of the process of developing a positive cultural identity.

Part of the process is learning their own history from the perspective of members of their own culture, reclaiming what has

been lost or unknown to them, and reframing what has often been cast subconsciously as negative in a more positive way. (Tisdell, 2001, p. 147)

Abalos (1998) identifies four interconnected faces that must be reclaimed in order to develop a positive cultural identity: personal, political, historical and sacred. As individuals start to explore their own stories they reclaim their personal face. They are also likely to “engage their historical face, learning some of their cultural history from members of their own culture, as opposed to being skimmed over or never mentioned in history books in school”. Furthermore because of the new understandings that come from exploring their personal and cultural history individuals often are moved to take action and engage their political face (Tisdell, 2001, p. 141).

This ancestral connection, rooted in one’s own history and culture, may be significant for everyone. But it seems to have particularly strong significance to people of color who have gone on the spiritual and cultural journey of reclaiming their history and cultural journey. (Tisdell, 2009, p. 150)

Learning about one’s personal, political, historical and sacred faces on a cognitive level, however, is sometimes not sufficient to reclaim one’s identity (Tisdell, 2009). A deeper exploration of the connection of these faces to the spirituality of ancestors may be required in the development of a positive cultural identity. Connecting with these spiritual practices within traditional contexts is a means of culturally grounding oneself and of reclaiming cultural identity. As Tisdall (2009, p. 152) comments, “being a tool for transformation requires that they connect with the history,

culture, and spirituality of their ancestors in order to continue their own transformative work on themselves”.

In connecting with the spiritual practices and contexts of the past one must be careful of what Fitzsimons & Smith (2000) call “naive nativism or romantic notions of the traditional” (p. 39). They argue that rather than reverting to an idealised and romanticised past, what is required is a re-theorising of current cultural and structural conditions.

Kaupapa Māori calls for a relational identity through an interpretation of the interaction of kinship and genealogy and current day events, but not a de-contextualised retreat to a romantic past. The past is instrumental in developing an equitable present and future. (Fitzsimons & Smith, 2000, p. 39)

As discussed in Chapter Three, Kaupapa Māori is ‘the philosophy and practice of being Māori’ (G, Smith, 1992, p. 1). Kaupapa Māori theory “suggests that reconnection with one’s own heritage enables greater opportunity and ability to reclaim the power to define oneself and, in so doing, defines solutions that will be more effective for Māori, now and in the future” (Berryman, 2008, p. 28).

### **5.3 Implications For Early Childhood And This Thesis**

Learning and identity are inherently linked. “Learning implies becoming a different person (and) involves the construction of identity” (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p.53). Geijsel and Meijers (2005) add that identity can be viewed as “the ever-changing configuration of interpretations that individuals attach to themselves, as related to the activities they participate in”. In other words, identity is constructed through the use of “culturally available building materials” (p. 423). Early childhood teachers

therefore have a responsibility to ensure that Māori children have access to the building materials, and learning activities that support pride in and connectedness with 'being Māori'.

The previous sections in this chapter have illustrated that identity formation is an extremely complex, ongoing, culturally located process. It begins in early childhood (Harris, Blue, & Griffith, 1995), as children actively construct their identities in relationship to their growing understandings of their cultural heritage. Some cultural identities are viewed as less academic than others by adults and children (Siraj-Blatchford, 2010). This is still the case for Māori identities within some mainstream education settings, including early childhood. It is critical that Māori children are not exposed to these 'forced' identities of the past that distort Māori realities and allow negative perceptions to become internalised. Kaupapa Māori theory provides a vehicle from which we can critically reflect on our assumptions and stereotypes related to forced Māori identities and ensure they are not normalised and further perpetuated in early childhood.

Associated with the reclamation of 'being Māori' within early childhood services is the reclamation and reconciliation of the spiritual connectedness of the person through whakapapa. The continuum of life from the spiritual world to physical world is emphasised, connecting the child not only with the spiritual world, but with the environment. Connecting to the spiritual realm is not simply a matter of performing a karakia (prayer) before eating, or singing a hymn at mat time, rather it is enacted through establishing an environment where 'being Māori' is acknowledged, respected, and valued.

Any understanding of identity requires an understanding of the relevant interpretive systems. Although it may not be possible to ‘see through the eyes’ or ‘from the heart’ of another, it is possible to develop understandings about peoples’ ways of knowing and being. This is important for early childhood teachers, as deeper understandings of Māori ways of knowing will support the Māori child’s positive sense of identity, of being Māori. As Durie (2003) argues:

[T]he essential difference [between Māori and other New Zealanders] is that Māori live at the interface between te ao Māori (the Māori world) and the wider global society (te ao whānui). This does not mean socio-economic factors are unimportant but it does imply that of the many determinants of educational success, the factor that is uniquely relevant to Māori is the way in which Māori world views and the world views of wider society impact on each other... As a consequence, educational policy, or teaching practice, or *assessment of students*, or key performance indicators for staff must be able to demonstrate that the reality of the wider educational system is able to match the reality in which children and students live. (pp. 5–6; *my emphasis*)

#### **5.4 He Kupu Whakatepe/Conclusion**

This review of the literature has clearly demonstrated the complex and increasingly diverse nature of ‘being Māori’ in contemporary Aotearoa/New Zealand, and the importance of reclaiming and reframing Māori identities within contemporary early childhood contexts. Māori identities encompass both historical and contemporary identity elements. Historical Māori elements of identity are derived from Māori perceptions of the creation of the universe and whakapapa relationships to the universe and everything in it. Whakapapa is a key element of Māori

interpretive systems. Whakapapa provides a continuum of life from the creation of the universe to people, past, present and future, and from the spiritual to the physical worlds. Wairuatanga, another important element of Māori interpretive systems, relates to the coherence between the spiritual and the physical worlds and recognises that spiritual dimensions pervade all aspects of Māori values and culture including perspectives of identity and wellbeing. Further elements of a Māori interpretive system are the social and kin-based connections, of whānau, hapū and iwi. Whakapapa and iwi/hapū /whānau affiliations provide biological and kinship bonds that inform Māori identity and link to the land – another critical element of Māori identity.

Colonisation, assimilation, land loss, language loss and urbanisation have all worked to transform concepts of Māori identity. Many Māori have been unable to fully connect to either their tribal roots, or the mainstream of wider Pakeha-led society. This has resulted in the development of ‘forced’ identities, or identities formed under conditions of deprivation and distorted by the realities of living with a marginal status. The challenge for Māori, therefore, is how to develop a positive Māori identity within constantly changing, Eurocentric, contemporary environments. One way is by reclaiming historical identities through reconnecting with historical identity elements, such as whakapapa, wairuatanga, whānau/hapū /iwi, whenua, and te reo and reframing these elements in the contemporary world.

Kaupapa Māori provides a vehicle for this to happen. Kaupapa Māori has been described as ‘the philosophy and practice of being Māori’. Furthermore, reconnecting with one’s heritage provides the opportunity to reclaim the power to define oneself, one’s identity as Māori. This reclamation of oneself as being Māori’ is associated with the reclamation

and reconciliation of the connectedness of the person to the spiritual and physical worlds, and with the spiritual practices within traditional Māori contexts. Furthermore, learning about and reconnecting with one's historical and spiritual self is, in itself, a spiritual experience or journey. Spiritual connectedness is therefore not only a fundamental aspect of a Māori identity, in terms of whakapapa, wairuatanga, whānau/hapū/iwi, whenua and te reo, but it is also basic to the process of reconnecting, reclaiming and learning. Identity, spirituality and learning are inextricably linked and this has important implications for early childhood education and assessment.

Another critical aspect of reclaiming oneself as Māori relates to reconciling and recentering the spiritual dimensions within the person. These dimensions are fundamental to the overall wellbeing of the person and therefore impact upon the child. In the next chapter, *Te Āhua o Te Mōkōpuna/ Constructions of the Child*, I explore constructs of the Māori child; what and who they bring to the early childhood service and the implications for early childhood education and assessment.



## CHAPTER SIX

				He Whenu- Te Ahua o te		
				Tamaiti		

### HE WHENU

## TE ĀHUA O TE MOKOPUNA - THE IMAGE OF THE CHILD

**Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi engari he toa takitini**

**I come not with my own strengths but bring with me the gifts,  
talents and strengths of my family, tribe and ancestors**

This whakataukī underpins traditional Māori constructs of the child. The child is perceived both in terms of ‘he taura here tangata’ ‘the binding rope that ties people together over time’ and ‘te kāwai tangata’, the ‘genealogical link’ that enhances family relationships (Metge, 1995; Reedy, 1991; 2003). The child is viewed as immensely powerful, rich and complete; an important living connection to the family past, present and future; a living embodiment of ancestors; and a link in descent lines stretching from the beginning of time into the future (Metge, 1995; Reedy, 1991; 2003). The child is extremely rich, inherently competent, capable and gifted no matter what age or ability. These perceptions are critical to Māori constructs of the child and are therefore are fundamental to

understandings of Kaupapa Māori teaching, learning and assessment and early childhood practice.

Te Āhua o Te Mokopuna, is the third whenu. It explores aspects of traditional Māori perspectives of the child, highlighting the Māori child's inherent connectedness to the past, present and future. It then discusses the impact of colonisation upon that image of the Māori child and some of the lasting effects. Finally it argues for the reclamation of historical constructs of the Māori child in order for them to achieve their potential.

## **6.0 He Kupu Whakataki/Introduction**

“Māori children were perceived as a problem when they started school and as educational failures when they left” (May, 2005, p. 5). The previous two chapters, Te Akoranga/ Māori Education and Ngā Tuakiri o Te Tangata/ Māori Identities provide a foundation for this chapter on the image of the young Māori child. Chapter Four, Māori Education, highlighted the ways that young Māori children were positioned by Western schooling as both intellectually and linguistically deficient, and lacking the basic experiences for school. Urbanisation brought this positioning to the fore. The ‘Māori problem’, which had earlier been located in rural Native Schools, became visible in urban schools, and this raised concerns about societal disorder (May, 2009). Early childhood education was viewed as a means to address this potential disorder by remediating the child's deficiency, overcoming the perceived cultural inadequacies and providing a means for the child to acquire the appropriate cultural capital for school. A number of early childhood initiatives were instigated to deal with the educational disadvantage that resulted from culturally and linguistically deprived home environments, including playcentres and preschool groups. Initially these groups proved popular with Māori, but by the 1970's very few Māori groups survived,

due mainly to a lack of support and funding. Between 1974 and 1976 a preschool experiment was instigated at the University of Waikato Centre for Māori Studies, to provide a programme for Māori children aimed at appropriate preparation for school. The programme, named Te Kōhanga, focused on 'accelerated development' and a 'language rich' programme (May 2009). The experiment was not repeated, although a few other preschool initiatives were established during the 1960s and 1970s. At this time urbanisation and cultural assimilation culminated in a significant downturn in the use of the Māori language. Younger Māori had never learnt the language and many elders did not use it. Te Kōhanga Reo (discussed in Chapter Four) can be seen as a rejection of the deficit focus present in previous educational initiatives and policies. It was in effect a reclamation movement, reclaiming not only Māori autonomy and rights over Māori resources, Māori education and the values, principles and pedagogies that underpinned it, and the Māori language – but also 'being Māori' and rights to define what 'being Māori' means in contemporary settings

Māori identities or ideas about 'being Māori' (discussed in Chapter Five) are both complex and increasingly diverse. Fundamental to the construction of Māori identities is the interweaving of both historical and contemporary identity interpretive systems. Reclaiming historical interpretive systems is critical to images of the young Māori child. Reclaiming and reconciling the connectedness of the person to the spiritual and physical worlds requires recognition of the elements that shape the systems, including whakapapa, wairuatanga, whānau/hapū /iwi, whenua, and te reo. This reclamation requires acknowledgement, not only of their identity as Māori (as discussed in the previous chapter), but also requires recognition and regard for their spiritual and physical being or essence.

## 6.1 Te Āhua O Te Mokopuna Māori /Māori Constructs of The Child

Mokopuna and tamariki are Māori terms used for grandchildren and children. Moko is a traditional Māori tattoo. Moko are visual representations of the flow of the wairua into the temporal realm, as represented in the physical body. Moko are carved into the face and other body parts of both men and women. Moko are unique to their owner, incorporating symbolic illustrations of their genealogy and identity.

One's moko was one's sign; to see the sign was to know the person. A puna ...is a spring of water. Thus the two concepts...combine as the representation of... the ongoing spring of the people. They are surface representations of the spring that originates within Ranginui and Papatūānuku and flows through life until it reaches and becomes one with the sea. Mokopuna are the temporal signs or manifestations of the tūpuna. (Love, 2004, p. 50)

Pere (1991) explains the term tamariki as "Tama is derived from Tama-tera the central sun, the divine spark; ariki refers to senior most status, and riki on its own can mean smaller version. Tamariki is the Māori word for children" (p. 4).

Tamariki/Mokopuna were seen as the receptacle of the combined understandings, abilities, and strengths of their ancestors: taonga, precious treasures to be held in trust for future generations. The child was perceived as unique. S/he was considered to be the greatest resource of the whānau, hapū and iwi. It was therefore essential that the young should learn the required skills, attitudes to work, moral codes, and their roles and expectations; all of which were strengthened as the child grew.

Traditionally it was important to Māori that children assert both themselves and the mana of the whānau, hapū, and iwi, and care was taken to ensure that children's spirits were never broken (Hemara, 2000). Morehu (2009) emphasises "Māori values of freedom and high spiritedness in child-rearing, nurtured curiosity, persistence and endurance that led to children growing up and being prepared to stand up and fight for the mana of their people" (p. 2). Pere (1991; 2008) adds that in order to develop and nurture the child's spiritedness, punishment and chastisement of children was not condoned. This is confirmed by Papakura (1986, p. 145) who states that "The Māori never beat their children, but were always kind to them, and seemed to strengthen the bonds of affection which remains among Māori throughout life".

Many early European commentators were surprised with the roles that fathers, both commoner and chiefly, played in the care of their children (Ralston, 1993). Hemara (2000) quotes Ihaia Hutana who wrote in *Te Puke o Hikurangi* (an early Māori newspaper) that "The salvation of the men of old was the attention they paid to raising children, for they knew well that safety lay in numbers and that rank could only be sustained by tribal strength" (Hemara, 2000, p. 11).

Mokopuna had a very special relationship with tīpuna in that grandparents were living links with history. Mokopuna were the hope for the future, the continuation of whakapapa lines and the strengthening of the whānau, hapū and iwi. "The tīpuna linked up with mokopuna with the past and the mokopuna link up with the tīpuna with the present and the future" (Pere, 1988, p. 8). The Māori child was viewed as being born with three ira (essences) which were linked to whakapapa: (1) te Ira Tangata or the essence of or links to both sets of parents; (2) te Ira Wairua or the essence of and links to ancestors; and (3) te Ira Atua or the essence

of and links to the gods. The child's ancestors were also a spiritual power that impacted upon the child. Ancestors who had passed on were always present in the environment, spiritual forces that needed to be recognised and acknowledged (Reedy, 1979; 2003). Ancestors provided the child with connectedness and spiritual protection.

### **6.1.1 Traits of the Māori child**

As Patterson (1992) states, "In Māori society children were under the spiritual protection of the gods therefore treated with the utmost respect, respect due any taonga, with the respect due the gods themselves" (p. 97). As discussed in the previous chapter, whakapapa connected the Māori child through their parents to generations of ancestors, and to the spirit world of the gods. From these ancestors the child inherited spiritual traits fundamental to their wellbeing, spiritual, psychological, and social (Mead, 2003). Shirres (1997, p. 28) adds that "It is from the spiritual powers that we receive our worth as human beings, our intrinsic tapu, and it is from them we receive our power; our mana, to carry out our role as human beings". The spiritual traits inherited by the child included but were not limited to: tapu, mana mauri, and wairua.

#### **6.1.1.1 Tapu**

Tapu can be translated as "being with potentiality for power": personal tapu is the person's most important spiritual attribute (Mead, 2003 p. 32). It is pervasive, influencing all other attributes, and is akin to a personal force field that can be felt and sensed by others. It is the sacred life force that reflects the state of the whole person. As Shirres (1997) states, "every part of creation has its tapu, because every part of creation has its link with one or other of the spiritual powers, and ultimately with Io, Io matua kore, 'the parentless one', Io taketake, 'the source of all' " (p. 33). Elsdon Best (1922) linked tapu with the notion of spiritual and intellectual

potential, when he claimed:

Man is of supernatural descent, from the personified forms of natural phenomena, the soul coming originally from Io (the first of the gods); hence man has a modicum of *ira atua* (supernatural life); this divine spark (*mauriora*) is very *tapu*, it represents man's true vitality, his physical, mental, moral and spiritual welfare; the spark must be protected from pollution. (Best, 1922, cited in Patterson, 1992, p. 84)

#### 6.1.1.2 Mana

Tapu and mana are intimately connected. Whereas tapu is the potentiality for power, mana is the actual power, the realisation of the tapu of the person. Mana at a basic level can be translated as "authority, control, influence, prestige, power, psychic force, effectual, binding, authoritative ... and take effect" (Hemara 2000, p. 68). It also has a deeper meaning of 'spiritual power and authority' (Love, 2004). Mana is a crucial aspect of Māori perceptions of the world and of the self, with almost all activities linked to upholding and enhancing mana. Understandings of mana are therefore critical to an understanding of the Māori person or child, and the Māori world. Furthermore a Māori way of describing a person's worth is to speak of their mana (Shirres, 1997).

All Māori children are born with an increment of mana from their parents and ancestors (Hemara, 2000; Marsden, 1992; Mead, 2003; 2003; Metge, 1995; Shirres 1997). Mana is accrued and actioned through one's service to whānau and the wider community, including hapū and iwi (Keelan, 2006).

There are different forms of mana including *mana atua*, which is the "enduring, indestructible and sacred power of the *atua*" (Love, 2004, p.

28). Mana tupuna relates to whakapapa and descent from certain ancestors. Mana whenua relates to one's relationship with the land. Mana tangata relates to personal qualities and achievements. Mana atua or "divine right from AIO Matua" is the most important form of mana. This form recognises and acknowledges the "absolute uniqueness of the individual" (Pere, 1991, p. 14). It is also the dimension that maintains the balance between individual and group identity.

Shirres (1997) explains that Mana is the power of being, a being that is realised over time. Paul-Burke (2011, p.14) adds that "Mana is derived from the spiritual dimension and humans are merely the vessels through which mana flows and manifests itself". Mana can only be present if the vessel in which it resides has mauri or life-force or life-energy. Mauri is a requirement for life itself. As Satterfield et al. (2005) explain it, "Our belief is that there's wairua and tinana...wairua is the spiritual part of the person and tinana is the physical side. Now you need something to join them together... it's the mauri" (p. 28).

#### 6.1.1.3 Mauri

Mauri is a generic life force. All living things have a mauri and all things are connected. Mauri is the spark of life, the active element that indicates one is alive (Barlow, 1991; Mead 2003). Mauri is inherently related with other metaphysical characteristics, including tapu, mana and wairua.

[Mauri is a] special power possessed by Io which makes it possible for everything to move and live in accordance with the conditions and limits of its existence...the mauri is that power which permits ...the living to exist within their own realm and sphere. When a person is born, the atua bind the two parts of the body and spirit of



his [sic] being together. Only the mauri or power of Io can join them together. (Barlow, 1991, p.183)

Mauri is an essential and inseparable aspect of the child. It is an active sign of life, an attribute of self. The Māori child is born with mauri, which remains with them all their lives. When the child is physically and socially healthy, the mauri is in a state of balance, known as Mauri tau (the mauri is at peace). It is therefore important to nurture and protect the mauri of the child (Mead 2003).

The mauri is the life force that is bound to an individual and represents the active force of life which enables the heart to beat, the blood to flow, food to be eaten and digested, energy to be expended, the limbs to move, the mind to think and have some control over the body systems, and the personality of the person to be vibrant, expressive and impressive. (Mead, 2003, p. 53)

Patteron (1992) associates mauri with a number of values that have relevance for teaching, learning and assessment, including:

- Self esteem - There is an obligation to foster children's self esteem;
- Enlightenment - Children have a right to seek enlightenment, to extend their mauri;
- Knowledge is power - Learning can contribute to the mauri of the child;
- Respect – Respect and acceptance supports mauri;
- Harmony – Live in harmony with and care for the natural world.

Pere (1991) raised a number of questions that are also pertinent for early childhood teachers with regard to the child's mauri. She asks:

How carefully do we feel for and consider the mauri of each child in our care? Have we done everything we can to build up the mauri, or do we damage it in a small way each day? If a child feels that she or he is respected and accepted, then her or his mauri waxes. (p. 12)

#### 6.1.1.4 Wairua

Whereas mauri is bound to the person and ceases to exist when the person dies, wairua can leave the body and lives on after the person dies. The immortality of wairua means that these spirits of departed humans live on forever and can be summoned to assist their living descendants. Wairua has been compared to the shadow of a person that interacts with the spiritual world and warns of possible danger (Love, 2004). Wairua is an unseen energy that impacts upon all aspects of a person's being and according to Durie (1985, p. 483) it is the "most basic and essential dimension of Māori health". All Māori children are born with wairua which can be translated as 'soul' or 'spirit' (Mead, 2003, p. 54). There are four characteristics of wairua:

- It is part of the whole person;
- It is immortal;
- It has the power to warn of danger through dreams and visions;  
and
- It is subject to attack and damage (Best, 1941).

Finally, unless these attributes are recognised and supported the Māori child is not going to grow to their fullest potential. Foster (2009, p. 32) argues that wairua is crucial to children's learning as it connects to the "unique capacity of the child to think rationally, creatively and

intuitively". Key to understandings of wairua is the acknowledgment that wairua is subject to damage through illness, injury and the actions and deeds of others. Teachers must ensure that the child's wairua is acknowledged and protected. Furthermore we must be aware of maintaining spiritual balance. As discussed in the previous chapter, wairua denotes two waters. Balance or harmony must be maintained between these two waters. As Pere (1991) explained, "Everything has a wairua, for example, water can give or take life. It is a matter of keeping balance" (p. 16).

### **6.1.2 Maintaining balance and harmony**

Maintaining balance or harmony is a key feature of Māori understandings and practices: balance between the sacred and the secular; good and bad; life and death; sacred and profane. The Māori view of the world is one where balance is maintained across different forces. Ensuring spiritual harmony or balance is an important aspect of the child's holistic wellbeing and development (highlighted in Chapter Nine, Case Study Three).

Actions were not viewed as good or bad, rather they were perceived in terms of harmony and balance. This is evident in the concept of 'tika', meaning 'natural', or 'correct' (Patterson, 1992; Mead, 2003). In Māori thinking the gods or their underlings were responsible for maintaining the natural balance or 'tika'. 'Tikanga' comes from the word 'tika' and means the nature or function of a thing (Patterson, 1992). Mead (2003) describes tikanga as a rule, method, or habit. Tikanga relates to things such as actions, habits, appearance and customs, including how and why people behave in certain ways. Mead (2003) relates tikanga Māori to "the Māori way" or in accordance with Māori customs (p. 11).

The all important quality here is that of being in accord with human nature, or rather, being in accord with tribal nature, being “natural” and hence being reasonable and correct. To a Māori this means being in accord with custom and common practice. By following the customs and practices laid down by tribal ancestors, you can be a full human being. (Patterson, 1992, p. 103)

Respect is fundamental to the concept of balance, harmony and understandings of the Māori values and ideals and ethics. Respect for all things, including people, artefacts, customs, values, and the natural and spiritual worlds.

## **6.2 European Constructs of The Māori Child**

As previously mentioned (Chapter Four), from the beginning of European schooling for Māori, missionaries and early settlers saw the civilisation of Māori to be a duty, both religious and humanitarian. Europeans, especially upper and middle class Europeans, were conceived as positioned at the peak of civilisation, as being more biologically evolved than any other race. Movements such as Social Darwinism and Eugenics advocated racial and national improvement through culling out weaknesses of the lesser races.

The emergence of genetics gave scientific authority to human stratification, with associated levels of intellect, strength and capabilities, and furthered the Eugenicists’ endeavour to cull out the weaknesses within the lesser races. The Eugenicists believed that intervention could either eliminate the flaws of the lower classes and black peoples, or manage them in ways that were acceptable to the white upper and middle classes. (Harris, 2007, p. 17)

The use of intelligence testing and child studies in the early twentieth century reinforced thinking about the racially inferior Māori child. Scientific evidence in the form of IQ and mental ability tests was used to confirm the presumption of inferior innate intelligence (Harris, 2007).

In the 1960s and 1970s the focus of attention moved to what was seen as the 'Māori problem'. Research centred on finding out what was wrong with the Māori child and could be done to overcome or rectify the inadequacy (Fleras & Spoonley, 1999; Simon 1986). Māori children were deemed to use a "restricted language code" and to be "suffering a pathology". These pathologies were considered as the result of a "deficient cultural background" (Walker, 1991, p. 9).

Some researchers' defined Māori children as 'retarded' based upon Western models of developmental psychology. The retardation was blamed upon the rural and cultural environments in which the children lived rather than the culturally biased tests. Lovegrove (1966), a researcher who undertook a comprehensive study aimed at investigating differences between Māori and European children in tests of scholastic achievement claimed that:

Māori and European children from almost comparable home backgrounds performed similarly on tests of scholastic achievement...the reasons for Māori retardation are more probably attributed to the generally deprived nature of the Māori home conditions, [which are not suited] to the complex intellectual processes assessed by tests of intelligence...compared with the surroundings in which the European child grows, typical Māori homes are less visually and verbally complex, and less consciously

organised to provide a variety of experiences which will broaden and enrich the intellectual understandings of their children (Lovegrove, 1966, cited in Hokowhitu, 2004, p. 197).

Further policy developments related to 'cultural difference' occurred over the 1970s and 1980s. Durie (2006) states that "the stereotypic low achieving Māori student becomes a self fulfilling prophecy, compounded by policies ... that target Māori because they are "at risk" rather than because they have potential" (p. 16). Bishop and Glynn (2000) add that "if the imagery we hold of Māori children (or indeed of any children), or of interaction patterns, is one of deficits, then our principles and practices will reflect this, and we will perpetuate the educational crisis for Māori children" (p. 7).

### **6.3 Early Childhood Constructs of The Child**

Throughout European history how children have been perceived and treated relates to the historical period and the dominant discourses prevalent at the time. For example Aries (1962) states that "In medieval society the idea of childhood did not exist" (p. 31). In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century there was a drastic decline in child labour, which made childhood possible, and changed ideas of how the child was constructed (Guldberg, 2009). Contemporary early childhood perspectives of the child have moved towards a view of the child as a co-constructor of knowledge and identity. From this perspective childhood is viewed as component of social structure rather than a preparatory stage. Early childhood is valued in its own right as a stage of life. This paradigm recognises that:

- While childhood is biological, it is understood to be a social construction and therefore socially determined.

- Childhood is always contextualized, a social construction, therefore there are no universal childhoods or children rather many childhoods and children.
- Children participate in determining their own lives and those of the communities in which they live. They are social actors and have agency.
- Children should be listened to and have a voice.
- Children are not just a burden on the community's resources but contribute to social resources.
- Power is involved with relationships with adults and this should be taken into account (Dahlberg, et al, 1999, p. 49).

### **6.3.1 Te Whāriki**

Te Whāriki is the New Zealand Ministry of Education's early childhood curriculum policy statement. Te Whāriki: He Whāriki Matauranga mo ngā Mokopuna o Aotearoa/Early Childhood Curriculum (New Zealand Government Ministry of Education, 1996) is a bicultural, socioculturally conceived curriculum document, partially written in Māori, founded on the aspiration that children "grow up as competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they make a valued contribution to society" (p. 9). Te Whāriki translates to 'a woven mat' that allows for diverse patterning depending on knowledge bases, beliefs, and values which all may stand upon. Accordingly, "...the whāriki concept recognises the diversity of early childhood education in New Zealand. Different programmes, philosophies, structures and environments will contribute to the distinctive patterns of the whāriki" (p. 11). Te Whāriki is an example of how traditional Māori and Pakeha values, concepts, worldviews, and philosophies have been integrated into a modern, bicultural, educational document.

The Whāriki framework reflects understandings of children that are respectful of their identities, viewing them as rich, competent, confident and capable learners. Māori perspectives and world-views are integral to the curriculum document and, according to Hemara (2000), are as valid today as they were when first conceived by ancestors. According to Macfarlane, Glynn, Grace and Penetito (2005), the Te Whāriki concept encompasses:

- Those who have gone before – and godliness;
- Other people in their lives – and relationships
- The culture’s language – and signs and symbols; and
- The place – the desire to explore the natural world. (p. 10)

Te Whāriki states: “E ai ki tā te Māori he atua tonu kei roto i te mokopuna ina whānau mai ana ia ki tēnei ao” (p. 35). This can be translated as: ‘According to Māori, the child is born with spiritual attributes’ (Ministry of Education, 1996). Te Whāriki has four guiding principles including Whakamana (empowerment), Kotahitanga (holistic development), Ngā Hononga (relationships), and Whānau Tangata (family and community) to support and guide assessment processes.

Considering these guiding principles in turn, Mana can be translated to mean ‘prestige’ or ‘power’ and whaka to ‘enable’ or ‘make happen.’ Whakamana in the context of education relates to the process of empowering the child to learn and grow. Te Whāriki states that “Feedback to children on their learning and development should enhance their sense of themselves as capable people and competent learners” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 30). Kotahitanga relates to reflecting the holistic way in which children learn and grow. Kotahi translates as ‘one’ or ‘together



with' and kotahitanga means 'oneness,' 'singleness,' and 'togetherness' (Hemara, 2000). Ngā Hononga is about the way children learn through responsive and reciprocal relationships with people, places, and things. 'Hono' can be translated as 'splice,' 'continual,' or 'join' (Hemara, 2000). Whānau tangata incorporates the wider world of the family and community. Whānau can be translated as 'to be born' or 'family group' and tangata as 'person.' This principle stresses the concept that individuals are never alone if they continually strengthen and maintain their family and community connections (Hemara, 2000).

Te Whāriki utilises five strands or forms of mana to embody areas of learning and development within early childhood education. These forms include: Mana Atua (Wellbeing), "The health and wellbeing of the child are protected and nurtured" (p. 46); Mana Whenua (Belonging), "Children and their families feel a sense of belonging" (p. 54); Mana Tangata (Contribution), "Opportunities for learning are equitable and each child's contribution is valued: (p. 64); Mana Reo (Communication), "The language and symbols of their own and other cultures are promoted and protected" (p. 72); Mana Aotūroa (Exploration), "The child learns through active exploration of the environment" (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 82). Mana strands are further discussed in Chapter Nine as Kaupapa Māori assessment framings for Case Study Two).

Te Whāriki can therefore be seen as part of the process of reclaiming Māori perspectives of the child. Te Whāriki recognises that the child is born with spiritual attributes, and highlights the importance of these attributes to the child's holistic wellbeing. It is an important resource that can not only support further understandings of the Māori child, but can also provide for deeper understandings of the Māori values, knowledge, pedagogies and aspirations for children. Part B of Te Whāriki provides

guidelines for kōhanga reo and Māori immersion early childhood settings, and offers insights into Māori perspectives of the child and identity. It is however mostly inaccessible to early childhood teachers, as it is written in te reo Māori. Making this resource available more widely to early childhood teachers, both Māori and Pākehā would support understandings of the Māori child and assist teachers to better provide for them within early childhood services.

#### 6.4 Implications For Early Childhood

**E tipu e rea mō ngā rā o tōu ao.**

**Kō tō ringa ki ngā rākau o te Pākehā hei ara mō tō tinana.**

**Kō tō ngākau ki ngā taonga aO tīpuna Māori hei tikitiki mō tō mahuna.**

**Kō tō wairua ki to Atua, nāna nei ngā mea katoa.**

Grow up and thrive for the days destined to you.

Your hands to the tools of the Pākehā to provide physical sustenance.

Your heart to the treasures of your ancestors as a diadem for your brow.

Your soul to God to whom all things belong.

This whakataukī was written by Apirana Ngata, an important Māori leader of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries'. He wrote the whakataukī for a young girl as a guide to becoming a secure, well rounded person. The first line E tipu e rea mō ngā rā o tōu ao, "Grow up and thrive for the days destined to you" refers to the young person as a rea or "tender shoot", "young plant". This child's development is associated with concepts of growth, new life, fertilisation, nurturing, blooming and harvest, highlighting the organic nature of development and the importance of the environment to development (Keelan, 2001). From an early childhood perspective this line stresses the crucial role of

early childhood in supporting and promoting the child's growth and development, and the establishment of appropriate environments to nurture the child's potential.

The second line *Kō tō ringa ki ngā rākau o te Pākehā hei ara mō tō tinana*, "Your hands to the tools of the Pākehā to provide physical sustenance", makes reference to accessing the rākau or tools, resources, knowledge and opportunities offered by Pākehā and other cultures and contexts in order to sustain oneself, to participate fully and to reach one's potential. This line recognises what others can contribute to the Māori child's learning and ongoing development, while at the same time there must be balance; balance between Māori and Pākehā ways of knowing, being and doing. It is not a one or the other option, as both are important. Maintaining balance therefore is a key to the development of a harmonious whole. Kei Tua o Te Pae (Ministry of Education, 2004, Book 3, p. 5) frames this as:

- Kia whakamana ngā ao e rua kia hono.

Honouring and respecting both worlds so that they come together in meaningful relationships.

- Kia whakamana ngā rerekētanga ki roto i tēnā i tēnā o tātou.

Honouring and respecting the differences that each partner brings to the relationship.

- Mai i tēnei hononga ka tuwhera i ngā ara whānui.

From this relationship, the pathways to development will open

The third line of the whakataukī, *Kō tō ngākau ki ngā taonga aO tīpuna Māori hei tikitiki mō tō mahuna*, "Your heart to the treasures of your ancestors as a diadem for your brow", looks to children wearing or displaying proudly the culture handed down to them by their

ancestors. It refers to the child's heart and commitment to the cultural treasures. The message for early childhood in this line relates to the rights of Māori children to be perceived within Māori constructs of the child which emphasises children as taonga, precious treasures, to be held in trust for future generations, which must be the construct that drives early childhood practice. Despite huge movements in perceptions of the Māori child, from the deficit constructions of the past, to the Te Whāriki constructions of the rich, competent, capable child, remnants of past framings remain. Further movement is required to ensure that these relics of the past do not continue to impact upon the Māori child today. It is important to note also that although contemporary early childhood perspectives of the rich, competent, capable child may be similar to, and in many ways derived from historical Māori perspectives, they are not the same. It is critical therefore, that historical Māori perspectives are reclaimed and reconciled within contemporary early childhood contexts. Supporting these changes are international instruments on rights. Article 30 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child (1990) states:

... persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language.

In addition, Article 14, Clause 2, of the United Nations Declaration of Indigenous Peoples (2007) states that Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination (p .5).

The last line of the whakataukī, *Kō tō wairua ki to Atua, nāna nei ngā mea katoa*, “Your soul to God to whom all things belong” emphasises the importance of the spiritual aspect in Māori perspectives of development. This includes acknowledging the child’s spiritual being, and the spiritual connections they bring to the setting including:

- the spiritual traits inherited by the child such as; tapu and mana, mauri and wairua;
- the ancestors who have passed on who are always present with the child in the environment; and
- the child who has whakapapa connections to the creation of the world and the world of the gods, to people, to places and to other entities in the living environment.

For early childhood it is crucial that children’s spiritual attributes are not damaged and it is the adult’s responsibility to ensure this does not happen. Mead (2003) argues that the child’s spiritual attributes place particular responsibility on the parents, and in early childhood services, teachers, to nurture the spiritual aspects of the child in order for them to realise their potential and blossom into their worlds.

## **6.5 He Kupu Whakatepe/ Conclusion**

Perceptions of childhood emerge from particular historical, cultural and social structures and relationships and change in accordance with movements in the wider contextual structures and relationships. It is clear from the literature that perceptions of the Māori child have shifted over time. Historical Māori perspectives of the child were of ‘he taura here tangata’ and ‘te kāwai tangata’, the binding connections of the people, powerful, rich and complete. Colonisation radically transformed this image to one of retardation, inferiority and more recently ‘at risk’. Despite

significant movements in perceptions, the 'at risk' Māori child remains a feature of contemporary thinking. If Māori children are to achieve their potential, and "Grow up and thrive for the days destined to [them]" (Ngata), it is imperative that the image of the child not be one imposed and perpetuated through the ongoing process of colonisation, but be embedded within the Māori understandings and constructs. These understandings must view the child as the receptacle of the combined understandings, abilities, and strengths of their ancestors, precious and unique. They must perceive the child as a spiritual being, who possesses spiritual traits inherited from ancestors, such as: tapu, mana, mauri and wairua, along with the aspects of identity (discussed in the previous chapter), which must be recognised and respected in order for the child to thrive and achieve their potential.

The reclamation of historical Māori identities and Māori constructs of the child are pivotal to the development of assessment understandings and practices for Māori. Educational assessment is an important contributor to constructions of identity and to images of the child. In the next chapter, *Aromatawai/ Assessment*, I discuss this relationship further.

					He Whenu - Aromatawai / Assessment	

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### HE WHENU

### AROMATAWAI - ASSESSMENT

**Kia mau ki tēna, Kia mau ki te kawa maro.**

**Hold fast to that, Hold fast to the swoop of the cormorant**

(Kelly, 1949, cited in Hemara, 2000, p. 39).

These are the dying words of a chief of Ngāti Maniapoto to his people. It became a Ngāti Maniapoto motto, encapsulating the need for unity in the tribe. It describes a travelling cormorant formation with young fighting men on the outer boundaries protecting the women, children, and old people in the interior. The outer ranks protected the inner ranks and the inner supported their protectors, a reciprocal relationship that was almost indestructible (Hemara, 2000). Hemara states:

Assessment in Māori terms is a concept that may require collective knowledge which then translates into collective action. Māori Culture is in a continual state of recreation, re-interpretation and re-

negotiation of itself...and assessment practices need to respond appropriately. (p. 39)

The thesis has taken my discussion so far to the following question: How might assessment practices in early childhood services reclaim, protect and strengthen culturally located interpretive systems that recognise the central role for identity construction, of whakapapa, wairuatanga, whānau/hapū/iwi, whenua and te reo Māori, and view the spiritual traits of the person as central to learning and assessment?

Assessment is dependent upon one's view of how children learn and what should be learned. This whenu examines literature on educational assessment and learning. It firstly explores traditional Māori ideas of assessment. Next it discusses European learning and educational assessment, highlighting the different purposes of assessment that have emerged over the last century and discussing current thinking on sociocultural theory. Next it explores sociocultural assessment practices and resources. Finally Kaupapa Māori assessment purposes and ideas of assessment are discussed and implications for early childhood assessment articulated.

## **7.0 He Kupu Whakataki/Introduction**

Assessment is the most powerful policy tool in education...and will probably continue to be the single most significant influence on the quality and shape of students' educational experience and hence their learning. (Broadfoot, 1996b, pp. 21- 22)

The word assessment comes from the fifteenth century Anglo-French word assessor which related to fixing tax, or judging worth. It originated from the Latin assidere, meaning to sit beside (Online Etymology



Dictionary, n.d), and therefore implies that teachers sit beside learners, that it is something teachers do with and for students rather than to students (Green, 1998). This interpretation has clearly moved, and, it could be argued, corrupted over time, however the ways assessment has been viewed and practised at any time in history is closely linked to the societal requirements of education at that specific period.

The role of assessment relates directly to the needs of society at any given time in history (Broadfoot, 1996b; Gipps, 1999). According to Broadfoot (1996b), even in the simplest society, children must learn and demonstrate the appropriate skills, knowledge and behaviours required to operate as a contributing member of the community. In other societies this 'primary socialisation' has been expanded to include a 'secondary socialisation' as preparation for the diversity of roles in the society.

Whether education consists simply of the passing on of the unified body of skills necessary for survival, or is transmitted through the highly bureaucratised, elaborate and costly systems which complex industrialised societies have typically evolved to provide for the wide range of specialist skills required, some kind of assessment of competence will be necessary. (Broadfoot, 1996b, pp. 26 -27)

### **7.1 Traditional Māori Assessment**

As previously stated (Chapter Four), learning was highly valued in traditional Māori society. It sometimes began before birth and continued through life. It was essential that children acquire the appropriate knowledge, skills and expertise to contribute to the community and in so doing support the survival of the present and future generations. Teaching and learning were therefore an important community responsibility. Assessment of learning was also a community activity, measured by the

level of family and community support and enthusiasm. Hemara (2000) maintains that:

Māori learners were assessed by their peers, teachers and all those who were affected by the results. When a whakapapa (genealogy) recitation or other activity was being performed the listeners sounded their approval or otherwise. This showed how well the learner lived with the information they had accumulated and how well the assessors knew the learner and the subject under scrutiny (p. 39).

There was a fundamental relationship between theory and practice and a requirement that learners demonstrate this in the context of their learning. Ka'ai (2004) states that there were numerous opportunities within Māori cultural occasions for learners to demonstrate knowledge acquisition. On these occasions assessment procedures are rigorous and culturally specific to the context. Assessments therefore occurred when the tasks were being performed, before or with the community and, according to Hemara (2000). Ka'ai (2004, p. 210) adds that "These occasions are extremely challenging for the learner, who is assessed on their performance in a transient culturally-specific context". Learners were expected to critically assess their own performance and improvements were anticipated when the opportunity for assessment occurred again. Barnhardt & Kawagley (2005) make the point that this type of education and assessment of learning was common in indigenous societies. They state that Indigenous people, "traditionally acquired their knowledge through direct experience in the natural world. For them, the particulars come to be understood in relation to the whole, and the laws are continually tested in the context of everyday survival" (p. 10).

Children were recognised early for their various abilities and learnings, and often selected to partake in different learning opportunities. Hemara claims that this selection sometimes took place before birth. Those children who showed themselves to be especially gifted in a certain area were supported to attend institutions of higher learning. This streaming allowed them to “build on their natural talents and so enhance their hapū and whānau mana and economic wellbeing” (p. 43). Hemara adds that there was also a focus on perspectives rather than correct answers. He states that “Considered and imaginative perspectives may have been as valuable as correct answers” (2000, p. 44).

Melbourne (2009) explains that although much of the transmission of Māori knowledge was through natural day-to-day living there were formal structures of learning generally referred to as whare. These whare or houses were not necessarily physical structures rather they could be “metaphors for housing philosophies and identifying stages of educational progression” (p. 75). She describes a Whare-Mauokoroa where children’s talents and skills were identified and decisions made as to what and where further learning or instruction would occur. She states in this whare “...the child’s level of attention, inquisitiveness, or understanding would be gauged in order to help determine their natural tendencies”(p. 73). In the Whare Tipuna or Whare Whakairo [physical structures] where this learning took place, the learner would enter the building and begin their instruction on the left-hand side. As they mastered the learning they would move right across the whare with progress being marked by their position in the whare. They would exit the whare on the right, on completion of their learning. There was no timeframe for learning or a strict idea of age for graduation, if one graduated at all. Melbourne adds that instruction would have probably taken place at night or on winter days when other types of work were not possible. Pregnant mothers and

new mothers would have attended with their children and unborn children to expose them to the histories and knowledge of their people.

The Whare Taikorera had a general curriculum, implementing a pedagogy of play, exploration and discovery. Melbourne (2009) states “the myriad of games that were such a favourite pastime of traditional Maori societies all served a purpose of challenging the intellectual, physical, emotional and metaphysical attributes of children” (p. 74). The games supported the development of not only adequate skills but also emotional discipline. Those children demonstrating the necessary ability and agility, as well as the required emotional and mental composure advanced to the next whare. At every stage the child only progresses when all the required mental, physical and emotional abilities and skills have been proven.

## **7.2 European Assessment In Education**

In Europe, major political, religious and technological changes brought to an end the Middle Ages, and heralded in Modernity, the Reformation, the French Revolution and the Age of Reason or Enlightenment.

Fundamental to these changes were social movements based on thinking around “individualisation - individual rights, individual responsibilities and individual opportunities” (Broadfoot, 2000, p. 204). These three tenets reflected and reinforced important changes in the social order as communities moved from predominantly communalistic ideologies to individualistic ones, from feudalism to capitalism. They created new perceptions of social institutions such as politics, law, religion and education, which impacted on values that underpinned the institutions and therefore assessment thinking and practices (Broadfoot, 1996b; Gipps, 1999). May (1997) adds that these new perceptions countered ideas about the feudal order, the hierarchal stratification of society and divine authority that had marked earlier times, providing the context for a new

political system. The expanding middle classes understood that education was a way to acquire status. It was in fact, “the first time that upward mobility became a practical proposition on a wide scale” (Gipps, 1999, p. 357). Broadfoot (2000) notes that, “Assessment procedures were the vehicle whereby the dominant western rationality of the corporate capitalist societies typical of the modern western world were transmitted into the structures and processes of schooling” (p. 204).

According to John Locke, a leading educational theorist of the seventeenth century, the new political system required the development of rational individuals. Education was crucial to enhancing knowledge and the mind in order to produce Locke’s independent rational thinkers (May, 1997). This focus on the development of rationality and the belief that reason was the key to human progress was a major shift in thinking of the time. Modernity marked an intellectual awakening and the development of new knowledge based on scientific ‘facts’ and ‘truths’ (Robinson & Diaz, 2006). Central to modernity, was the view of the world as ordered and knowable, and the individual as a stable, autonomous being. Dahlberg, Pence and Moss (1999, p. 20) describe the thinking in the following way:

Just as there is a “real” world to be revealed, so too there is an inherent and preordained human nature, existing independently of the context and relationships, that can be fully realised through the transmission of a pre-constituted body of knowledge, assumed to be value-free, universal and offering a true account of the world and ourselves...The closer individuals come to reason the closer they come to themselves and the world, arriving at true understanding by the personal application of reason, knowledge and self-consciousness.

Through reason, later to be described as 'science', one could control natural forces, understand the world and oneself, and find freedom, justice, equality and true happiness. Over time science came to encompass a collection of notions or truths about the world and the ways to discover it, and scientists aimed to generate theories about the world including theories about children, child development and ultimately assessment. Assessment processes, which embodied ideas of power and rationality, reflected modern western thinking and were instrumental in the development of the structures and procedures of western schooling (Broadfoot, 2000; Gipps, 2002)

It is the prominence of individualism and rationalism which has made thinkable the concept of assessment as we know it; which underpins a system in which, not only do "experts" have the power to "judge", but they are expected and required to do so; in which they are provided with "tools" which are regarded as scientific and therefore fair and dependable. (Broadfoot, 2000, p. 205)

Western assessment thinking over time has been influenced not only by social and political structures and institutions but also by the changing theoretical perspectives of teaching, learning and development. Harlen (2006), states that how learning is assessed is necessarily related to how one views and theorises learning. A number of learning theories have attached purposes to assessment understanding and practices over time. These purposes include: maturation and behavioural purposes, constructivism, and social constructivism, and a number of purposes that develop from sociocultural perspectives on learning.

### 7.3 Purposes Of Assessment

#### 7.3.1 Maturation and Behavioural purposes: to check against a predetermined, biologically bound, sequence of developmental milestones, and to measure skills that can be generalised across contexts.

The term 'maturation' came from the work of Arnold Gesell in the 1920s (Podmore 2006). It describes "genetically programmed sequential patterns of developmental change" (Raban, Nolan, Waniganayake, Ure, Brown & Deans, 2007, p. 17). The three main features of Gesell's maturation process were: (1) it is universal, essentially the same for all people across the world; (2) it is sequential, following set genetic patterns; and (3) because of its innateness, environmental factors, such as culture, have little influence on it (Raban, et al., 2007). Assessments focused this biological image of the child and learners were assessed against a predetermined, biologically bound, sequence of developmental milestones (MacNaughton, 2003; Raban, et al., 2007; Twomey-Fosnot & Perry, 2005). The focus on biological norms of development suggested that those who did not conform to the prescribed patterns were abnormal or deviant (MacNaughton, 2003). These aberrations or genetic errors should therefore be corrected and normalized. In this way assessment was a means toward rectifying diversity and difference.

Intelligence testing grew out of the eugenics movement (discussed in chapter 6), around the turn of the twentieth century. In 1905 Alfred Binet, a French psychologist published the first intelligence test. Binet developed a series of intelligence tests with Theodore Simon, known as the Simon-Binet scale. This became the foundation for future intelligence testing (Gould, 1982). The science of psychometrics evolved from the work on intelligence testing, and was based upon the premise that intelligence like any other inherited characteristic was fixed and could be measured.

Measuring intelligence was therefore important for schooling as it ensured learners were streamed into the appropriate groups or classes (Broadfoot, 1996a). Assessment testing was also used as a tool for regulating competition and controlling individual aspirations (Gipps, 1999; Broadfoot, 1996a). It worked to distribute social roles in a supposedly fair and equitable way, that were acceptable to both the winners and losers. As Broadfoot (1996a, p. 35) states, “Thus intelligence testing, as a mechanism for social control, was unsurpassed in teaching the doomed majority that their failure was the result of their own inbuilt inadequacy”.

Behaviourism developed in the 1950s through the work of Pavlov, Watson, Skinner, and later Bandura. Unlike the followers of psychometrics and maturation theory, behaviourists maintained that nurture was the most important feature of learning. A key assumption to a behaviourist perspective of development was 'readiness' – that learning was governed by the learner's readiness to learn and readiness could be rationalized and scientifically measured (Podmore, 2006; Raban, et al., 2007). Reinforcement was another key assumption of a behaviourist perspective. Behaviour was seen to be shaped by reinforcements and rewards (Cullen, 2001; Raban, et al., 2007; Podmore, 2006). Progress was seen through assessing measurable objectives, that is to say behaviours of predetermined activities (Gipps, 1994; James 2006; Twomey-Fosnot & Perry, 2005).

Early childhood assessment thinking and practices were based upon these ideas of the child and child development (Anning, Cullen & Fleer, 2009; Anning & Edwards, 2006; Davies, 2006; Drummond, 1993). In early childhood it was referred to as developmentally appropriate practice (DAP). DAP was the basis for the development of the guidelines for the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in the United States (Bredekamp, 1987; Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1992). One of



the key tenets of DAP is that it is based on sound scientific knowledge about how children learn (Bredekamp, 1987; Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1992; Burman, 1994, Cannella, 1997; Davis, 2006; Fler & Robbins, 2004).

Knowledge of the sequences of growth that each child experienced in the domain areas provided the basis for teaching, curriculum development and the environment. Individual appropriateness related to the notion that:

...each child is a unique person with an individual pattern and timing of growth as well as individual personality, learning style, and family background. Learning in young children is the result of interaction between the child's thoughts and experiences with materials, ideas, and people. These experiences should match the child's developing abilities, while also challenging the child's interest and understanding (Bredekamp, 1987, p. 2)

In terms of early childhood provision the emphasis was on supporting the child's progression through the sequence of developmental stages by providing the appropriate environments for self-directed experiences and exploratory play (Burman, 2008; Cannella, 1997; Cannella & Viruru, 2004). Assessments focused on observing for expected developmental norms and stages of development. Observations were required to be objective, unbiased, scientifically sound observations of individual children's development. The developmental domains of physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development provided the framework for these observations and assessments (Anning, Cullen & Fler, 2009; Fler & Robbins, 2004).

Within this paradigm the purpose of assessment was typically to measure the sum of the child's knowledge against predetermined lists of skills and competencies, and identify any shortfalls. The focus of any intervention was to fill gaps in children's knowledge, highlighting the deficits within the child. Learners were viewed as needy and deficient, requiring the support of adults to address perceived inadequacies. Stonehouse & Gonzalez-Mena (2004) make the point that when learners are assessed and compared to each other, "even ones who, by comparison, are ahead of the rest have some gaps and weaknesses so they get the message that they aren't there yet, wherever 'there' is" (p. 14).

Learning was viewed as an independent endeavour, fragmented and free of context, with assessments validated through objective measures, impartial and detached from the child's reality (Broadfoot, 2000; Carr, 2001). Furthermore this individualistic perspective of learning highlights an ethnocentric view of assessment, which has have been generalized and institutionalized to represent universal truths for all human beings. They have impacted detrimentally on people whose world views differ from western thinking. The individualistic perspective actively worked against children who utilised culturally different benchmarks to that of the dominant western culture, but ensured those children with the appropriate cultural capital were privileged and empowered. It has served to foster power ideologies and to fabricate a rationale for the marginalization of diverse peoples and cultures as backward and deviant (Cannella, 1997; Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 1999).

Child development has been constructed based on enlightenment/modernist notions of human progress that are linear, universalistic, deterministic, and that establish advancing as

a standard for “normalcy.” Those who do not fit are abnormal.  
(Cannella, 1997, p. 63)

Fleer and Richardson (2009) argue that assessment has primarily centred on individual children’s unsupported development and understandings. They maintain that this individualistic perspective of the autonomous learner situates the learning in the past and does not allow assessors to ascertain children’s potential capacity.

Traditional approaches to observations and assessment can underestimate what a child is capable of knowing, because all they can tell us about a child concerns the small events and moments in their life that are readily observable by the educator. Thus these approaches can result in simplistic views of who the child is and who they are becoming (MacNaughton, 2003, p. 150).

Broadfoot (2000) describes this as “the myth of measurement” whereby what is unable to be measured by conventional means is deemed not to exist or be valued. Furthermore the measurements themselves have the power to influence how learning is encouraged, and define the quality of that learning. She states this myth pervades the prevailing discourse to the extent that the obsession with measurement “not only dominates the means we choose to achieve our ends, but is increasingly becoming the end itself” (p. 199)

## **7.4 Moving Towards Sociocultural Purposes For Assessment**

### **7.4.1 Constructivism: to assess the level of personal understanding in a complex subject domain**

Constructivism is fundamentally different from both behaviourism and maturation in that it holds that intellectual development and depth of

understanding are the key elements. The central theme of a constructivist perspective of learning is that learning is constructed, and that new understandings build upon previous knowledge (James, 2006; MacNaughton, 2003). Twomey-Fosnot & Perry (2005) state that “Rather than behaviours or skills as the goal of instruction, cognitive development and deep understanding are the foci; rather than stages being the result of maturation, they are understood as constructions of active learner reorganization” (pp. 10-11). Assessment from a constructivist perspective is therefore diverse, in order to capture the complexity of students' learning and understandings (Gipps, 1994; 2000; 2002). Assessment from a constructivist perspective is about assessing levels and complexity of understandings rather than the recall of test information and facts associated with psychometrics and behaviourism.

#### **7.4.2 Social constructivism: to assess learning and potential in a social context**

Whereas constructivism stresses the importance of the individual striving for understanding, social constructivism emphasizes the role of the social context in the individual's learning and how social and emotional factors impact upon development. Social constructivism is associated with the work of Lev Vygotsky, who argued for the place of a shared consciousness or intersubjectivity, which refers to joint or shared attention between the learner and adult or peer (Daniels, Cole, & Wertsch, 2007). From a social constructivist perspective, intersubjectivity is crucial in order for the learner to actively construct knowledge. Through social activity new learning and different ways of thinking develop (Cullen, 2001; Leach & Moon, 2008; MacNaughton, 2005; Robson, 2006). “Learning then occurs as learners internalize shared cognitive processes – by socially constructing meaning” (Leach and Moon, 2008, p. 60). From a social constructivist perspective, assessment is not only about identifying fully developed

cognitive processes but also those in the process of being developed (Fleer & Surman, 2006). Fleer (2006) terms this 'potentive assessment', or assessment that focuses on the child's potential to learn rather than their actual learning (p. 166). This is often a formative purpose: to change the social context in order to enhance the opportunity for learning.

## **7.5 Sociocultural Purposes For Assessment**

### **7.5.1 Sociocultural purpose one: to assess participation in complex and diverse social and cultural contexts and tasks that connect learners and environments**

Like social constructivism, sociocultural theory has its roots in Lev Vygotsky's work on how social contexts contribute to understandings of learning. Urie Bronfenbrenner also provides a bridge between social constructivism and sociocultural theory, emphasising the interlinking social systems that surround the child, and that development is grounded in a particular society and a particular time in history. He maintained that interaction between the child and the different 'ecological' systems, which contained roles, norms, and rules, could shape the development of individuals and families (Anning & Edwards, 2006; Robson, 2006). The ecological environment is conceived in terms of nested structures like a set of Russian dolls, with the child at the centre, and emphasised how events taking place in each setting could influence and shape development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Sociocultural theory has been expanded by the work of Etienne Wenger, Jean Lave, Michael Cole and Barbara Rogoff whose approaches have been termed; sociohistorical, sociocultural, cultural-historical activity theory (Robson, 2006). One of the key differences between social constructivism and sociocultural theory is the belief that the sociocultural context is "the crucible for rather than influence on development" (Robson, 2006, p. 40).

Wenger (1998) adds that in order to understand the nature of knowledge, knowing and knowers, we must be cognisant of four basic tenets. Firstly, we are social beings and that this fact is a central aspect of learning. Secondly, knowledge is competence in valued undertakings. Thirdly, knowing is about participation in such undertakings and therefore relates to engagement in the world, and lastly meaning is the result of our ability to experience, engage in and participate in our world. It requires “shifting the analytical focus from the individual as a learner to learning as participation in the social world, and from the concept of cognitive process to the more-encompassing view of social practice” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 43). James (2006, p. 57) states that learning is “by definition a social and collaborative activity in which people develop their thinking together”. It involves “participation and what is learned is not necessarily the property of an individual but shared within the social group, hence the concept of ‘distributed cognition’”.

Fundamental to sociocultural thinking therefore is the belief that our worlds are socially, historically and culturally constructed and that learning, thinking and knowing occur through our activity, negotiation and participation in and action upon our worlds (Bruner, 1990; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff 2003; Surman, Ridgeway & Edwards, 2006). Our participation is based on “situated negotiation and renegotiation of meaning in the world” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 51).

Not only do we develop through our changing participation in the sociocultural activities of our communities, but the communities themselves also change (Rogoff, 2003). It is not a one-way movement towards predetermined learning goals and outcomes, nor is it about acquiring information or adhering to existing community practices and

values (Sfard, 1998). Learners do not just acquire knowledge of their world but transform it while operating within its expectations and conventions. They use these conventions to make sense of their experiences developing understandings and knowledge.

### **7.5.2 Sociocultural purpose two: to transform participation in complex and diverse social and cultural contexts and tasks that connect learners and environments**

Rogoff (2003; 2008) proposes three mutually constituting planes of analysis for analysing participation in complex contexts. The first plane of analysis, the intrapersonal plane involves the “individual as the focus of analysis” (Rogoff, 2003, p. 56). Knowledge is constructed by the individual as they engage in the external world. This is premised upon Piagetian thinking that emphasises the individual child’s exploration of the world and the subsequent integration of knowledge, learning and representations. The second plane, the interpersonal plane emphasises “the interpersonal focus of analysis” (p. 58) and relates to learning interactions with social partners. It is highlighted through the work of Vygotsky, whose central tenet was that learning led the development process, and children acquired knowledge through participating in the practices of their host communities. Development therefore was seen as a process that occurred on two planes, the interpersonal and the intrapersonal. Rogoff adds a third plane of analysis, the community/institutional plane. This plane requires a “cultural-institutional focus of analysis”, in which learning is mediated by the communities in which the learner engages. Included in this plane are the cultural tools, processes and relationships valued by the community or institution. Flear & Richardson (2004) makes the point that sociocultural approaches to teaching and learning emphasise the idea that learning is not just related to an individual construction. “Meaning occurs in the

context of participation in the real world. Ideas are socially mediated and reside not in individuals but are constituted in collectives, such as a particular community of practice” (Fleer & Richardson, 2004, p. 122).

Rogoff (2008) points out that it is possible to fore-ground the planes separately without losing connectedness with the whole. Fore-grounding one plane does not negate the inherent interdependence and participation of back grounded planes, nor are they seen as hierarchical or separate; rather they are viewed as different focal points of sociocultural activity. To understand each plane requires inclusion of the other planes. As Rogoff (2008, p. 59) states, “It is incomplete to focus only on the relationship of the individual development and social interaction without concern for the cultural activity in which personal and interpersonal actions take place”.

### **7.5.3 Sociocultural purpose three: the building of cultural or learner identities**

Pullin (2008) links learning to identity and therefore to the discussions in Chapter Five:

The outcomes of learning are not simply the acquisition of information and skills, but the creation of self aware learning identities marked by the capacity to invoke useful knowledge in real world settings based not only on information and skills, but as reasoning, problem solving, and critical reflection. (p. 335)

In this way learning always involves the building of identities (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Identity is therefore not seen in terms of the individual’s psychological actualising but as embedded in and constructed through a range of processes and practices.



In this view, learning only partly – and often incidentally – implies becoming able to be involved in new activities, to perform new tasks and functions, to master new understandings. Activities, tasks, functions and understandings do not exist in isolation; they are part of broader systems of relations in which they have meaning.... Learning thus implies becoming a different person with respect to the possibilities enabled by these systems of relations (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 53)

## **7.6 Sociocultural Assessment Practices**

### **7.6.1 Formative assessment**

Sociocultural assessment purposes are associated with formative purposes, or ‘assessment for learning’. Formative is a word that in common usage is associated with forming or moulding something, usually to achieve a desired end. Formative assessment can be viewed as assessment that supports the development of learning. It refers to assessment practices that provide information which can be used by teachers to modify teaching and learning activities to meet the needs of students (Black & Wiliam, 1998a & b). It can therefore be termed ‘assessment for learning’ (Black & Wiliam, 2003; Broadfoot, 2007; Gipps & Stobart, 1997; Stiggins, 2002) and centres on feedback loops to assist learning (Black & Wiliam, 2004; Sadler, 1989; Shavelson, 2006). Broadfoot (2007) explains that formative assessment relates to practices that are designed to enhance and guide learning. Black & Wiliam (1998a & b) highlight a number of elements associated with formative assessment. These include: rich conversations between teachers and students that continually build and go deeper; effective and timely feedback that supports students to progress their learning; active involvement of students in their own learning; and teachers responding to identified

learning needs and strengths by adapting and modifying their teaching.

Black & Wiliam, (1998b) add that:

There is a body of firm evidence that formative assessment is an essential feature of classroom work and that development of it can raise standards. We know of no other way of raising standards for which such a strong prima facie case can be made on the basis of evidence of such large learning gains. (p. 13)

According to James & Pedder (2006), effective assessment for learning requires a radical transformation of teaching and learning, through the development of two key features. The first involves teachers and students developing new understandings and perspectives about each other, and about the nature of teaching and of learning. The second involves the acquisition and implementation of new attitudes to teaching and learning, which are “shaped by explicit and critically reflective modes of participation”. This, James & Pedder (2006) argue, requires the development of a “language and disposition for talking about teaching and learning” (p. 29). They point out that “just as such transformation requires new dimensions of student learning, so it is essential for teachers to learn if they are to promote and support change in classroom assessment roles and practices” (James & Pedder, 2006, p. 29). This learning is not a straightforward matter, however, and James & Pedder stress that:

Learning that involves radical transformation in roles always requires change in normative orientations. This, in turn, involves development of frameworks of values and principles to guide action when faced with decisions about how best to act in novel or unpredictable situations...Thus the metaphor of ‘learning as

participation' may be important, to set alongside the more familiar metaphor of 'learning as acquisition' of knowledge skills and understandings. (p. 29)

### **7.6.2 Interactive assessment practices**

From a sociocultural perspective, learning is an interaction between the learner and the social setting, and occurs as people move through understandings rather than to the end point of understanding. It involves transformation of understanding and assessments that are active and dynamic (Greeno, 2002; James, 2006; James & Pedder, 2006; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 2003). The implications for observations and assessments are that rather than simple short snapshot observations, more sustained, richer observations over time are required. Lampert (2001) introduces the notion of a camera lens which is able shift focus and zoom in and out. This, she argues, can address the issues of what next? It moves away from stand-alone types of assessment to allow for differently focused evidence.

In a broad sense, assessment is inherent within all interactions, as individuals reflect their understandings of other's intended meanings, which influences the ways in which the interaction progresses (Greeno & Gresalfi, 2008). Jordon & Putz (2004) identify a three part framework characterising assessment practice – inherent, discursive and documentary assessment. Inherent assessments occur informally and nonverbally in socially situated activities. Jordon & Putz (2004) provide the example of a listener looking puzzled. The speaker then rephrases what was said. Both people have made an assessment. These assessments are one of the fundamental mechanisms by which learning occurs, and include incidental learning that is viewed as normal human development and critical for efficient interpersonal interactions. Discursive assessment is

explicit and involves talking about the activity at hand in an evaluating manner. These types of assessments are important for the efficient flow of activities in that they can become social objects: agreed upon, referred to, revised and evaluated by the group. An example is the effectiveness of an assembly line. Documentary assessment involves recordings including, tests, surveys, checklists and stories that reflect upon and evaluate activities (Greeno & Gresalfi, 2008; Moss, 2008).

### **7.6.3 Assessment practices that protect and strengthen culturally located interpretive systems**

Assessment is not seen as something to be done to children, a technical activity that can reveal or display learning, rather it is something that is actively produced through social interaction that entails consequences (Pryor & Torrance, 2000). Sociocultural assessment can be likened to 'assessment as inquiry' that focuses not only on what learners are learning, but also on how and why. It moves away from assessment practices that seek defined behaviours and prescriptions, to educational practice and assessment involving participation in activities and events where learners develop interpretations to understand and transform their worlds (Delandshere, 2002; Lund, 2008; Moss, Girard, & Haniford, 2006). In this process teachers must to be aware of their own learning as well as that of their students. Rogoff (1998, p. 691) explains that "key to transformation is participation in community activities, and not the acquisition of competences, separate from the sociocultural activities of the community in which people participate". Culturally located interpretive systems (Gee, 2008) include shared cultural referents, experiences, scripts, events and objects. As A. Smith (1999, p. 86) says:

Sociocultural perspectives emphasise that children's higher mental processes are formed through the scaffolding of children's

developing understanding through social interactions with skilled partners. If children are to acquire knowledge about their world it is crucial that they engage in shared experiences with relevant scripts, events, and objects with adults (and peers).

Furthermore the complexity of children's learning increases through participation in authentic learning experiences in the wider community (Ministry of Education, 2004). Fler (2002) stresses simple assessment methods lose the "authenticity of complexity" and that authenticity is provided through "the complexity of teaching-learning contexts, with differing interaction patterns, historical contexts and dynamics specific to classrooms" (p. 115).

According to Moss, et al, (2006), all assessment practices occurs within a "particular activity system, community of practice, or learning environment" (p. 137). Furthermore, developing understandings of learning and how assessment documents and supports learning requires an understanding of the entire activity system. Greeno and Gresalfi (2008) add that claiming to assess learners' knowledge in 'simple qualitative terms' without taking into account the activity system does not make sense. It entails a shift in emphasis, from the individual learner, as the unit of analysis, "to a learner –operating –with-mediational-means and, in a more complex way, to the larger activity system, community of practice, or learning environment" (Moss, 2008, p. 228; Wertsch, 1991, p. 12). Gipps (1999) concurs stating "the requirement is to assess process as well as product; the conception must be dynamic rather than static; and attention must be paid to the social and cultural context of both learning and assessment" (p. 375). Greeno & Gresalfi (2008) state that knowing:

is fundamentally relative to a frame of reference in which it observed and interpreted. The frame of reference for an assessment of someone's knowing is the activity system in which the person participates in generating information that is used in evaluating what he or she knows. (p. 187)

#### **7.6.4 Narrative assessment practices**

Narrative assessment has been described as credit based and learner centred (Moore, Molloy, Morton & Davis, 2008). Narrative assessment allows for a particular way of understanding the learner, of viewing and interpreting the learner within authentic contexts. When the narrative is shared with others, it provides a way of interpreting the learner, and sharing ones perspective of who the learner is. As Moore, Molloy, Morton & Davis (2008, p. 7) state:

As we engage in conversation about the narrative, all participants in the conversation are together constructing, and reconstructing the student's identity. In our conversations about narrative assessment, we can be excited, affirmed or even challenged in our sense of who a student is. (p. 7)

Narratives are powerful assessment tools. They permit families access to the practices and purposes of the early childhood setting (Carr et al., 2001). Mitchell (2008) explains that narratives are "emotionally appealing and affirming to families, children, and teachers/educators. They offer a window into the learning that is valued within the ECE setting, by 'reifying' the practice" (p. 10).

While narrative assessment can be both summative and formative, Gunn & de Vocht van Alphen (2010) claim that effective formative assessment

practices in early childhood requires children's, families' and teachers' understandings of what children can do, what they want to do, and ways to get there. This necessitates children, families, peers, and teachers reaching agreement on what counts as a reliable and valid account of learning. They argue that "high quality documented assessments evidence these processes in action. Where documented assessments are used by children and others to provoke discussions about previous, current and future learning goals they both reify and constitute formative assessment" (p. 4).

Because of its accessibility to multiple audiences and perspectives, narrative is useful as a method for communicating assessment. Both documented and oral narratives are able to support communication between teachers, students, and families, which permits input into the assessment process, and enhances and supports a sense of ownership. Moore et al, (2008) describe how teachers in their research came to see things with different eyes through the writing of narratives, more specifically Learning Stories. The teachers claimed they began to see their students as more competent learners. This raised questions as to whether students had always been competent learners, and the teachers hadn't noticed, or whether students' behaviours were being re-framed and reinterpreted from a different lens. A further possibility was that, through writing and reflecting on Learning Stories teachers were better able to implement different learning opportunities, and thus support new learning for students. Teachers also changed the way they saw families. They described the reactions of parents and families when Learning Stories were shared, and the resulting contributions to assessment processes from the families, which then influenced the direction of learning opportunities within the learning environment. Changes also occurred in the way teachers saw assessment. Teachers became excited

and re-energised by the process of collecting stories, then reviewing them to see the learning that may not have been noticed or recognised before. Finally they described changes in the ways they perceived themselves and their roles as teachers.

Through the use of Learning Stories, these teachers' reporting practice was now able to be more congruent with their beliefs and philosophies. We interpret this to mean that any assessment tool provides a framework that can both enable and constrain what can be noticed and reported. The teachers have appreciated narrative assessment as an approach which better supports noticing student learning in more holistic ways that better supports telling about learning in ways that are more accessible to students and families (Moore et al, 2008, p. 11).

Learning Stories is a narrative approach to assessment, developed by Margaret Carr and early childhood practitioners working on the 'Assessing Children's Experiences in Early Childhood' project (Carr, 1998). It is an alternative to traditional assessment approaches. Learning Stories involves observations in everyday settings aimed at providing a cumulative series of qualitative snapshots or written vignettes of individual children displaying one or more of the five target domains of learning dispositions. These learning dispositions are based on the strands of Te Whāriki: Mana Atua (well-being); Mana Whenua (belonging); Mana Reo (communication); Mana Tangata (contribution); and Mana Aotūroa (exploration). Learning Stories are a form of narrative assessment. The Learning Stories approach is credit based in that it fore-grounds what children know and what they can do as opposed to what they cannot do. Learning Stories highlights the image of competent children engaged with their families, communities, and culture.



Learning Stories focus on participation and increasing complexity. Interpreted observations, discussion, and multiple perspectives contribute to a deeper understanding of the child and provide validity for the process. This assessment approach also provides for social spaces in which family and community are able to contribute their 'funds of knowledge' to the curriculum and to children's learning (Carr, Cowie, Gerrity, Jones, Lee & Pohio, 2001). Carr (2001) describes an approach to assessment that reflects the connected, culture- and context-specific nature of learning:

The traditional separation of the individual from the environment, with its focus on portable "in the head" skills and knowledge as outcome, has been replaced by attaching social and cultural purpose to skills and knowledge, thereby blurring the division between the individual and the learning environment (p. 5).

Cowie & Carr (2004) make the point that Learning Stories is an approach to assessment that can contribute to social thinking in three important ways. Firstly, it can work as a 'conscription device' — the 'social glue' that recruits involvement of whānau/educators in the development of a centre community of learners and teachers. Narrative and credit-based assessments provide a context for the development of trust and respect, and enhance relationships between teachers, parents, and children. Secondly, the Learning Stories approach provides an avenue to access and contribute to curriculum. It supports participation and mediation of learners and whānau. It validates what the learner brings to the context, encouraging children and whānau to incorporate their knowings and understandings to the centre. Thirdly, Learning Stories provides the space to negotiate and renegotiate the meaning of children's learning,

constructing multiple or multidimensional pathways of learning ‘works in progress’ or formative assessment.

Formative assessment must make a difference to, form and inform, learning. In early childhood, the interpretation of the “gap” between what went on before, what is happening now, and what might be the next step will shift. The assessments will story and re-story as new information comes to hand (Cowie & Carr, 2004, p. 14).

### **7.7 Assessment Resources That Followed Te Whāriki**

Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 29) makes some key statements about early childhood assessment. Firstly, it states that the purpose of assessment is to provide “useful information about children’s learning and development to the adults providing the programme and to children and their families”. Secondly that “assessment of children’s learning and development should involve intelligent observation of the children by experienced and knowledgeable adults for the purpose of improving the programme”. Thirdly, that assessment is occurring all the time “minute by minute as adults listen, watch, and interact with an individual child or with groups of children”. Furthermore it is these continuous observations that provide the foundation “for more in-depth assessment and evaluation that is integral to making decisions on how best to meet children’s needs”. Finally, that “In-depth assessment requires adults to observe changes in children’s behaviour and learning and to link these to curriculum goals”.

Te Whāriki challenges the concept of the found world that is knowable, objective, and factual, and supports the notion of constructed worlds (Cannella, 1997; Dahlberg, et al., 1999; Lather, 1991; Rogoff, 1990; Wenger,

1999; Woodhead, 1998). Te Whāriki encompasses the notion of constructed worlds and the concept of 'meaning making,' where children and adults engage in activities and learning that have social, political, economic, and cultural significance within worlds of multiplicities and complexity. They are worlds of "multiple causes and effects interacting in complex and non-linear ways, all of which are rooted in a limitless array of historical and cultural specificities" (Lather, 1991, p. 21), and assessments must reflect this.

Drummond (2003) describes New Zealand's contemporary early childhood education assessment approaches in positive terms, being empowering, meaningful and authentic for children, families and teachers. She adds that Learning Stories replace the tape measure with stories of life; "the New Zealand approach emphasises learning as a moving event, dynamic and changeful, practically synonymous with living" (Drummond, 2003, pp. 185-186).

Te Whāriki states that "Assessment is influenced by the relationships between adults and children, just as children's learning and development are influenced by the relationships they form with others. This influence should be taken into consideration during all assessment practice" (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 30). This perspective of assessment is a fundamental shift from the perception where assessment was something to be done to children, a technical activity that could reveal or display learning, where children existed in an ahistorical, asocial, acultural world and assessment was a context- and value-free activity.

Te Whāriki states that "families should be part of the assessment and evaluation of the curriculum as well as of children's learning and development" (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 30). Cowie & Carr (2004)

make the point that not only should families be part of the assessment process, but that assessment itself can work as a ‘conscriptio device’ to recruit whānau involvement in the development of a centre community of learners and teachers. Assessment provides a context for the development of trust and respect and enhances relationships between teachers, whānau, and children. Assessment provides whānau with an avenue to access and contribute to curriculum and validates what the learner brings to the context, encouraging children and whānau to share their knowings and understandings with the centre.

### **7.7.1 Kei Tua o Te Pae**

The Kei Tua o Te Pae project began as a pilot project in conjunction with the Ministry of Education’s National Exemplar project in schools. The Kei Tua o Te Pae resource is aimed at supporting teachers to develop practices that incorporate assessment and quality learning experiences. Its focus was on “assessment as a powerful force for learning, not on a particular format or method” (Ministry of Education, 2004, book 1, p. 2). Kei Tua o Te Pae provides early childhood educators with exemplars of assessment that are credit based, narrative, collaborative, and that inform ongoing learning. The exemplars reflect the Te Whāriki curriculum document by making connections between learning and learning opportunities, including multiple voices, and assessments that are meaningful to a range of audiences and that reflect the value of early childhood education. The focus is on children actively participating in their own learning, interacting with the environment, acting on and transforming relationships with people, places, things, and time, and co-constructing knowledge within a sociocultural context (Ministry of Education, 2004).

The objectives of the Kei Tua o Te Pae assessment resource were to:

- develop a resource to support and guide assessment practice that is embedded within the dynamics of teaching and learning and the context of Te Whāriki;
- illustrate what progress in learning means within the context of Te Whāriki where knowledge, skills and attitudes combine as learning dispositions and working theories;
- develop a learning and assessment resource that speaks to Māori children and whānau participating in English-medium early childhood settings;
- involve parents, whānau, teachers and children in collaborative discussions and assessment of children’s learning and assessment, with the objective of collaboratively responding to and strengthening ongoing, diverse learning pathways; and
- increase the quality of all children’s learning experience in ECE by strengthening their sense of themselves as capable, competent learners, secure in their identity and sense of belonging (Ministry of Education, 2006, p. 3).

Kei Tua o Te Pae describes assessment for learning as “noticing, recognising and responding” (Ministry of Education, 2004, book 1, p. 6). It describes these processes as “progressive filters. Teachers notice a great deal as they work with children, and they recognise some of what they notice as learning. They will respond to a selection of what they recognise” (Ministry of Education, 2004, book 1, p. 6). Following Drummond (1993), Kei Tua o Te Pae, defines assessment for learning as:

[the] ways in which, in our everyday practice, we [children, families, teachers, and others] observe children’s learning [notice], strive to understand it [recognise], and then put our understanding to good use [respond]. (Ministry of Education, 2004, book 1, p. 6)

## **7.8. Kaupapa Māori Assessment**

### **7.8.1. Cultural validity**

Solono-Flores & Nelson-Barber (2001) offer important understandings of assessment that have relevance for Kaupapa Māori assessment. They introduced the notion of cultural validity to account for the need to take into consideration the influence of sociocultural contexts on how students make sense of and respond to science assessment items. They contend that current approaches to handling student diversity in assessment such as adapting or translating tests and providing assessment accommodations are limited and lack a sociocultural perspective. Solono-Flores & Nelson-Barber asserted there are five aspects to cultural validity: student epistemology, which recognises the ways students' personal experiences influence thinking and understandings; students' language proficiency, which reflects the ways that culture shapes language; cultural worldviews, and the requirement for sensitivity to cultural ways of knowing and traditional knowledge; cultural communication and socialisation styles, that are cognisant of culturally determined communication and socialisation styles; and student life context and values, where assessments are contextualized within students' cultural experiences.

Weenie's (2008) writing on curriculum development for Aboriginal peoples in Canada highlights features of Indigenous cultures that must be taken into account when addressing the issue of cultural validity. She states:

The landscape of Aboriginal curriculum involves the colonial history, worldviews, philosophies, languages, cultures, stories, songs, literature, art, spirituality, ceremonies and ethos of Aboriginal people. These are the "things" or objects that make up

our embodied ways of knowing. They form a body of knowledge that represent the order of things in the worlds we live and work in. (Weenie, 2008, pp. 551-552)

Weenie adds that we are “embodied knowers” who “*enact* the world we inhabit and know about” (Weenie, 2008, p. 550). This includes “the language, symbols, and tools, patterns of reasoning, shared meanings, and customary practices needed for competent participation and problem solving in a particular social group, community, or culture” (Smith, Teemant & Pinnegar, 2004, p. 39). “How learners’ efforts are evaluated will reflect a particular view of knowledge and what counts as relevant competencies, goals and results” (Lund, 2008, p. 33). The question with regard to assessment is whose knowings are recognised, validated and the basis for assessments. Solono-Flores & Nelson-Barber (2001) add that one of main challenges posed by the concept of cultural validity relates to “who needs to be involved in the process of assessment development and who decides what is relevant to a given cultural group” (p. 567). If the teacher’s embodied knowings are different from those of the students there is potential for bias. According to Friesen & Ezeife (2009) “Teachers need to be aware of the potential biases in their assessments and strive to eliminate them from their practice (p. 32).

Solono-Flores & Nelson-Barber (2001) claim that:

... from the perspective of cultural validity, what is being done to address cultural diversity in assessment is not sufficient to ensure equitable testing. Current approaches to handling cultural diversity do not focus on understanding student thinking and the sociocultural influences that shape thinking. As a result, the assessment of cultural minorities is guided by simplistic

assumptions about language and culture and cultural misconceptions and stereotypes, and gives little consideration to the context in which students live. (pp. 566 -567)

It is important to note that these knowings or bodies of knowledge cannot just be added on to existing approaches in an attempt to address the issue of assessment validity (Bishop & Glynn 1999; Johnston, 2010; Weenie, 2008). Johnston refers to this as a 'beads and feathers' approaches to assessment, which aim to make environments friendlier for culturally different groups but do not address the power relations within the contexts. Solono-Flores & Nelson-Barber (2001) add that despite attempts by these approaches to deal with cultural diversity and provide for equitable assessments, they fail to acknowledge that "culture shapes the mind" (p. 555). Weenie (2008) states:

They cannot be mere add-ons or supplementary pieces but the core components of Aboriginal curriculum. Curricular theorizing from this standpoint needs to be 'an act of imagination that is a patterned integration of our remembered past, perceived present, and our anticipated future. (p. 552)

Friesen & Ezeife (2009) add that "It is not the assessment itself that must be validated, but the inferences made from the assessment scores and implications for action based on these scores". They argue that creating assessment approaches based upon one single cultural system does not have a high level of validity, in that it would assume all students from the same culture have culturally generic experiences and knowledge.

Furthermore cognisance must be taken of the "nuances of a culture that shapes the world view of a student" (p. 35). Solono-Flores & Nelson-Barber (2001) explain that in assessment development it is important to be



sensitive to the subtle differences in the context, the differences that individuals from the same cultural group experience. They claim:

... no valid generalizations regarding culture can be made based on criteria such as ethnicity, country of origin, native language ...  
People who are external to a cultural group tend to make overgeneralizations and rely on cultural stereotypes. As a result, they may misperceive or misrepresent what of that group's culture is relevant to an assessment. Cultural validity, then, cannot be attained if the current assessment systems remain unchanged and only a few people write the items or develop the assessments that are administered to all students. (p. 567)

If assessment practices are inconsistent with our beliefs about knowing and learning, the understandings we gain from assessments will not correspond with our goals and learning outcomes, and will not be culturally valid. As Bishop & Glynn (1999) put it:

Many educators remain ignorant of the fact they bring to educational interactions their own tradition of meaning-making that are themselves culturally generated. This invisibility of culture perpetuates the domination of the 'invisible' majority culture. However it is not sufficient to simply raise awareness of other cultural backgrounds; it is also important to critically evaluate how one set of cultural traditions (their own) can impinge on another (their students). (p. 78)

Key to understandings of Kaupapa Māori assessment is the recognition that sociocultural assessment is designed to strengthen culturally located interpretive systems – and that these are different for Māori and non-

Māori. Therefore different learning and assessment practices must be utilised. These differences must be recognised and addressed in ways that are culturally appropriate and responsive (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Durie, 2001; G, Smith, 1997). It is, however, important to recognise the diversity of Māori children which requires an adjustment in understandings about developing 'one size fits all' assessment approaches. Assessment approaches must be flexible enough to reflect the heterogeneous nature of Māori children, families, communities (Hemara, 2000) and interpretive systems.

### **7.8.2 Contemporary assessment that reflects Māori interpretive systems**

A recent draft paper, *Rukuhia, Rarangahia*, commissioned by the Ministry of Education presents a Māori medium position. It utilises *Aromatawai* as the basis for assessment understandings, and argues that *aromatawai* does not directly translate to assessment. An *aromatawai* position holds that "if it is worth teaching, it is worth learning, and if it was meant for all, then all must have access to it when ready". It recognises the unique learning pathways that are determined by *ākonga/* learners readiness, rather than being determined by what should be learnt and by when. It states:

*aromatawai* is part of an expression of the concept of *ako*. Implying that not only is *aromatawai* a manifestation of a learning and teaching event that can be seen and measured but also that it can be unseen and not measureable in terms of some of the tools presently used. As such the role and practice of *aromatawai* is both tangible and intangible, incorporating at times a range of senses to understand what learning, how and why it has occurred. (Ministry of Education, 2012, p. 12)

The paper suggests that there are five conditions between teachers and learners to be attended to in order *for aromatawai* to be appropriately determined. These conditions include, “knowledge, experiences, language, motivation (or desire and skills)” (p. 13). Aromatawai has three key characteristics. The first is it is “an integral part of ako”. The second is it is based on the “interplay between teacher as learner and learner as teacher, and the special relationship between the two. Third it focuses on “the learner as opposed to the products” the learner produces (p. 17).

There are four *Rukuhia, Rarangahia* principles. Firstly, *Mana Mokopuna*, which relates to education being tailored for and to the mokopuna/learner). The central theme of this principle one is that aromatawai serves learners/mokopuna and not the other way around. It is premised upon the idea that when learning is tailored for and with the learner based on who they are and their interests and needs, they can participate more fully in education. Secondly, *Toitū Te Mana*, holds that education should affirm indigeneity and distinctiveness. This principle relates to identity, language, culture. It adheres to the understanding that whānau and iwi have a right to be involved in choosing, participating and contributing to that learning. Thirdly, *Whanaungatanga*, which acknowledges relationships as being a source of Empowerment. This principle asks educators to build relationships with *leaner, whānau* and iwi. This is critical, as they provide key sources of support and inspiration in contributing to learning. The establishment and maintenance of relationships between groups for the benefit of learners is a key task for schools, both inside and outside of the classroom. Finally, *Rangatiratanga*, that relates education to realising potential both internal and external. The final principle asks teachers to activate key sources so that learner talents are able to flourish. It upholds the understanding that education should be underpinned by Māori values, which fosters a strong foundation for

learning and life. The principle also acknowledges diversity not only in individuals but also between and across people and iwi.

In summary, an *aromatawai* approach means that:

- *Aromatawai* policies, practices and resources are founded in *mātauranga-Māori* and therefore embody Māori values, beliefs and knowledges
- *Aromatawai* is practised as an integral part of *ako* (learning and teaching on daily basis)
- *Aromatawai* identifies what has been learnt in relation to what was previously *known*-and-what matters in future learning
- *Aromatawai* supports individual pathways to learning and the recognition that if it is important enough to be taught, then all *ākonga* should have access to that learning when they are ready
- *Aromatawai* practices are centered on- *ākonga*- and support their engagement in setting and reflecting on their own learning goals
- *Aromatawai* is the engagement of a process that involves *ākonga*,-*pouako*,-*whānau*,-*hapū*,-*iwi*-in determining what is important for their-*tamariki* and their futures
- *Pouako*-use a range of information about learning gained through-*tairongo* (different Ways of seeing and sensing both intuitively and deliberately to build further learning
- *Pouako*-use *aromatawai* tasks that are aligned with the desired learning outcomes
- and are embedded in authentic learning and teaching contexts
- *Pouako* and *tumuaki*- use appropriate *Aromatawai* practices to support *ākonga* learning. (p. 44)

### 7.8.3 Te Whatu Pōkeka

Te Whatu Pōkeka: Kaupapa Māori Learning and Assessment Exemplars is an initial attempt to embed Māori knowledge and ways of knowing into early childhood assessment understandings. Launched in 2009, its primary aim was to produce a resource that would support quality teaching and learning experiences in Māori early childhood settings, as defined by Māori. It is, however, available to all early childhood services in New Zealand, and therefore provides support for non-Māori services to develop bicultural understandings and practices. Te Whatu Pōkeka draws upon Kaupapa Māori theory, and traditional Māori world-views, values and concepts in order to articulate assessment understandings and framings that express Māori ways of knowing, being and valued learnings.

‘Te Whatu Pōkeka’ refers to the weaving of a baby blanket or wrap, made of flax fibres or muka. Albatross feathers were woven into the blanket to provide maximum warmth, comfort, and security for the child. The pōkeka took the shape of the child as it learned and grew and is therefore a powerful metaphor for the development of assessment theory and practices, that are not only determined and shaped by the child, but provide the warmth, security and fit for the Māori child (Ministry of Education, 2009).

The resource provides the basis for professional development support on teaching, learning, and assessment within Māori early childhood centres, including the development of a Kaupapa Māori context-specific assessment approach, based upon centre/community philosophical underpinnings, values, and whānau aspirations for children. In order for this to occur, meaningful partnerships between teachers and communities must be developed and maintained. It is premised upon the idea that

cultural contexts, values and understandings contribute significantly to children's learning and potential growth and that assessment is a vehicle for acknowledging, reifying and normalising this cultural capital.

The overarching philosophy of Te Whatu Pōkeka is the Māori creation story, and links are made between three contexts or truths:

- the birth of the world;
- the birth of the child; and
- the birth of ideas and process of teaching and learning (Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 48).

The threads common to the contexts include: power, combined strength, possibilities, fertility, challenge, new learning, apprehension and resilience.

Assessment informed by Kaupapa Māori does not view the child in isolation. It recognises the child emerges from rich traditions, surrounded by whānau, visible and invisible, living and dead. It recognises that the child is linked strongly with his or her whānau, hapū ..., iwi ..., history, whakakapa and identity (Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 50).

## **7.9 Implications for Early Childhood And This Thesis**

We need to recognise that assessment practices do far more than provide information; they shape people's understanding about what is important to learn, what learning is, and who learners are ...Thus any assessment theory needs to take into account the way in which assessment functions as part of – shaping and shaped by – the local learning environment and its learners. (Moss, 2008, p. 254)

Haertel, Moss, Pullin & Gee (2008) argue that sociocultural perspectives move thinking about learning from the acquisition of skills and information to a focus on rich conceptual understandings, reasoning, and problem solving in a domain which is deeply situated within social contexts and experiences. Gee (2008, p. 200) explains that:

Any actual domain of knowledge, academic or not, is first and foremost a set of activities (special ways of acting and interacting so as to produce and use knowledge) and experiences (special ways of seeing valuing and being in the world) Physicists do physics. They talk physics. And when they are being physicists, they see and value the world in a different way than non-physicists.

Kaupapa Māori assessment moves beyond a culturally situated perspective of learning to learning being seen as deeply located within Māori ways of knowing and being. Physicists may view the world differently from others when they are being physicists and situated within the activities, values, experiences and understandings of that particular activity system, and one could argue that seeing the world as Māori is similar to the way the physicist views the world. There are, however, significant differences. Being Māori is located within a frame of the world that is fundamentally different to those of non-Māori. It is a deeply spiritual world where: people are connected to the creation of the universe; whakapapa links all living things from the gods to the present time; the spiritual and the physical worlds are intimately connected and all things have a physical as well as a spiritual body; ancestors who had passed on live, with their descendents, in the everyday world; whānau/hapū/iwi define identity spiritually and physically; the whenua is the earth mother, and therefore the spiritual relationship to the land is as

important as the physical; te reo has a life force, a living vitality and a spirit.

Whakapapa is the 'connect' to the Māori world. Whether one is able to recite it or not is immaterial; in fact, whether one is aware of it or not, as is the case with many disenfranchised Māori, makes no difference.

Whakapapa means one is Māori and being Māori links one to the Māori world, which is spiritual.

The image of the child or learner within this frame of the world is also fundamentally different from that of non- Māori. The child is not only embedded within the spiritual world, but he/she is also imbued with spiritual traits such as mana/tapu, mauri and wairua, inherited from ancestors, and fundamental to their holistic wellbeing and ability to grow and develop to their fullest. Spirituality is therefore not only an overarching feature of the world in which the child resides, but it also resides within the child. Understandings of learning and assessment must therefore also be located within this frame. It is an insider perspective that goes beyond formative, narrative and sociocultural/Te Whāriki models of assessment and has important implications for early childhood assessment practice.

### **7.9.1 A fourth plane of analysis**

From a Māori perspective, current early childhood assessment theory and practices are inadequate, in that they fail to recognise the full cultural location of the Māori learner and learning within the Māori world. What is evident from the literature on sociocultural theory and Rogoff's 'planes of analysis' is the absence of spirituality and the spiritual dimensions of the world and people. Spiritual interpretive systems for Māori children are missing in discussions of assessment. These aspects of the world and



people are not encompassed within understandings of the intrapersonal, interpersonal or community/institutional planes. A fourth plane of analysis, a spiritual plane is required. It is the spiritual plane that gives cohesion and connectedness to the Māori world. For Māori learners, therefore, a spiritual plane is critical.

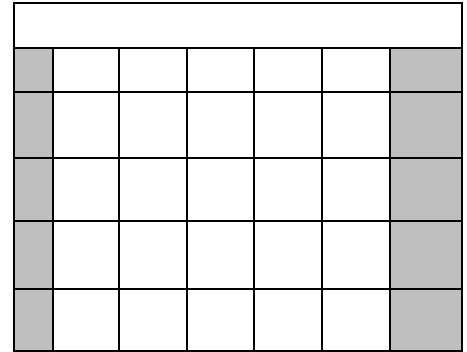
### **7.10 He Kupu Whakatepe/Conclusion**

This chapter raises important issues for early childhood professionals. How might assessment practices in early childhood services reclaim, protect and strengthen culturally located interpretive systems that recognise the central role for identity construction of the Māori world and whakapapa, wairuatanga, whānau/hapu/iwi, whenua and te reo Māori and the spiritual traits of the person? These are the key features that differentiate Kaupapa Māori assessment from the current sociocultural frames. This thesis adds a spiritual plane to the Rogoff planes of analysis, as the significant element for Kaupapa Māori assessment.

I began this thesis by commenting on the innovative response by Māori to a new environment. Utilising traditional technology and knowledge, early Māori explored and experimented with the available resources to develop the required clothing for the new world. In a similar way the case study services have woven their assessment kākahu utilising the Kaupapa Māori theory elements of conscientisation, resistance, transformative praxis and Māori ways of knowing and being, across and within historical, cultural and educational discourses and paradigms in order to produce their assessment kākahu, with their own unique patterning and styles. This has involved the three case studies responding to, and engaging with Māori education, Māori identities and images of the child in the last 20 years. This has been assisted by, but has gone beyond, Te Whāriki and narrative assessment models.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### NGĀ KAIWHATU



### CASE STUDY ONE - 2003-2008

This is the first of the Case Study chapters. It outlines the developing understandings of assessment theory and practice of the service kaiako as they wove the Kaupapa Māori theory *aho* across the four *whenu*. This weaving involved kaiako engaging in their own way with the *whenu*, making sense of, critiquing, questioning, transforming, and looking for fit. In accordance with the *whatu* process, aspects of the Kaupapa Māori dimensions are sometimes highlighted or fore-grounded in the discussion and at other times although not mentioned specifically can be seen as integrally embedded within the body of the thesis fabric.

#### 8.0 Te Tīmatanga – Introduction And Background

There were three distinct phases in the study:

- *Phase One: 2003-2005* - involved monthly meetings with kaiako/teachers
- *Phase Two: 2006-2008* - involved one or two follow up meetings a year with key service kaiako/teachers
- *Phase Three 2009-2010* – involved presenting the written material back to kaiako/teachers for feedback and amendments.

Comments and quotes included in this case study are taken from research notes during and after monthly meetings, and interview transcripts from phases one and two of the study. It needs to be acknowledged that I was not an outsider looking in on the service, and although not a complete insider, my positioning was mostly one within the service context, with ideas and understandings being co-constructed as a whānau.

The chapter provides a brief introduction to the service, *Te Tīmatanga*/Introduction. It then backgrounds the service's rationale for establishment, philosophy and history. This makes links to their understandings of the history of Māori schooling: *Te Akoranga*/Māori Schooling, with an emphasis on the importance of utilising a 'Māori' perspective on Māori children's learning. Next it explores *Te Āhua o Te Mokopuna*/The Image of the Child and discusses the service's changing views of the child. The following section *Ngā Tuakiri o Te Tangata* /Māori Identities describes the importance of 'being Māori' to the centre's developing assessment understandings and practices. This is followed by *Aromatawai*/Assessment, which articulates the centre's emergent understandings of assessment; *Te Haerenga*/ the Assessment Journey, the centre's assessment journey; *Te Whakapiki Whakaaro*/ Emergent Thinking; and finally *Te Taniko/Kaupapa Māori Assessment*, which outlines the service's assessment framing developed through the research.

The childcare service is located in Papakura, South Auckland. It services a low socio-economic community with a high population of Māori and Pacific Island families. It is a Māori/English bi-cultural, bilingual early childhood service. It was established in 1995, and due to lengthy waiting lists a second service was opened in 2004. The services provide for 34 and 33 children respectively and employ 16 kaiako who work across both services. The majority of the children and kaiako at the centres are Māori,

however a diverse range of cultures, ethnicities and nationalities are also represented.

### **8.1 Te Akoranga - Māori Schooling**

In the early 1980s the founder of the service (Ruth) moved to Auckland with her husband and two small children. She enrolled her children at a local early childhood service but became unhappy with some of the service procedures, expectations and understandings, including the practice of separating siblings. There was little visibility of the Māori language and culture evident in the early childhood service and she felt she wanted more for her children, something that fitted with her values and aspirations.

Te Kōhanga reo offered what she felt was missing: Māori values, culture and language and an environment where Māori cultural capital and ways of knowing and being were normal. Ruth enrolled her children in a kōhanga reo and became involved in the Te Kōhanga Reo movement. During her time in the kōhanga reo she took part in kōhanga training and learnt basic Māori language. She and her family moved to a new subdivision and in 1989 she established a kōhanga reo. The kōhanga began in the family garage with little money or resources. Her mother and whānau helped with administration and the operation of the kōhanga.

Over her time in early childhood and kōhanga reo, Ruth became increasingly aware and concerned with the number of Māori children she saw failing in the schooling system, within the South Auckland region. She felt little was being done to curb these negative outcomes and she believed that failure had become the norm for many Māori children. She describes the children as being 'whakama' or shy, and she had a strong desire to help support their confidence and build their self esteem (Ruth,

13/07/05). She began to challenge practices that positioned Māori children in the deficit, and sought alternative perspectives. She believed that early childhood had a critical role to play in transforming this deficit positioning, but that this potential for change was not being recognised or encouraged. What was required, in Ruth's opinion, was for both Māori and Pākehā perspectives, values and beliefs to be equally acknowledged and respected so that Māori children and whānau received the best of both worlds. For her it was not an either-or option.

In 1995, Ruth and her whānau established a new early childhood service as a means of generating solutions for her concerns. The new service allowed Ruth and her whānau the opportunity to realise their dreams, to give children the best of both worlds: of te Ao Māori, reo and tikanga, together with an educational programme reflecting all the aspects of the Pākehā culture. This they considered would support children to succeed and achieve in the education system. It is also in accord with Ngata's whakataukī (previous chapter), which encourages the child to grow and thrive into their future, utilising the resources offered by both cultures. The parents that enrolled their children at the service also shared this Kaupapa Māori vision of promoting excellence within the Māori as well as the Pākehā worlds.

The service kaupapa reflects this focus:

*To prepare children for school. To give them the confidence to question, when they do not understand something. To openly discuss situations or events. For children to understand their tikanga and use it when an event calls for it. To know who they are and what they are as a person is important. Their identity. To learn to challenge things and challenge life. To test the barriers and boundaries and learn to take risks in order to*

*problem solve. To establish relationships with peers and ongoing friendships. To be a part of tuakana teina and understand how our elders look after our younger. To learn life skills in an environment where they are loved and understood (Research Notes, 20/04/03).*

## **8.2 Ngā Tuakiri O Te Tangata – Māori Identities**

In 2003, the service was approached to work on the *Te Whatu Pōkeka: Kaupapa Māori Learning and Assessment Exemplar Development* project and this doctoral study. For service kaiako, beginning the exploration of what Kaupapa Māori assessment could mean to them required in depth analysis of what made them Māori, different to mainstream centres, and how the differences were reflected in the centre. Kaiako did not find it easy to explicate Māori early childhood practices from generic early childhood practices. The initial work focused on raising awareness and articulating what kaiako did that was specifically Māori, that expressed and reflected 'being Māori' and discussions on why these practices, routines and understandings were important to 'being Māori'.

*What made us unique from other centres? What strategies did we have in place? What types of assessments did we use? What was the basis of our framework? My gosh what did we do? (Ruth, 01/09/03).*

Being Māori was not something kaiako had explored previously; it was 'taken for granted', just 'what people did'. It was related to individual kaiako's upbringings, experiences and backgrounds, including: knowledge of whakapapa, iwi/hapū/whānau and whenua connectedness; understandings and experiences of the Māori world; te reo abilities; and comfort with being and reflecting Māori identities in a modern urban environment. A review of the types and frequency of Māori activities being provided in the service was key to critically reflecting on what

'being Māori' entailed in the centre Questions were asked about everyday events such as karakia and mihi. What was the rationale for these activities? Why were they important? What does it mean? Who is it for? Who benefits? From the review the kaiako realised that what they saw as normal practise was not necessarily normal for other centres.

*So it was about trying to find out what is special to just us and what is normal to everyone else. So, eating a meal was normal to everybody else, maybe having a karakia and a waiata in the morning was the difference. So it was finding what is different and probably what defines us as the service that we are ... We knew and we practised it, but to define why we are different, why we do things the way we do. ... made us look at what we took for granted ... and say 'this is why we are special' and 'this is why we are what we are' (Ruth, 18/04/05).*

A consequence of the reflections on Māori procedures, routines and activities, at least in the early stages of the work, was that kaiako began to focus on implementing more adult directed and initiated Māori activities. Many of these types of activities are not necessarily available to children in their everyday lives, especially in large urban settings, and so are not likely to be instigated by children. These types of activities included learning about Māori rituals of encounter and marae etiquette.

*The reflection process resulted in more adult directed activities ... based on tikanga Māori. As child initiated activities are common in the centres ... it can be assumed that once educator competence and confidence grows in regards to Kaupapa Māori and te reo that they will not feel the need to direct the activities as much (Research Notes, 12/12/03).*

This raised important questions for kaiako: What is Kaupapa Māori assessment? Is it assessment of Māori activities and events, or content; or is it more about process and context?

*Stories have concentrated on documenting Māori activities such as mihimihi, karakia and waiata as these are both 'Kaupapa Māori' and assessment. Whether this is Kaupapa Māori assessment is still being discussed (Research Notes, 15/06/03).*

*The beginnings of the service framework are starting to emerge: ... does the interest come first, which is then related or articulated in terms of Kaupapa Māori theory? One of the factors is that the assessments are developed within a Kaupapa Māori context, so possibly this is not an issue (Research Notes, 10/06/04).*

An unforeseen outcome of the focus on adult directed and initiated Māori activities, was that children and whānau were able to engage, in a small, but safe way, with their cultural identity. This was significant as large numbers of urban Māori struggle to make meaningful links to their culture, language and identity and the sense of cultural homelessness is real.

*In many modern contexts tikanga Māori may not be a lived reality for children so [kaiako are] responsibility for ensuring Māori children have the opportunity to experience their culture and language. Adult directed teaching is a way of introducing aspects of tikanga that may not be available to children in their communities (Research Notes 12/12/03).*



### 8.2.1 Reflecting from a Māori Lens

Part of the process of articulating what kaiako did that was specifically Māori, involved defining what Kaupapa Māori meant for the service and children. It was noted that children were participating in many of the same sorts of activities as would be available in any other non-Māori early childhood service, such as painting, play dough and so on. Kaiako therefore had to examine their point of difference. Ruth highlights the differences in cultural norms as the basis for emerging confidence.

*We must be even more comfortable now because we've gone out to the whole play area ... all the things that aren't naturally Māori (Ruth, 18/04/05).*

Although the service worked from a Kaupapa Māori base they had not had the opportunity to reflect on what this meant or to articulate values that underpinned their philosophy, assessment practices and 'being Māori'. The reflection allowed kaiako the space or the luxury to explore in depth what Kaupapa Māori meant for the kaiako team, tamariki and whānau as well as its expression in the service's routines, procedures, activities and events.

*... so that was a great opportunity for us. And then the fact that I was working with my own framework and how I did assessment, it gave me the chance to put what I believe in a format, on paper (Ruth, 12/02/08).*

Reflection and critique were therefore essential aspects of the service's Kaupapa Māori praxis process, with kaiako reflecting on the service philosophy and its relation to Māori children's learning. Research Notes highlight the researcher's thoughts, after discussions at a monthly

meeting, regarding the connections between valued learning and assessment.

*If we accept that assessment is concerned with teaching and learning that is valued by a particular culture or group of people (after all we do not tend to document and assess learning that is not valued), then the first stage of the development process must be the defining of what are important and valued learnings for the particular group or culture. For this to occur educators must reflect on their philosophy and how it is reflected in practice (12/12/03)*

Kaiako explored what behaviours and actions were acceptable or encouraged for Māori that may not be for other cultures. Comparisons were drawn between Māori and Pākehā ideals of development, what aspects were perceived as important within specific cultures and encouraged or alternatively discouraged. Kaiako began to realise that their ways of thinking, feeling and behaving were aspects of a Māori identity, and the service's practices were located within distinctively Māori interpretive systems that were different to most early childhood services.

*I think there's a very big difference between European culture and our culture, what is acceptable and what is not acceptable. We are very different (Ruth, 18/04/05).*

Tuakana/Teina is an example of ways of thinking, seeing and behaving that are distinctly Māori.

*We talked about how important concepts such as Tuakana/Teina are reflected in the service and the ways adults acknowledge and encourage these types of behaviours and actions (Research Notes, 12/12/03).*

Viewing learning through a Māori lens required a positioning of both historical and contemporary Māori ways of knowing and being within learning. Refocusing or reclaiming Māori ways of viewing and reflecting development was a key to the development of what Maaka & Fleras (2005, p. 66) called an 'inclusive supra-Māori identity'.

*For me, what it says is that you have to look at ... through Māori ... you have to see it through Māori eyes in order to understand (Ruth, 12/02/08).*

Developing shared cultural understandings was the starting place for thinking about assessment framework development. For example the whanaunga links were vital for the service to develop strong meaningful relationships with whānau/ hapū/iwi; understanding, acknowledging and expressing whanaungatanga to 'being Māori' for Māori children and whānau. Kaiako encouraged a sense of whanaungatanga through routines and procedures, as it was important for Māori children to enhance self esteem and confidence. Discussions focused on the way whanaungatanga was discouraged in mainstream centres without the teachers realising and how this could lead to centres feeling very cold and unwelcoming to Māori whānau.

### **8.3 Te Āhua O Te Tamaiti - The Māori Child**

An ongoing discussion for kaiako was around historical Māori perspectives of the child, childrearing and education that do not necessarily fit with contemporary early childhood health and safety

expectations. For example in historical Māori society, the child was embedded within the life of the community, where all aspects of life were open. In this environment the child learned, through observation, imitation and practice, the valued learnings, skills, attitudes, and moral codes of the community. Furthermore, freedom and high spiritedness were encouraged in order to develop spirited adults who would fight for the mana of their people. Discussions emphasised the image of the Māori child as a receptacle of the strengths and abilities of their ancestors, and therefore as inherently competent and capable. The child who is free: in mind, body and spirit. This recognised the spiritual traits the child inherits from ancestors, such as mana, mauri and wairua, as fundamental to the child's wellbeing and learning.

*In terms of an assessment tool maybe we [the researcher and the kaiako together] could be looking at the development of self confidence and self esteem, mapping children's growth of confidence...again a very complex and subjective task (Research Notes, 01/10/04).*

### **8.3.1 Māui as a focus of interest**

In early 2005 Māui emerged as a focus of interest. It came about from discussions around the jawbone taonga that the centre gave to children on leaving the service. What became clear from the discussions was that the answers to their questions on assessment framings were already part of kaiako thinking and had been all along. What was needed was a reimagining of that thinking in terms of assessment.

*I had written about the different atua and associated this to that and I had a bit of a write up on Māui, and you said to me, 'What do you mean Māui?' and I said, 'Oh when we first started back in Kōhanga Reo, this is what I believed and so everything we did, our taonga we bought for our*

*children was all based on Māui. And you said, 'Well that sounds like what you're telling me through all of this' (Ruth, 12/02/08).*

The service had for many years viewed Māui as a mentor, an inspiration for the service practice and operation and were able to articulate their understandings of how Māui's characteristics could be utilised in assessing teaching and learning. They viewed Māui's behaviours and characteristics as a template for life, and began to research further on this topic.

*I loved the discussion around the jawbone that [the centre] gives as a taonga to every child who leaves the centre. It really for me strengthens the thinking around Māui – it was all there, what was required was the discussion and articulation. We just drew on what was there and reified it so that we could see it clearly. It is so important that there are strong connections that fit, it all must fit (Research Notes, 23/03/05).*

This was a surprise for the kaiako. Once they identified Māui, it was an obvious assessment framework choice. The question they asked was “why didn't we see it sooner”?

*It's funny really. Once we had thought about the frameworks we began seeing the behaviours in children. Ruth's moko came in and we all kind of looked at each other and said yes that's Māui behaviour. It will be interesting to see what actually comes out. I am secretly hoping it will be Māui because I see it fits better than the others [framings] however we'll see (Research Notes, 23/03/05).*

*Once we realised we used Māui continuously we then started defining what Māui meant to us as a mentor. His characteristics were what we strived to encourage or facilitate in our children (Ruth, 23/04/07).*

*Māui has always been our ... mentor as far as what I want from the children for them to achieve, but actually defining it ... because we went through a lot of stages ... the atua and all those different things and it ended up coming back to something that we'd thought of years and years before (Ruth, 12/02/08).*

#### **8.4 Aromatawai - Assessment**

Prior to 2002 the service was using a variety of assessment approaches, which they had borrowed from other centres including checklists and photographs. The approach was based upon development models of assessment which focused on measuring skills, finding gaps and filling them. Ruth adds that at this time in the journey there was little fit or coherence between their assessment approaches and the service philosophy. Furthermore assessments were being completed primarily to meet the requirements of outside agencies such as the Education Review Office and Ministry of Education, rather than to highlight children's learning for educators, whānau and children.

*We were following templates ... that never fit ... to be honest ... we were really filling in spaces to suit everybody else ... more than writing ... what we believed we saw and what we believed we wanted (Ruth, 12/02/08).*

##### **8.4.1 Kei Tua o Te Pae/Te Whatu Pōkeka**

When work began on the *Kei Tua o Te Pae* project in early 2002 there was a lot of uncertainty among kaiako. Educational assessment was new to most

so there was a great deal of doubt about what the service could contribute to the project.

*[Kei Tua o Te Pae] ... made us look at assessment and how we do things. It was one thing to do observations but looking at the continual picture and where to from here really made us reassess our way of assessment. A lot of hit and misses with the first type of assessments and to be honest total fumbling. Have had major doubts and uncertainty (Ruth, 18/04/05).*

*[I had never been] satisfied with what we were writing ... so therefore our assessments weren't as regular and probably weren't as developmental for the child, or for anyone to see (Ruth, 12/02/08).*

The *Kei Tua o Te Pae* project required that the service critique their assessment procedures and this provoked much thought about what learning they should be capturing and how. The service had recognised the value of photographs as a means of capturing children's activities in the service and had amassed large numbers of photographs over the years. Kaiako were able to articulate stories associated with the photographs, with confidence. However there was little documentation of the stories or the learning was taking place. As the kaiako knew the stories and events associated with the photographs it was decided to go through the photographs and write up some stories as a starting place. It soon became apparent however that the majority of the photographs did not show children at play. Although images could be important assessment tools they needed to focus on capturing stories of children's learning rather than accumulating a collection of pretty pictures.

*Photos were plentiful but depicted a beautiful child posing. No learning ... with children doing something and the 'where to?' and the wow factor (Research Notes, 23/4/07).*

In 2003 the service was approached to work on the *Te Whatu Pōkeka* project and this doctoral study. Ruth states that for the service, much of the work completed previous to working on the *Te Whatu Pōkeka* project, was aimed at learning and conforming to what they viewed as the norms of assessment. Working on the *Te Whatu Pōkeka* project made them realise that they were, in fact, not 'the norm' and that it was important to express and reflect this difference in their assessment practices.

*First we did the [Kei Tua o Te Pae] project ... but I felt as though it was just really conforming to what was already out there and just using their guidelines like the learning stories ... So when you approached us about the Māori exemplars, ... it was a chance for us to see ... to put in our assessment ... what we believed and what is ... not so much the norm (Ruth, 12/02/08).*

The *Kei Tua o Te Pae* project had been a catalyst to begin to examine assessment processes. Work on *Te Whatu Pōkeka* project involved exploring and articulating what Māori ways of knowing and being meant in early childhood education, what assessment meant, and what Kaupapa Māori assessment practice might look like. Kaiako critically reflected on what they had learnt about assessment that did not fit comfortably with the service philosophy. They realised that appropriate alternatives were needed, ones based upon their own assessment thinking and Māori ways of knowing and being. It involved re-imagining their own priorities, developing their own approaches, and determining their own goals: fundamental features of kaupapa Māori theory and praxis.



*Kaupapa Māori assessment we felt maybe was better for us, but this was also a lot of scratching heads and where are we going (Ruth, 12/02/08).*

#### **8.4.2 Uncertainty and assessment**

Kaupapa Māori assessment was a very new concept for the service. Developing Kaupapa Māori assessment understandings and practices, was a huge challenge for all concerned. It involved venturing into the unknown, where there were no structures or framework to guide the work. This resulted in a deep sense of uncertainty about where to begin and what could be produced. It involved kaiako struggling to make sense of their own world and thinking, while attempting to articulate it so that others could understand.

*Uncertainty is an underlying thread that weaves through much of the work on the project ... Today Ruth described it as 'fumbling along hoping for the best' (Research Notes, 26/11/06)*

Much of this uncertainty related to the amount of contradictory information on assessment available in the sector, which continues to draw from a range of assessment discourses and ideologies. Kaiako felt overwhelmed by the different approaches, and had genuine fears about doing assessment 'right'. Kaiako believed there was a right way to assess, that others knew it, and that they didn't.

*I'm unsure about ... what we were previously doing, but I don't fully understand this type of assessment or what I'm meant to be doing (Ruth, 18/04/05).*

*Is this right? Am I doing it right? Is there a right and wrong way? But if you don't know what you're doing in the first place you're only going to see a wrong way (Ruth, 12/02/08).*

Kaiako attended a number of workshops on assessment, planning and evaluation, but there was much inconsistency of information given by different providers. Despite *Te Whāriki* providing loose guidelines for assessment, it left much open to interpretation. Lack of understandings of assessment made it 'scary' for many kaiako. Ruth highlights this when she states that kaiako:

*had no idea ... they didn't understand ... they didn't have the knowledge of assessment and so ... it was scary to them. One of them did say it was actually scary (Ruth, 12/02/08).*

### **8.4.3 No right way**

This fear lessened with the realisation that in fact there was no one right way to do assessments, that in fact assessment thinking was subjective and socio-culturally determined. This allowed kaiako the freedom to develop their ideas and practices.

*After many consultations ... we realised that yes we had ... a framework and what we did and taught was unique to us as a centre. Fine tuning this having a written format for our framework and looking at our assessments was the beginning (Ruth, 1/9/03).*

*... I didn't think it was the right answer. But in actual fact there wasn't a right answer (Ruth, 18/04/05).*

#### **8.4.4 Removing the word**

Another major turning point for kaiako was the act of removing the word 'assessment', reconceptualising and reconstituting the word.

*I think ... if you look at the word 'assessment', the word 'documentation' ... they're quite powerful words. You know ... what is assessment? I remember saying when we were talking about even coming on the project. What is assessment to you? I have no idea. 'Cos straight away there's a block, that's scary (Ruth, 12/02/08).*

*I have thrown away the word 'assessment' ... because that word tends to give me a block. So that's what I do now, I write a time in a child's life (Ruth, 12/02/08).*

Through the process of critiquing, and deconstructing assessment ideas, kaiako were able to make way for alternative understandings, theories and constructs. It involved removing the blocks that limited the opportunities for growth. In Ruth's case this involved completely removing the word 'assessment'. For others as confidence grew and kaupapa Māori assessment understandings and practices developed, there was some reconciliation with the term.

#### **8.4.5 Documentation**

A growing sense of confidence and self belief began to develop as a result of the ongoing critique and deconstruction of assessment theories and practices, including those based on maturation and behaviourism. In 2005 kaiako began to develop deeper understandings and emerging comfort and ease with their practice. Yet the documentation continued to be challenging.

*'Documentation'. What sort of documentation do you want? What do you want me to write? What do you expect from me? So that is quite scary (Ruth, 12/02/08).*

Kaiako felt anxious, uncertain and insecure about their writing skills. They believed assessments needed to be written in an academic manner. This unease with writing was a huge barrier to progress.

*The question is 'am I doing it right?', 'will I embarrass myself with my writing' and 'I don't really know what the learning is' (Research Notes, 10/10/04).*

Kaiako anxiety came from the fear of being judged by colleagues and whānau and outside agencies. The real question for kaiako was who is being assessed, them or the children?

*but assessment is scary because I think it's ... as much as I'm writing an assessment about a child, what I'm writing is being assessed on how I write it (Ruth 18/04/05).*

This resulted in assessment stories being quite cold and clinical compared with the wonder and joy evident when kaiako verbally related the stories. The written word seemed to rob the children, of their power and energy, their *mana, mauri and wairua*.

*I think the kaiako are natural story tellers but the written documentation is difficult for them as they lose much of the essence of the story once it's written (Researchers Notes, 10/10/04).*

Kaiako were able to talk to the stories but documenting them remained an issue for much of the research period. A number of options were explored such as dictating onto a dictaphone. The problem was however that either way someone still had to take the time to write up the stories whereas taking a photo was quick and did not require too much effort.

*Discussion was held on how to support the development of effective documentation processes, which tends to be the centre's biggest obstacle (Research Notes, 24/3/04).*

Not only was documentation viewed as difficult and scary it was also viewed as over and above normal duties rather than as integral to their roles. Finding time in their working day to do assessments was a major issue for kaiako.

*Discussions on how to make the documentation and analysis process less time consuming and easier to fit into a busy day (Research Notes, 01/07 04).*

A major breakthrough came in late 2004 when the focus moved from: How do we assess? to Who are the assessments for?

*It is I believe a matter of supporting their confidence in writing the stories but it is also about defining who [kaiako] are writing the stories for (Research Notes, 10/10/04).*

#### 4.5.1 Audience -writing for the whānau

In early 2005 the decision was made that kaiako write the assessments specifically for the whānau using words and terms that whānau would understand. It was hoped that writing for the whānau would lessen the

pressure on kaiako to adhere to academic and professional writing standards that were alien to them. Viewing children's learning from a whānau perspective, from a nanny's perspective made sense to kaiako.

*It changed our whole way we took photos, how we wrote up. You start writing ... how you want that story to be read ... example, Nana reading that story ... how is the Nana going to feel? I want to feel what that Nana's going to feel and have that excitement (Ruth, 12/02/08).*

*The parents when they see them, they understand what's going on (Ruth, 12/02/08).*

The focus on documenting stories and events that were meaningful for the whānau, changed the focus of documentation. Rather than trying to assess in an objective and systematic way, kaiako concentrated on developing Kaupapa Māori whānau based assessments; which were unapologetically subjective and aimed to capture the child the whānau knew and recognised.

*They're more personal ... And the parents' reactions ... they love it. They tell me, 'You know my child. I know exactly what you mean when you say ... I love reading it' (Ruth, 12/02/08).*

*I'm actually able to write and feel and understand and know what the parents want to read ... what I want to read and ... it's exciting. I really can't put it down to one thing. But I do love writing my stories now and I can honestly say I didn't before (Ruth, 12/02/08).*

In order to capture the child the whānau recognised it was important to take a whānau perspective: a conscious effort, to celebrate children's

successes, and feel the whānau excitement in the child's learning and achievements, the 'wow' factor.

*This changed the way we wrote our stories and what we were capturing was fun, milestone things that we could keep and talk and laugh about and see learning through and through (Ruth, 12/02/08).*

*I can read that story ten years later and it will still bring a tear to my eye'. It's not to say that what we were doing before had no feeling, it was just writing, really to get that assessment done (Ruth, 12/02/08).*

#### 8.4.5.2 Ecology of assessment

Kaiako recognised the whānau as the audience for assessments but also in terms of assessment reciprocity, where assessments and stories were brought into the service by the whānau and community. Kaiako discussed how whānau were relating stories to them about what had happened or been seen out in the community and there was a growing recognition that these were valid assessments of children's learning. It also recognised the important place of children in the Māori world, the powerful Māori child, competent, wealthy and confident, the child's connectedness to their whānau/hapū/iwi, and the role of whānau/hapū/iwi in contributing to children's learning and development. The story of a grandmother's pride in her mokopuna's learning within a whānau/hapū context reflects these features.

*Kaiako related a story of one of their older children being asked to start the karakia at a recent tangi. The child attended the tangi with her grandmother who was so proud of the incident and related the story to the centre. The assessment therefore was a community/whānau assessment outside of the context of the centre (Research Notes, 1/9/03).*

The child's learning including her competence in te reo were recognised by the elders at the tangi, and by whānau/hapū/iwi. This 'ecology of assessment' incorporates assessments from outside the service environment and grounds the service within a wider more complex context where informal assessments are inherent in day to day living.

*Ecology of Assessment- Linked to holistic assessment is the acknowledgement that assessment can be multi-levelled and extremely complex. Assessment may be made on different levels – community, whānau, educators, peers, individual children and in Māori contexts this is common. An example of this was when one of their children was asked to begin the karakia at a hui. This is an acknowledgement by kaumatua of the marae and the whānau that the child had the appropriate knowledge to carry out this important task (Research Notes, 12/12/03).*

#### 8.4.5.3 Whakapapa of assessment

Stories were often written without background information in the early assessment attempts. Kaiako knew the background of the stories, and the significance of the stories, however failed to communicate this in the written assessments. Articulating the history of the story, what kaiako just knew, was an important step in the process.

*'Whakapapa of assessment' recognises that learning does not occur separate from the context of the learning and is a determinant of the learning. The whole story is therefore important to the learning, the factors that brought about and instigated the learning are as important as the learning itself and cannot be omitted from the story of the learning. 'Whakapapa' reminds us that there are at least two contributing factors that bring about a learning situation and that these contributing factors*



*can and should be retraced to gain a fuller picture of what is happening for the child (Research Notes, 26/11/06).*

*We talked about the need to document the stories in full so as to give the reader a clearer picture of what occurred and the history of the story (Research Notes, 24/3/04).*

#### 8.4.5.4 Recognition of benefits

As kaiako became more comfortable and confident with Kaupapa Māori assessment theorising, their competence with documentation also grew, and they began to take personal responsibility for the development of assessments. Whereas previously the impending monthly visit from the researcher was the driver for work, the benefits of the assessments themselves began to drive assessment documentation.

*kaiako made the point that they are taking more individual responsibility for completing work whereas previously the impetus had been my visits (Research Notes, 01/12/04).*

*And putting it on paper ... that was the biggest thing, writing it down ... once you did that ... everything fell together (Ruth, 12/02/08).*

From the documentation came a sense of pride, enjoyment and satisfaction.

*I think it's because I understand what I'm doing; I now love writing my stories. It's not a task. When it's a task it's not good. But now I love writing (Ruth, 12/02/08).*

#### 8.4.5.5 Ngā reo e rua -both languages

A further point with regard to documenting of assessments was about language, whether assessments be written in Māori, English or both languages. It was felt that in order to maintain and reflect their service philosophy, all assessments needed to be written in both languages. This however posed a problem for some, as not all kaimahi were able to write assessments in both languages. The problem was overcome with support being accessed from kaiako and whānau who were more fluent in te reo.

*Some discussion about how the service wanted their (assessments), in Māori, English or both. They believe theirs should be in both in line with their philosophy and service name (Research Notes, 04/05/04).*

### 8.5 Te Haerenga – The Journey

The following section outlines some of the issues that arose for the service and outlines the emergent thinking related to the assessment framings.

#### 8.5.1 Doing it on your own

One issue for kaimahi related to the development of thinking and understandings in isolation. Ruth was often working in isolation within the centre, especially when other team members could not see her vision. She maintains that this was a pressure she put on herself and that this was heightened when she felt there was no progress being made or anything to offer.

*But I put pressure on myself ... what I saw my staff didn't see. And I felt on a few occasions that I was doing it on my own ... and I found that hard (Ruth, 12/02/08).*

Although there were others in the centre who were interested in the research no one else had the depth of understanding of what was trying to be achieved to give Ruth relevant and critical feedback. This resulted in her having problems working through her thinking and ideas by herself.

*Ruth has had problems trying to sort out her thinking by herself. She had spoken to ... who said that what she had done was great but didn't add anything that could help Ruth's deliberations ... they ... haven't been part of the theoretical dialogue so cannot support further discussion (Research Notes, 18/4/05).*

Ruth felt having another person in the centre that was also committed to the work, who she could talk to and bounce ideas and thinking off would have been a great support.

*[It] would be to explain to two people in the one centre, so straight off, you've got two people supporting each other (Ruth, 18/04/05).*

### **8.5.2 Role of the researcher**

Monthly meetings between the researcher, Ruth and sometimes others were crucial in supporting the work and lessening Ruth's sense of isolation. Having a discussion partner, someone to support and co-construct thinking, a knowledgeable other, a professional, a collegial collaborator, was critical to the development of her understandings and practices.

*So it wasn't a matter of handing you over a few pieces of paper, 'Here, this is what I've done' ... like an assignment. But just the actual sitting there for a couple of hours talking and going through things. So that was my input for the month, sort of thing... there were quite a few times I just*

*thought, 'Oh God, what have I got to offer you' ... but just our conversation and then when you'd leave I'd say to Mum, 'Jeez, that was actually all right' and it was really good just talking ... so having times like that was good because it wasn't all about the paperwork. Sometimes it was just sitting and talking about how things had been, what I'd been feeling or what's going on and just pulling things out (Ruth, 12/02/08).*

A further benefit of having an outside support person was that it offered Ruth and the centre kaiako another, objective view that could highlight aspects of the work that may not have been obvious to kaiako.

*You had the luxury of coming from my setting to another setting to another setting, so you were able to say... is going through the same thing. Look they're having the same problems (Ruth, 12/02/08).*

A further requirement of the support person was realistic expectations of the team and understandings of the time and energy requirements required for the work. Ruth makes the point that allowing time and space for the development to take place was important as was an understanding of the background issues facing the centre.

*But you actually allowed me the time ... the space, which is what I needed ... I could actually cope with seeing you ... but had there been a phone call or anything, it could have been enough to ... say, 'Look, I've had enough'. So you knew when to give us time, you knew when to allow that space and you knew when it was all right ... there were times I could have [said] 'That's it!' but ... there was no pressure. If there was pressure, it was my own pressure that I put on myself (Ruth, 12/02/08).*

Ruth acknowledges the importance to the research that the support person shares the same cultural understandings, values and thinking. This meant there was no requirement to articulate ideas for others, nor justify concepts and behaviours.

*And it had to be an approachable person that I could ... really talk to and really relate to because over the period ... I had a lot of ups and downs ... it had to be a Māori for me to actually open up and trust, and we had to have that time before ... the building up for me to actually get those relationships and to actually trust you (Ruth, 12/02/08).*

Associated with the importance of shared cultural understandings was the importance of strong whanaungatanga relationships that the researcher had developed and maintained from the previous two years work. As previously stated the researcher was viewed more as a whānau member than an outside researcher. Trust had already been established and power was shared within the research paradigm, which entailed recognising what each person brought to the conversation and learning from others. The researcher was therefore not viewed as the expert nor did the researcher have a stronger voice than others, rather it was a collaborative approach which strengthened and supported the understandings of all.

*... then there were days when I said to you, 'I don't want to be on it any more. I feel as if I'm not giving you what you need and I just don't think we're going to benefit the project'. And you persevered and [said]... 'No, we'll be fine' and we [were] (Ruth, 12/02/08).*

### **8.5.3 Hui**

The service participated in twice yearly Tamaki Makaurau *cluster hui*. These provided opportunities for kaiako from the two Auckland services

to: exchange ideas, discuss their developing understandings of teaching and learning, share examples of assessment, and discuss their successes and challenges. The cluster hui were useful for the kaiako in that they were able to showcase their work, receive feedback and more importantly realise that they had the same or similar issues and interests as everyone else. Kaiako stated that they found the cluster hui particularly uplifting.

*This hui was far less formal and open, which allowed both centres to discuss openly problems and barriers they had encountered whilst working on the project. They were also able to suggest solutions to problems or dilemma that each [service] had faced (Research Notes, 01/12/04).*

Kaiako also attended twice yearly Kaimahi hui that were held with the five participating *Te Whatu Pōkeka* centres from across the country. This offered kaiako the opportunity to discuss issues related to the work. These hui proved to be critical in relieving the sense of isolation and uncertainty around the work.

*The hui provided the opportunity for educators to exchange ideas and experiences and maybe more importantly develop relationships that support each centres emerging thinking and approaches. Participants are getting to know and trust each other which supports their ongoing communication (Research Notes, 15/11/04).*

Realising that all the services were having the same types of struggles was comforting. Being able to discuss the struggles and how each service was working through the issues was particularly supportive.

*And then when you hear that other people on the project are having the same pressures, feeling the same things, I was really rapt because then I*

*wasn't the only one going through it. They were struggling as much as we were struggling and they were coming up with the same problems that we were ... So it was sort of satisfying that everybody else was having those problems, you know, so then you didn't feel alone ... You felt almost human again because everyone that was on the project faced the same dilemmas that you had and we're trying to work through those and you could actually advise, 'This is what I did' ... so you formed that real good understanding with people ... yeah, you're not alone (Ruth 12/02/08).*

The Kaimahi hui not only helped with the sense of isolation but put into perspective each centres progress.

*You did think you were on your own ... like everybody must be way ahead of you ... but it wasn't like that when we'd met. You might get someone who's clicked onto something a little bit faster, but ... I felt we all moved and experienced the same problems and went through the same things and it was very satisfying. Yeah, because you're not alone ... you know that was a big thing (Ruth, 12/02/08).*

The hui also allowed kaiako to look to the future and focus on future developments.

*And it really was just a time to sort of let loose about the whole project and then know, 'Okay, that's us for another round and then move on'. I think they were very important those touch-base ones, very, very important (Ruth, 12/02/08).*

#### **8.5.4 Time and energy**

There were many obstacles or barriers to progress throughout the three years of development. Probably the biggest barrier was the time and

energy requirements of kaiako. Much time and energy was required over a sustained period of time.

*The centre operation has to be the first priority and this takes much energy and time. Despite this they seem to enjoy and gain a lot from our regular hui and discussions and I think it supports all of our developing understandings of Kaupapa Māori theory and assessment. I believe the commitment is there even if the time and sometimes the energy are not (Research Notes, 08/01/04).*

One strategy was to free Ruth up from teaching in order to put in a concerted effort on the assessment work. Ruth states that one of the biggest supports for her was the break from the service for meetings and discussions.

*A breakthrough for you and I was ... when I started doing our meetings away from the centre. I felt as though I wasn't achieving because I was getting called out here and there and the phone ... once we made that decision ... I'd take a couple of hours off and we'd go somewhere else ... There were no interruptions, ... allowing me the time away ... I felt we made a lot of ground at that time (Ruth, 12/02/08).*

Encouraging kaiako participation and commitment was another barrier faced by the centre.

*But it was really hard trying to explain something to them [kaiako] when I was only just grasping it myself ... Now, if I was to show someone now, I'd know exactly ... what I'm looking for (Ruth, 12/02/08).*



In roads began to be made in supporting kaiako understandings when assessments were shared with kaiako and collaboratively examined for the learning that was evident. This in effect, made the learning visible, and for the kaiako, it became do-able.

*Probably the biggest breakthrough for me was when my staff started realising that they were on track, when they were bringing me over little [notes] ... on pieces of paper saying, 'This is the story' (Ruth 12/02/08).*

#### **8.5.5 Ruth works with centre kaiako**

One strategy utilised to gain buy-in from kaiako was to work with smaller groups of kaiako.

*One thing I did do, instead of showing the whole ten staff ... was I took a couple of staff from each centre and worked with them. So if I could get a couple on board understanding, then maybe that would filter through ... and it was one of those staff ... that actually came back with some good stuff (Ruth, 12/02/08).*

The researcher also undertook professional development with the centre kaiako which took pressure off Ruth.

*I am working more closely with kaiako as a way of keeping them informed ...also it takes the pressure off Ruth to continually push people along (Research Notes, 12/06/05).*

#### **8.5.6 Life**

*LIFE is an issue ...when you're looking after two centres and you're their supporter ... and the different things that are going on (Ruth, 18/04/05).*

Family issues, illness, workloads and outside stressors sometimes meant the work had to be put on the back burner until the issues were resolved or people were able to refocus on the work.

*... is still away and kaiako are now feeling the pressure of holding the centre operation together. Much of the kaiako's energies have been reserved for ensuring the centre is running smoothly which has resulted in little work being completed ... in the last month. At this month's meeting we talked about some content, formatting and presentation issues however we are aware that there will not be much opportunity for kaiako to get back into the work until ... returns (Research Notes, 02/07/04).*

#### **8.5.7 Staffing**

A major barrier to progress throughout the three years was the recruitment and retention of appropriately qualified staff, meaning Ruth was constantly required to relieve. There did not seem to be an easy solution. Compounding this issue was the training requirements of permanent staff members including training days out each week to attend classes and practicum requirements.

*Associated with this factor is that of staff acquisition. Attracting staff with the appropriate skills, knowledge and qualifications to work in a bi-cultural/bi-lingual centre is not always easy and is an ongoing barrier (Research Notes, 23/04/07).*

As the assessment development process required building on existing understandings, when staff were constantly changing there was a need to continually go back and recover old ground. This impacted on the centres ability to move forward. Staff turnover was a major barrier to progress.

*The ability to retain staff is another factor... When staffing is stable the centre can move forward, however when staffing changes are ongoing we needed to keep going back over old ground (Research Notes, 23/04/07).*

## **8.6 Te Whakapiki Whakaaro/ Emergent Thinking**

Key factors in the service's progress were issues of fit and comfort.

Research Notes (18/04/05) highlight their importance to the process.

*[kaiako] needed to find something that was going to fit comfortably and once [they] did it, [they] were away...it became so clear and it fitted so comfortably. Fit is an important issue, so that it actually feels good.*

*Once a clearer understanding of the framework emerged, a framework that made sense and fitted with the service and kaiako, a lot of work was possible in a very short time (Research Notes, 18/04/05).*

*Discussion issues that were not a good fit tended to be difficult if not impossible to integrate into the framework despite a huge amount of effort. The opposite can be said for those aspects that on reflection fitted comfortably with service values and understandings. These aspects tended to be seen as common sense and natural as opposed to new thinking (Research Notes, 22/05/05).*

A number of assessment framings were explored throughout Phase One of the research period. The following are brief accounts of some of these framings. All framings are derived from a strong Māori philosophical and epistemological foundation.

### **8.6.1 Mana and assessment**

Mapping the development of mana was one of the centre's first attempts at an assessment framing. It was the recognition of the need to support and enhance the inherent power of the child, in order for them to succeed and achieve.

*We have begun long discussions on what may be a focus ... of a service assessment framework. The area of developing self confidence and self esteem is a key area of interest for Ruth as it fits with the service aspirations and philosophy. Mapping the growth of confidence in children from when they first start at the service to when the confident, competent four-year old leaves the service (Research Notes, 10/06/04).*

### **8.6.2 Tāne and baskets of knowledge - engagement**

Another area of interest related to 'levels of engagement' and how to cater for children who were interested in delving deeper into specific areas or activities.

*Not sure how it could evolve but we've been looking at how levels of engagement can be linked to the heavens that Tāne climbed to fetch the baskets of knowledge. Tāne's ascent of the heavens has been interpreted by some as an ascent of the mind, involving climbing the levels of knowledge and understanding to knowledge rather than a physical ascent to a physical place. This is a really interesting idea to be explored in more depth (Research Notes, 22/07/04).*

Associated with this were questions of how to cater for children who were interested in delving deeper into specific areas, who wanted to ascend the heavens of understanding. How were kaiako to support children to explore their interests in a more in-depth manner? This was a challenge as

it required a major shift in thinking and practice; a movement past the surface, to purposefully located teaching, research and inquiry.

*The thinking has been around how we would be able to recognise the different levels of engagement and the movement through the levels. It's actually a very complex concept, subjective in nature and extremely difficult to define. I am also concerned that it has a strongly cognitive focus on development and posits learning solely with and within the individual (Research Notes, 22/07/04).*

### **8.6.3 Ngā ātua Māori**

At one stage a number of frameworks were being explored including Ngā Atua Māori. The focus was on how the characteristics of each atua could be utilised to assess children's learning. This framework required that kaiako examine each atua and flesh out aspects that related to valued learning for children.

*I think we were going on the Atua side of things, ... but then it started going off that and then some of Māui's traits came in. It wasn't until I said "this is what we have always done" ... and then it was more comfortable... normal. I don't know why I went to the Atua, I think it was the beginning, ...everything starts with a beginning ...you have to have those Atua (Ruth, 18/04/05).*

### **8.6.4 Māui**

Following the discussions in 8.3.1 kaiako began the process of articulating their assessment framework based on the characteristics of Māui. It was something they believed in, lived and were committed to.

*Working on this concept once established made the journey understandable because there was a knowing now and links to Māui (The Māui Child) (Ruth, 23/04/07).*

*We were able to link our framework in assessment and know where to go from here and children's learnings, assessments were captured and recorded (Ruth, 23/04/07).*

### **8.7 Te Taniko – Māui-tikitiki-a-Taranga Assessment Framing**

The following is an outline of the service's Māui-tikitiki-a-Taranga assessment framing.

Tihei Mauriora! Ki te Wheiao, ki te Ao-mārama.

Ka tu kei runga, ko wai koe?

Ko Tu, ko Rongo koe, ko Tāne koe

Ko te manuhiri i ahu mai i Hawaiki, nau mai

This sneeze is the sign of the new life in this world.

And when you are mature, whose shall you be?

You shall be dedicated to Tu, to Rongo, to Tāne.

To you who come from Hawaiki, we welcome your presence!

(Marsden, 2003, p. 125)

According to Māori tradition this chant is part of the dedication used at the birth of Māui tikitiki a Taranga, the demi-god, ancestor superhero of the Pacific. The chant is sometimes used to welcome visitors on to the marae or ancestral house. It links the visitors with the spiritual world and powers of the Māori gods, Tūmatauenga, Rongomātāne and Tāne Mahuta, just as it does Māui. It also makes reference to Hawaiki, the ancestral

Māori homeland, and provides a model of the universe that dates back 1000's of years (Shirres, 1997).

Walker (1996) makes the point that Māori thinking places the source of knowledge within that spiritual world, with the gods, and that in order to access this knowledge, mediation was required by intermediary ancestors (between gods and humans). Māui tikitiki a Taranga was able to fulfil this mediation role and pass the knowledge on to his human descendants. He had godly origins but also carried the seeds of humanity, a physical as well as a spiritual being. This genealogical connection moves Māui from the realms of myth and legend to one of physical form and ancestry (Keelan, & Woods, 2006).

Māui was a romantic figure, a mischief-maker, a culture hero described as courageous and wise and sometimes associated with negative characteristics such as laziness, deviousness, recklessness, and mischievous. His more favourable traits include intelligence, initiative, boldness, persistence and determination (Walker, 1996). He was, according to Walker (1990), the most important culture hero in Māori mythology, the prototype culture hero who overcame disadvantages and barriers to achieve fame and prestige. He served as a model, characterising personal qualities and traits valued in Māori society - Māui-mohio (great knowledge), Māui-atamai (quick-wittedness), Māui-toa (bravery). "He was quick, intelligent, bold, resourceful, cunning and fearless, epitomising the basic personality structures idealised by Māori society" (Walker, 1990, p.15). He was a trickster who used deception to achieve many of his accomplishments. This is where he derived his names, Māui-nukurau (trickster) and Māui tinihanga (of many devices).

The following is a description of the Māui characteristics defined by service kaiako which came to form the basis of the service assessment practices.

#### **8.7.1 Mana: identity, pride, inner strength, self assurance, confidence.**

As the pōtiki, the youngest, of five brothers, Māui was inherently low in status, low in the family hierarchy. Through his deeds he was able to acquire mana and serve his community (Walker, 1990). Hemara (2000) maintains traditionally it was important for Māori that children assert themselves and the mana of the whānau, hapū and iwi.

For the service the expression and assertion of mana included; standing up for oneself and others (being courageous), confidently stating ideas and thinking, having a positive view of one's abilities, views, relationships, self and place in the world and those of others. For this to happen children must know 'who they are' and where they belong, and be able to acknowledge and respect this in others.

#### **8.7.2 Manaakitanga: caring, sharing, kindness, friendship, nurturance.**

Manaaki is derived from the word 'mana.' Manaaki can be translated as 'to entertain or befriend, to show respect or kindness' (Patterson, 1992, p. 148). Hirini (1997) links manaaki with the whānau, hapū and iwi referring to the Māori view of self as fundamentally non-individualistic. Collective action and responsibilities are expressions of this social identity and associated social obligations (Patterson, 1992; Rameka, 2007; Reilly, 2004). Māui's feats can be seen as not only a quest for mana but more importantly as benefactor of man, through sharing the benefits of deeds with his human descendants.



For the service manaakitanga is reflected in behaviours that reflect the mana inherent within each person. It includes: showing respect and kindness to others, caring, sharing and being a friend. It requires that children develop empathy and connectedness with others, social and communal identities, and understandings of roles and responsibilities associated with those identities.

### **8.7.3 Whanaungatanga: developing relationships, taking responsibility for oneself and others.**

Whanaungatanga comes from the word whānau. Whanaungatanga or kinship is the way Māori view, maintain, and strengthen whānau/hapū/iwi relations. It involves rights, responsibilities, obligations and commitments among members that generate whānau/family cohesion and cooperation (Reilly, 2004).

To be a person is not to stand alone, but to be with one's people, and the deeper the oneness the more we are truly persons.... The persons we stand with are not only living but even more the ancestors, those members of the family who have already gone before us. So basic to being a person and being Māori is to be whānau, family, not just with the living, but also with the dead (Shirres, 1997, p. 53).

In a society such as the Māori society, where being surrounded by whānau was considered the natural way of being, a person without whānau was viewed as an aberration, outside the bounds of normal human life (Reilly, 2004).

For the service, whanaungatanga is evidenced in the ways children develop and maintain kinship relationships; take responsibility for themselves and others, and connect with others. It involves establishing and maintaining effective and equitable relationships and requires the recognition of what is inherent within the child, what the child brings to the context, including their whakapapa, their whānau/hapū/iwi and ancestors, their history and links to the land.

#### **8.7.4 Whakatoī: cheekiness, spiritedness, displaying and enjoying humour, having fun.**

Whakatoī can be translated as cheeky, annoying, or teasing. In traditional Māori society children were the centre of attention and affection, often indulged, fed on demand, undisciplined and wilful. Children were encouraged to be spirited and chastisement was very rarely condoned.

As the pōtiki of the family, Māui held a special status in traditional Māori society. Pōtiki were considered taonga and were often even more indulged, the favoured, precocious child (Morehu, 2009).

For the service whakatoī reflects the high spirited, confident, cheeky child. The confident, curious, social child who is humorous and enjoys humour and having fun.

#### **8.7.5 Rangatiratanga: confidence, self reliance, leadership, standing up for oneself, perseverance, determination, working through difficulty.**

Rangatira is a term for 'nobleman' or 'chief.' Rangatira encapsulates many of the Māori virtues, aspirations and human possibilities including ideas of beauty, strength and courage (Patterson, 1992). Within a Māori worldview, rangatiratanga includes a focus on individuals reaching their

highest potential in order to expand and deepen their talents and skills, thus strengthening and enhancing the whānau or collective (Macfarlane et al., 2005; Rameka, 2007). A feature of a rangatira is their innate chiefly qualities, inherited from ancestors, qualities inherent in all Māori children. Rangatiratanga acknowledges the chiefly origins of children.

For the service rangatiratanga is a combination of an adventurous spirit, including taking advantage of opportunities; an ability to observe and plan; work hard and learn; combined with a responsibility to nurture, mentor, share and be grateful

#### **8.7.6 Tinihanga: cunningness, trickery, deception, testing limits, challenging, questioning, curiosity, exploring, risk taking, lateral thinking.**

Māori myths and legends contain many examples of the use of deceit and trickery to attain important knowledge and skills. The use of trickery and deceit was commended as a way of gaining important knowledge and information (Patterson, 1992). Walker (1978) adds, that it is not only about gaining knowledge, more importantly it is about achieving outcomes that are socially acceptable. “Deceit and trickery are acceptable if socially acceptable desires are to be achieved” (p. 22). Māui was the arch trickster, with recurring themes of trickery and deceit in his adventures. His trickery is a key element to the achievement of his tasks.

Tinihanga requires depth of thinking and reflection which involves: the ability to forward plan, with an emphasis on possible and probably outcomes; an understanding of human nature including emotions and social convention; strategic positioning and the ability to utilise resources.

## 8.8 Examples Of Māui-tikitiki-a-Taranga Assessment Framing

The following are two assessments that reflect the service's Māui-tikitiki-a-Taranga assessment framing. These two assessments have been published in the Te Whatu Pōkeka (Ministry of Education, 2009, pp. 61-63). The assessments below were written in 2005 and the commentary which follows each assessment was added for Te Whatu Pōkeka in 2009. I have only included the English language versions.

### *These Babies Don't Whakarongo (listen)*

Te 4 ½ years, Dujournae 2 years, Ariana 2 years 3months.

*Today Te Hirea asked if she could be my helper, kaiāwhina, with the younger children for their nappy changes and I agreed. The children and Te Hirea, the helper, held hands as we walked to the changing area. All the children waited for their turn to be changed. While I was changing the first child, I heard Te Hirea say "E noho darling. Whakarongo, titiro kia Ariana." After a few more tries at getting the children to sit, Te Hirea pointed at Dujournae, and in a stern voice said, "E noho"(sit down). I finished the change and quickly stepped in because Dujournae was becoming quite unhappy saying "Whaea Estelle will take over now." I did have a laugh to myself but laughed even more when Te Hirea put her hands on her hips and said, "Whaea, these babies don't whakarongo. Can Ihipera help you tomorrow?"*

*Whanaungatanga – Te Hirea takes on her tuakana responsibilities with enthusiasm and authority even in the face of perceived "disobedience" from the babies. The role modelling that was going on was wonderful, te reo Māori, Tuakana Teina relationships, mothering and problem solving (22/11/05)*

This exemplar highlights how Te Hirea defines her place as tuakana. She is able to acknowledge and nurture the mana of others through respecting and taking responsibility for the well-being of others and showing generosity, kindness, and caring for others. Her mauri or life force is healthy, which is evident in the way she confidently articulates to adults what she is prepared to do and not do. The image of the children is that of being active participants in their own learning, making choices, and directing their own learning and development. (Ministry of Education 2009, p. 62)

### ***Tumeke (Awesome) George!!***

*George is 1 year, 8 months. The assessment below was written by a staff member in the toddler room.*

*George was playing with a toy in his area with his friends. He then turned around and threw it over the gate into the babies' area. He tried to climb up over the gate. He tried to unlock the gate. He kicked the gate, and then tried to crawl under the gate. He wanted his toy, one way or the other. After being unsuccessful at getting the gate opened,*

*George then lay on his stomach and pulled himself under the gate, using his arms. It took George a couple of minutes to get into the baby area but he finally did it with a big smile on his face. He picked up his toy, looked at it for a bit, then threw it back over the gate to his area. George then got back on his stomach and pulled himself back under the gate. The look on George's face when he had retrieved his toy was as though he had just climbed a mountain.*

*Rangatiratanga – determination, persistence, thinking through solutions, problem solving. The Maui child never giving up trying*

*to problem solve and work ways in which to reach his goal.*

*(13/10/05)*

This exemplar reflects a competent child whose rangatiratanga traits – determination, problem-solving skills, persistence, courage, and assertiveness are evident. George has a positive attitude about his own abilities and is able to show that he is capable of taking responsibility for his own learning. Through his endeavours he is asserting his personal mana and energy, or mauri. George displays a great deal of persistence in achieving his goal, which results in his feeling good about his achievements. His wairua is in a state of balance as he seeks more challenges. (Ministry of Education 2009, p. 65)

## **8.9 He Kupu Whakatepe - Conclusion**

Concerns over Māori children's educational failure can be seen as the beginning of Ruth and the service's Kaupapa Māori journey. Not only was it the impetus for the establishment of the service, but was also the rationale for the service participating in the doctoral research. More needed to be done to support Māori children in education, including early childhood education. Although not aware of it at the time Ruth and her whānau were part of the Kaupapa Māori movement with the dimensions of conscientisation, resistance, transformation integral to Ruth's determination to make a difference for Māori children.

Key to the establishment of the centre and the development of Kaupapa Māori assessment practices was a commitment to 'being Māori' and integrating Māori ways of knowing into the early childhood context. This required that kaiako work together to develop shared service understandings of 'being Māori' in the service. Important to this process

was the recognition that kaiako came with their own perspectives and experiences of what it means to 'be Māori', shaped by aspects of both historical identity elements and contemporary factors, such as urbanised living and dislocation from iwi/hapū whenua/ tūrangawaewae, the influence of elders, and mainstream schooling.

The work entailed critically reflecting on what 'being Māori' meant in the centre and finding ways to effectively reflect this in practice. It entailed reclaiming and weaving a historical Māori lens across current Māori identities, images of the child, learning and assessment. The outcome of the weaving was an emphasis on important traditional aspects of 'being Māori', such as: wairuatanga, whānau, hapū and iwi; and traditional images of the Māori child as: free in mind, body and spirit; the holder of spiritual traits, inherited from ancestors, such as mana, mauri and wairua; a precious taonga.

Assessment and assessment documentation were very new concepts for the service kaiako and created much uncertainty and fear. Fear lessened with time and the growing recognition and awareness that there was no one right way to do or write assessment. This allowed kaiako the freedom to develop alternative ideas and practices that were located within their particular cultural and community context. There were a number of strategies that supported this Kaupapa Māori praxis process, including: removing reconceptualising and reconstituting the word 'assessment'; writing assessment for the whānau and not outside agencies; and involving whānau in the assessment process.

The journey required ongoing commitment from the service kaiako, especially when faced with barriers such as: feelings of isolation and working on ones' own, time and energy requirements, life pressures,

ongoing staffing changes and disruptions. Despite these barriers and concerns, progress was made and a framing developed that reflected the service's philosophy, and emerging understandings of Māori ways of knowing and being.

Māui-tikitiki-a-Taranga was the inspiration for the assessment framing developed by the service. Māui is a spiritual as well as physical being. His whakapapa connects him to the realms of the gods and also acknowledges that he was the recipient of spiritual traits and characteristics, as are children. He provided a template for valued ways of being and acting that have been handed down through the generations to support future generations. For the service Māui is a mentor, an inspirational being whose characteristics can be emulated to support Māori children's educational success. The service's assessment practices were contingent upon recognising and further supporting these Māui characteristics in children, and nurturing these wondrous superhero qualities.

This chapter outlined the unique patterns and styles developed by Ngā Kaiwhatu, the Case Study One weavers, as they wove Kaupapa Māori theory aho: conscientisation, resistance, transformative praxis and Māori ways of knowing and being across the four thesis whenu: Māori Schooling, Māori Identities, the Image of the Child and Assessment. The process involved engaging in their own way, making sense of, critiquing, questioning, and looking for fit, in order to articulate emerging assessment understandings and articulate contextually located, Kaupapa Māori assessment framings and practices. In the process they were able to deepen their understandings of, and comfort with kaupapa Māori assessment, being Māori and more specifically being Māori in early childhood education.



Following is a diagram that illustrates the weaving patterns for Case Study One.

Nā Aho	Te Akoranga	Ngā Tuakiri o Te Tangata	Te Āhua o Te Mokopuna	Aromatawai	Taniko
<p style="text-align: center;">Māori Ways of Knowing and Being</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Transformati ve Praxis</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Resistance</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Conscientisation</p>	<p>Little visibility of the Māori language and culture in ece. Ruth wanted more for her children.</p> <p>Concerned with Māori children failing in state schooling system.</p> <p>Establishes Te Kōhanga reo</p> <p>Resists deficit positioning of Māori.</p> <p>Both Māori and Pākehā perspectives important - not an either or option.</p> <p>Early childhood had a critical role to play in transforming this deficit positioning.</p> <p>Determination to make a difference for Māori children.</p> <p>Established the new ec service as a means of generating solutions.</p>	<p>Work required indepth analysis of what made them Māori, and different to mainstream services, and how expressed in practice.</p> <p>Positioning of historical and contemporary Māori ways of knowing and being important.</p> <p>Initially more deliberate adult directed activities. As kaiako became more aware and comfortable activity focus changed.</p> <p>Refocusing or reclaiming Māori ways of viewing and reflecting development was a key to developing of a 'inclusive supra-Māori identity'</p> <p><i>"have to see it through Māori eyes in order to understand"</i></p>	<p>Recognition that historical Māori perspectives of the child, childrearing and education, not visible in early childhood.</p> <p>Perspectives do not always fit with ec regulations, norms and practices.</p> <p>Reclaimed historical Māori image of the child - free in mind, body and spirit.</p> <p>Recognised the spiritual traits inherited from ancestors – mana/tapu, mauri, wairua.</p> <p>All children have inherent mana that must be recognised and respected.</p> <p>A focus on the characteristics of Māui-a- Taranga.</p> <p>Tuakana/teina relationship promoted in the service.</p>	<p>Prior to 2002 service using checklists and photographs.</p> <p>KMA work required kaiako to critique ec and their assessment procedures</p> <p>Realisation that alternatives needed to be based on Māori ways of knowing and being. Involved re-imagining own priorities, developing own approaches, and determining own goals.</p> <p>Deep sense of uncertainty, fear lessened with the realisation, no one right way to do assessment. Strategies included: rejecting the word and writing for whānau. Gave a new purpose.</p> <p>Linking assessment to philosophy critical.</p> <p>Recognition of benefits, and fit. It all started to make sense.</p>	<p>Answers to questions already within the service, kaiako and whānau.</p> <p>Once identified Māui, obvious framework. Why didn't see it sooner?</p> <p>Maui was something they believed in, lived and were committed to.</p> <p>Framework reflects spiritual as well as physical realms of Māori world and thinking.</p> <p>Recognises Maui's spiritual traits. Māori children have same traits.</p> <p>KMA reflects traits and further supports growth and development.</p>

## CHAPTER NINE


## NGĀ KAIWHATU

### CASE STUDY TWO -2003-2008

This second Case Study chapter explores the emergent thinking of kaiako in another early childhood service as they worked towards developing understandings of assessment theory and practice. As in the first Case Study chapter, it involved kaiako critiquing, questioning, transforming, looking for fit and making sense of discourses and paradigms associated with the thesis *whenu*. This chapter follows the same format as the first, involving three distinct research phases. Comments and quotes included in this case study are taken from research notes and interview transcripts from phases one and two of the study (see section 8.0 in previous chapter)

The chapter includes the following aspects: *Te Tīmatanga/Introduction*; *Te Akoranga/Māori Schooling*; *Ngā Tuakiri o Te Tangata/Māori Identity*; *Te Āhua o Te Mokopuna/The Image of the Child*; *Aromatawai/Assessment*; *Te Haerenga/ the Assessment Journey*; and *Te Whakapiki Whaakaro/Emergent Thinking*. The final section *Te Tāniko /Assessment Framings* outlines the service's assessment framing.

## 9.0 Te Tīmatanga – Introduction

Case Study Two is a Christian, Kaupapa Māori, bilingual early childhood centre, located in West Auckland. It is licensed for 20 children under five, and employs five full time and part time staff. The service was established in 1997, in the garage of the founders and eventually received Ministry of Education discretionary funding, which enabled them to renovate and purchase equipment and resources.

### 9.1 Te Akoranga - Māori Schooling

The founders of the service (Veronica and her husband) were primary school teachers who became increasingly concerned about the educational outcomes for Māori children. As in the first case study, the couple saw first-hand the numbers of Māori children failing in the state schooling system and did not consider there was the ability or will for change within the system. It was clear to them that a new way of looking at schooling for Māori was required, one that confronted the existing education structures and where Māori cultural perspectives could be affirmed and validated. The couple worked from the premise that the change for Māori education needed to occur in early childhood first. The vision was:

*To provide birth to tertiary education based on Christian and Māori ideals. In this way they can plant seeds in the lives of children so that they succeed and not be part of the Māori educational underachievement rates (Research Notes, 19/03/03).*

The rationale for establishing the early childhood service was therefore related to addressing the crisis of Māori educational underachievement. The service was part of the growing Kaupapa Māori movement and the Kaupapa Māori dimensions of conscientisation, resistance, transformation and social change are clearly evident in the couple's determination and

commitment to make a difference for Māori children. Their focus was on upholding and centralising the Māori language, culture, practices and knowledge, and supporting the development of pride in being Māori within the service. The couple also worked on developing a Kaupapa Māori, Christian primary schooling option for children graduating from the early childhood service. The primary school received full registration as a Christian bilingual private composite school in 1998.

## 9.2 Ngā Tuakiri O Te Tangata – Māori Identities

Questions posed by the researcher at the beginning of the research provided a starting place for investigating and developing shared understandings of 'being Māori' in early childhood contexts. Looking back, Veronica commented:

*You posed us a question ... it was something like ... 'What makes you Māori?' ... and we thought, 'Oh, that's a good question...from that questioning, came the realisation that we do things because we see things differently (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

This questioning instigated an ongoing review of how Tikanga Māori was practiced in the centre. Kaiako recognised that being Māori meant they viewed things differently, from a Māori perspective. This critique also encouraged in-depth dialogue about what were important learnings for Māori children. Such reflections began to open pathways to new activities and events based on tikanga Māori and had the effect of strengthening a sense of being Māori in the service.

*For us it meant that ... if we were to walk into another childcare centre, how they did things was different to how we did things. We thought that we were the same as everybody else...our practices were different ... we*

*realised our practice was part of who we were, or who we are. Why do we have mat time? What do we want to achieve in mat time? ... And then we went on our marae noho [ancestral meeting place] and we realised that we do things because when we go on the marae ... we want them to sit and listen. We... do these practices because it's part of us or part of our culture... And so it refined some of our practices ... with a bit more purpose.*

*We looked at ourselves and said, 'Okay, we're Māori, how do we use this for us as Māori ... a tool for us?' (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

It also required refocusing on the service philosophy, questioning whether their practice was aligned with their philosophy, and how did they know? Kaiako commented that:

*It challenged us to see things through a Māori vision. We began to see children in a different light, with the ongoing discussion. This supported staff to see children - what are we on about, what are we doing, what's our philosophy, why are we doing it have we achieved it, where is the proof (Research Notes, 19/03/03).*

### **9.2.1 Māori heart**

Achieving a balance between having 'heart' (which Veronica related to understandings of 'being Māori') and the ability to write assessments (which she linked with early childhood teacher qualifications) was important. One discussion comparing two kaiako: one trained with a great deal of experience in early childhood, and the other untrained, with a strong Māori background, highlighted essential differences in perceptions.

*She [kaiako 1] was trained and she was academically inclined but [with] not enough [heart] (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

*It was a Māori heart. What she [kaiako 2] was seeing and how she was saying it was very Māori, full of heart (Research Notes, 09/03/08).*

Questions included whether this Māori heart could be developed, if a kaiako had little experience of the Māori language and culture. Could non-Māori develop understandings of Māori interpretive systems, of 'being Māori', and having a Māori heart or lens?

*If we put a Pākehā person, they are going to miss a big component of our style, because they can't see it the way we see it. You can't employ someone other than Māori to see it Māori, no matter how much aroha you have for the culture. You can't see it Māori unless you're Māori (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

### **9.2.2 Māori lens**

To utilise a Māori lens kaiako needed to critique their own, sometimes hegemonic, perceptions and assumptions about children. This was not an easy process.

*I think the biggest benefit is that we began to understand them [children] a lot better... even F and her bossiness. You think, 'Well that's just a leadership thing coming out. She just needs to control her world a bit, you know'. I think when you begin to see their character... you begin to appreciate how they're made. So you can celebrate that with them... So first and foremost is that we began to see them in a different light and we can write ... those strengths and those characteristics... that we know are important to their learning (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

Veronica stated that whānau recognised and appreciated the ways children and whānau were viewed which instilled a strong sense of belonging to the centre.

*You're accepted here.... Because you understand them, you can accept them (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

She related a grandmother's perception:

*There's a different wairua here. I don't want ... any of my moko going anywhere else but here, because ... there's an acceptance (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

The service had rarely had the opportunity to discuss and articulate what 'being Māori' and wairua meant in practice and what a Christian, Kaupapa Māori philosophy implied in terms of protocols, routines and behaviours. Cultural values and associated practices had been viewed as normal, natural, or common sense. The centre practices tended to be based on cultural knowings and understandings that each kaiako brought with them. These knowings were founded upon each individual's understandings, experiences and connectedness to the Māori world, both historical and contemporary.

*And often you do it... because that's how it feels right to do it, but [Māori educators]very rarely get the chance to actually analyse what it is that makes you do it that way. .. you actually had to stop and think why... then realising it's because it's Māori (Research Notes, 09/03/08).*



### 9.2.3. Freedom and a celebration of 'being Māori'.

The work not only challenged kaiako to view things through a Māori lens, it affirmed what they were already doing in terms of Māori practices.

*I think what it is ... is that you don't have to be a Pākehā, you can ... celebrate being Māori, and you can do it the way you believe it to be done. And you've got the liberty ... and the freedom to do it then you do it (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

One of the early outcomes of this, as in Case Study One (see 8.2), was a more planned, focused implementation of tikanga Māori into the programme. Mat times became more structured with Māori protocols being developed and implemented. Mihimihi was introduced which required that children learn their whakapapa and be able to recite it to the group. Children were expected to listen to others and support with waiata tautoko. This focus then began to flow from mat time into other areas such as development of whanaungatanga links to whānau, school and the community, including the marae. The result of the work was the development of a 'transition to school' ritual, involving the handing over of the taonga, the child.

*As staff we discussed how we could make the fifth birthday more important and it was decided that the emphasis would be more on the child as the taonga rather than giving them a taonga. After much discussion and brainstorming the staff collectively came up with a wonderful idea of 'Te Huarahi'. It was decided that a special transition ceremony would be held for the five year olds who were enrolled at the Kura. A special pōwhiri would be arranged at the school and consultation with the parents and whānau of the child making the transition. This would encourage whānau participation, a smoother transition from service to kura and it*

*would also be a wonderful way for the service staff to pass over the taonga who they have invested much love and time into (Veronica, 01/09/03).*

Leading up to the transition (to school) ceremony the children learned the appropriate processes including pōwhiri, karanga, kōrero, waiata, harirū, kai, and whakangahau. Children also learned their specific roles within these processes including: kaikaranga, kaikōrero, and kaiwero, which in other circumstances and contexts may not have been appropriate for young children to participate in or take the lead in. Veronica noted that the reason why the transition worked so well was:

*The preparation that went into it from both the Kura and the Centre. The continuous instilling into the children what was going to happen and why and reinforcing the expected behaviours during mat time in a positive empowering way. All staff knew their roles and carried them out well. The unity of the teaching staff in making the day a success also finished it off (Veronica, 01/09/03).*

This event is an example of whānau being intimately involved in the service activities, along with the primary school and church community. This 'handing over the taonga' (child) to the primary school was a community event that involved the child's whānau, the service and school whānau and the church community. This resulted in the development of stronger relationships between whānau, community and the centre. Veronica describes the 'handing over' day for C:

*The participation of the Centre, C's whānau, the Kura and other whānau made the day of whakawhanaungatanga. It was a great time of celebration by all who attended. The transition to school was made smooth with the*

*full participation of the kura students from the time of the wero to the hākari. It was a time of great unity for all who attended (01/09/03).*

Research Notes (01/09/03) highlight further benefits:

- *Raised awareness of abilities of children – Pride has been expressed by community members in the ability of the children to perform appropriately within the ceremonial occasions.*
- *Closer links and relationships developed with school, whānau and kōhanga – Community and whānau members have more understanding of what is happening at the school and centre, and the centre's and the aspirations for children.*
- *Deepening understandings of tikanga Māori, te reo, appropriate behaviours in different situations, sequencing of ceremonial practices – For those community and whānau members who are not familiar with Māori protocols the transitioning ceremony is a way of deepening understandings.*
- *Raised [whānau] awareness of abilities of young children and C in particular – Pride is the key feature for the whānau. Pride in their mokopuna's abilities, knowledge and competence.*
- *Knowledge of C – All the children at the kura now know C and her whānau. They understand C is new to the school and happily provide support when required. C is special!*

The transition process not only provided learning opportunities for children and kaiako in the service but also for whānau and community. Whānau were able to deepen their understandings of tikanga Māori and te reo alongside their children. It provided a safe and welcoming environment for whānau and community to be involved in a process that they may not

ordinarily be involved with. Some of the families had little connection with te Ao Māori. Research Notes highlight the changing urban Māori reality.

*We talked about the differences in the way cultures look at and perceive actions and behaviours. We also discussed the changing Māori reality, i.e. children who have no knowledge of the sea and kaimoana, who have never been to collect sea food or traditional Māori food, children who have no links to traditional homes, foods, marae etc (Research Notes, 23/3/05).*

#### **9.2.4 Being Māori differently**

Being situated in an urban area meant that the service was not bound by tribal expectations and norms, and in fact needed to utilise whatever resources they had at hand to support their development, whether this fitted with traditional views or not.

*I think ... that was realised when we went to that meeting, and the thing about ... 'Oh no, we wouldn't let the little girls do the karanga' or 'We wouldn't let the boys do the mihimihi' ... and I thought, 'Well, we can't limit that' ... because we don't have many speakers and we don't have many kuia out there ... These whānau are urban Māori ... they don't have the marae so it was like we had the freedom to do it (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

This freedom provided a sense of comfort and ease with who they were and what they were trying to achieve. It allowed them to develop their own understandings, protocols and practices utilising the resources and knowledge available to them. Furthermore there are many ways to be Māori and Veronica's comment echoes this:

*We're not tied by tradition, although we want to have tikanga, we're not tied because we have to use what we can ... And you don't have to prove anything. It's okay to be who you are (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

### **9.3 Te Āhua O Te Mokopuna / The Image Of The Child**

One of the critical changes that resulted from the focus on tikanga Māori was a change in the way children were viewed, as educators began to see children in a different light. Utilising a Māori view of children and children's learning required assessment not to focus on possible weaknesses, rather consider actions and behaviours from a positive, mana enhancing perspective. An example of this was the change from regarding behaviours such as haututū or mischievousness, as naughty, to viewing it as an expression of leadership. This in turn changed perceptions of what and who children bring with them to the centre. Discussions by kaiako included:

*the idea that children do not come by themselves but bring with them an 'invisible roopu' who are always with them ... need to acknowledge that children bring so much with them. Furthermore children have the seeds of greatness within them. They are the culmination of generations of chiefs, of rangatira, of greatness. They therefore cannot be viewed in a deficit or as needy. They are full and complete and bring with them their history, their ancestors, and their roopu (Research Notes, 08/04/05).*

The metaphor of the child as a koru, 'Te pītau o te pikopiko' or the 'frond of the fern' became an interest for kaiako as a basis for exploring their thinking on assessment. The child was recognised as a pikopiko, initially tightly wound then as the child is nurtured and supported, they unfurl and the child becomes visible. Each branch of the pikopiko therefore is part of that child's character and as the child grows and develops the

character is revealed. The child like the koru is surrounded by the outer branches of whānau, community, whakapapa, and whakawhanaungatanga.

*We began to see the child, not as a statistic or as an enrolment, but as a family ... that comes with all this whānau that's basically standing in support of them. So we began to see the child as a taonga, and that's the koru. And so we ... started to do that transition from service to school and the handing over of the taonga and the beginning of that new journey (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

The fern represented the individual child's learning experiences or the child learning within the whānau context. All of the smaller stories combined to create the whole picture. Children's stories could be delved into in further depth. Assessments of what learning took place depended on what and where the assessment lens was applied. Utilising the fern-frond metaphor also changed the way adults viewed children. They were no longer seen as individuals who one could see and assess, but rather as unfurling beings who were surrounded by a whānau and community, visible and invisible, living and dead. Children's learning was also seen as an unfurling of consciousness, an unfurling of personality and dispositions.

#### **9.4 Aromatawai - Assessment**

Prior to 2002, like Case Study One (see 8.4); the service was using a range of assessment approaches, including developmentally based checklists, mainly borrowed from other centres. Assessment was a new concept to kaiako and they felt uncomfortable with what and how to develop assessments. The service began accessing professional development on Learning Stories as the basis for assessment. This involved exploring how to write and analyse assessments.

*I thought if it means us growing professionally ... at that stage, we didn't have knowledge about learning and assessment ... You thought children just have to come here and have fun (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

Veronica explains that part of the professional development involved visiting other early childhood services.

*The childcare service that we went to, to do the workshop, had all these flash things all over the place ... It was a bit far up for some of us, but we took that on board and we did professional development in writing learning stories (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

#### **9.4.1 Kei Tua o Te Pae/Te Whatu Pōkeka**

In 2002, the centre was approached to be part of the *Kei Tua o Te Pae Assessment for Learning: Early Childhood Exemplars* (2005) project. Veronica believed that it would provide professional support for staff and so they agreed.

*... but we didn't really know much about assessment and learning. So we thought, 'Oh well, if it's going to improve our professionalism and our teaching practice, we might as well just do it. We all trained and saw how to do learning stories. And so we started to do that ... We had a bit of difficulty with photos and how to put it all on a piece of paper (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

Like the first case study, the service began work on the *Te Whatu Pōkeka: Kaupapa Māori Learning and Assessment Exemplar Development* project and the doctoral study in 2003.

*So when we got on ... the mainstream one [Kei Tua o Te Pae] it taught us the foundation of how to do learning stories and how to do assessment. And then when we swapped over, we took that knowledge that we learnt (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

#### **9.4.2 Being like everybody else**

Reflecting on the work completed in 2002, Veronica claims it was mainly focused on 'being like everybody else', attempting to conform to existing early childhood assessment approaches. At the time, despite the focus on sociocultural assessment, there were no approaches that represented and reflected a Māori perspective of learning and assessment. Their aim therefore was to be as good as everybody else, a view that changed as kaiako realised they weren't like everybody else.

*I think the biggest thing that really came out of that first stage was that we tried to be like everybody else, and we tried to be as good as everybody else, but we weren't like everybody else. And that's when we realised that we were different... because we're Māori ... that we were different to the mainstream ... then to develop that difference (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

This instigated thinking on the Learning Stories approach, which the service had been utilising. They felt that the timing was right to begin exploring other options, options that aligned with their thinking. This required repositioning or centralising Māori theory, knowledge and world views.

*Discussions on the usefulness of the 'Learning Stories' format ... that had initially been utilised. It was thought that the format no longer fit with their developing understandings of Kaupapa Māori assessment (Research Notes, 25/3/04).*



This realisation was fundamental to the development of alternative Māori approaches to assessment. It was the starting place for kaiako to explore implications of tikanga Māori for children's learning in their service. It was part of the conscientisation, resistance, and transformative praxis process and involved exploring the ways Māori ways of knowing and being could be integrated service practice.

*It spring boarded a whole lot of things... I think it gave realisation that we can be different, we can celebrate our differences as well as the learning that comes for the children...it allowed us to develop, to look at ourselves and say, did this suit us? Was the structure something that we could work with? ... so we appreciated it was a starting point, but then we realised that we could mould it the way we thought it ... should be done (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

### **9.4.3 Uncertainty and assessment**

Although there was a growing sense of comfort with being different, as with Case Study One, there was a great deal of apprehension about 'doing assessment right'. Newer, less experienced and kaiako without formal qualifications especially, felt overawed and fearful.

*Confidence is an issue with staff, especially with assessment. The question is 'am I doing it right?'. A further point is that staff are often untrained and may lack writing skills. What then happens? (Research Notes, 22/07/04).*

A key issue was who defines what Kaupapa Māori assessment is?

*The issue of content, context and process arises. Do Kaupapa Māori assessments need to have Māori content. What makes the assessment Kaupapa Māori? (Research Notes, 10/06/04).*

These questions were reoccurring themes throughout the research period. In the initial stages of the work:

*Assessments tend to be related to Māori activities such as mihimihi and karakia (Research Notes, 10/6/04).*

As with Case Study One an outcome of the focus on Māori activities, in late 2003, was the development of large scale Kaupapa Māori projects, such as the 'Handing over the Taonga' ritual. The initial focus was on creating Kaupapa Māori learning opportunities.

*Kaiako are learning more about what Kaupapa Māori means for them... The centre has concentrated on how to reflect the Kaupapa Māori philosophy in the centre. This has resulted in more directed activities being implemented... I think this is part of the process. I think that the Kaupapa Māori philosophy must be in place prior to the assessment processes as Kaupapa Māori practice relates to ways of knowing and seeing the world - epistemology and ontology (Research Notes, 08/01/04).*

#### **9.4.4 Documentation**

Many kaiako had little exposure to the language of assessment which meant they were often left feeling inadequate and loathe to contribute. This impacted on the articulation of the stories. Some kaiako wrote as little as possible so as not to be seen as inadequate. Failure to capture the stories in

rich language made the stories difficult to understand thus of limited use in terms of assessment.

*The new service staff are starting to develop understandings about assessment and their roles in collating assessments of children's learning, however they still feel unsure whether they are doing it 'right'. They are reluctant to make mistakes so are not participating fully in the assessment documentation (Research Notes, 19/04/04).*

Some kaiako began to utilise overly academic language, (they were initially writing in English) believing that this was the 'way to do assessment' professionally. When questioned about the jargon being used in the assessments Veronica puts it down to kaiako being unsure about the audience for assessments; assuming that they were for the Ministry of Education or the Education Review Office.

*It means absolutely nothing... who are you writing it for? ... To me it's who are you trying to impress ... I can't stand just ... reading piles of words like that (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

She added that there was a lot of written material was just words.

*We actually got a lot of paperwork done ... but it was ... a whole lot of words, which didn't really pull on the heartstrings or make you 'Whoa!' ... it was finding the balance (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

Initially documentation content was left to individual kaiako with variable results. The focus was on supporting assessment understandings and confidence rather than producing a certain number of assessments.

Veronica states:

*I just accepted what they did and maybe just made changes to make it a bit better...But most of them, we just said, 'Well just write what you can (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

In 2004, however, each kaiako was required to develop at least one assessment per week. Feedback was given by Veronica and the researcher, affirming their efforts, making suggestions on extending or re-wording observations, and capturing the complete story. This resulted in growing in confidence, with kaiako participating more fully in the process.

*I think... it comes down to ... who hasn't got them done and who has because we've got a whole heap of photos on our camera (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

By 2005 the focus had shifted to accountability to parents, and government agencies.

*It comes down to accountability; serving our parents well... Everything comes together that makes you have to do it. Whether you have to do it or not, you know, ... the parent needs to know, ERO will want to see it, you know there's all these other accountabilities that make you have to do it, but then there's that enjoyment and you want to do it (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

Part of this process included revisiting old assessments; revisiting them with new understandings and perspectives.

*That's right, so for us we're just redoing it again picking up our stories again, so ... it's once again ... 'What does this mean to us?' ..., the new*

*ones, the old ones ... collectively, what does it mean to us. And that's revisiting it again, again, again (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

#### 9.4.4.1 Both languages

Another important decision was to write all assessments in Māori and English. Although this fitted with the service's kaupapa, and Māori beliefs, it was a major change for kaiako as not all kaiako were competent writers of te reo.

*We talked about the process of translating the exemplars. Staff are comfortable that the translations ... will not be a major issue as they have the support of a number of fluent/native speakers whom they can call upon (Research Notes, 19/04/04).*

The plan involved kaiako attempting a first draft in Māori, then accessing support from either the service kuia, Veronica's daughter, or the fluent speaking kaiako. Corrections (in red pen) to the draft would be made and the draft returned to the writer, who was then responsible for completing the assessment. In this way kaiako learnt correct grammar, appropriate language and more effective ways of expressing the story.

*Discussed the issue of translating the exemplars. One kaiako is more comfortable writing in Māori, then accessing support to translate it into English. Others are writing in English and are supported to translate into Māori. This is an excellent learning process for staff who are encouraged to firstly attempt to translate the stories themselves before accessing the support of others (Research Notes, 10/06/04).*

This was additional work for kaiako. However it highlights the impact of finding one's own solutions, seeking from within oneself, and taking

control of ones aspirations and objectives. Kaiako slowly gained confidence writing in both Māori and English until they were able to competently write assessments in both English and Māori. In this way the written competency of all kaiako was supported and a marked improvements in assessment documentation in both languages was evident. Assessment was the vehicle for the development of both Māori and English language skills, both written and oral abilities.

#### 9.4.4.2 The audience - writing for whānau

An issue that continued to impact on kaiako was audience, i.e., who were the assessments for? In 2005, a new kaiako, with a lot of early childhood experience, introduced 'writing assessments to the child'. This instigated much reflection and dialogue over fit with service philosophy and vision. The overriding thinking was that from a Māori perspective children do not live in isolation from the whānau, but are embedded within the whānau, like the rito. It was therefore argued that writing stories to the child alone, was a western idea, which excluded whānau and was incongruent with Māori thinking, and ideas of communalism and whānau. Veronica states:

*If you're writing it to the child, that's a European concept (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

It was agreed therefore that assessments should be written to the whānau. This decision to write assessments to the whānau was a major breakthrough in the development of Kaupapa Māori assessments. It necessitated not only a change in the way documentation was articulated but more importantly it gave kaiako an audience to address documentation to.

*That's an important one ...how we write it ... because it's not aimed at anyone but the parent. So the parents got to want to read it and capture that 'wow' (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

Language was critical as was content. If whānau were to read the assessments, the assessments needed to speak to them, to make sense to them, which required emotion, feelings, and heart in the documentation. It was about sharing children's achievements and celebrating success in an interesting, informative, and joyful way.

*When you write it to the whānau ... you're all celebrating that child's step or whatever they did (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

#### 9.4.4.3 Wow factor

The 'wow' factor was the factor that engages whānau interest and makes them want to read the assessments.

*Okay, we want to have a wow factor. When the parent picks it up, it's got to be written to the parent (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

It was important that kaiako related their enthusiasm and excitement about children's learning to whānau in order to engage whānau interest, involvement and contribution to the programme. It created a way of understanding the learner, of viewing and interpreting the learner, that whānau related to, and sharing these perspectives with others. Including themselves in the assessment helped achieve the 'wow factor' and also encouraged whānau contributions and a sense of belonging in the centre. Assessments were no longer confined to the centre; many of the assessments occurred outside of the service environment and involved whānau and community.

*The key question is – who says this learning is important? (Research Notes, 01/09/03).*

Veronica makes the point that over time writing assessments was no longer viewed as a chore, or extra duty, but rather an exciting activity, central to the role of kaiako. With the 'wow' factor, kaiako wanted to write and they gained a great deal of enjoyment and satisfaction from the assessments.

*Otherwise you know what you're doing? Its like, 'this child's only got one done. We've got to hurry up'. Anything, anything, anything. It's done out of necessity and not out of enjoyment (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

*Last year I was doing it flat out ... it's quite a buzz time ... now how will I put that again? Oh yeah!' ... and it's not like you've got to write screeds of sentences (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

#### **9.4.5 Maintaining the vision**

Keeping the purpose, the vision for establishing the service and working on Kaupapa Māori assessment, to the fore was crucial to continuing with the work. Through the difficult times, it was the vision for children that gave Veronica the motivation to carry on.

*Deep purpose ... why have a child care service when you can go to one down the road ... when the going gets tough ... I've often thought, 'God, I might as well just go and teach at the school and close the service down' ... 'cos you have so many regulations to meet, so many deadlines and then you advertise for staff and you don't get any staff and you think, 'Well, is it all worth it?' And it gives you the purpose to say, 'Right, it is actually*



*worth it. These tamariki need to come to a service ...where they are going to get valued, and get that Māori input. So it came down to purpose, 'cos if you know your purpose you'll carry on doing what you need to do (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

For Veronica the vision was clear, straightforward and easy to understand. However, for others, especially new kaiako, it was complicated and difficult to take on board.

*Getting [others] to see the concept was really hard...it was a whole retraining. (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

To maintain the momentum and passion, it was essential to continually define, redefine and re-emphasise the vision.

*'Cos we're for ever seeing learning stories left, right and centre... But then if we type it up we have to sit down and really think; now how did we work this framework again. It's not just going to come easy. It's still being realised ... although we've still got to re-emphasise to staff what that vision is. But the thing that has to be continuously thought about and discussed is that framework ..., one of the staff said to me, 'What does that word [one of the framing constructs]mean again, Whaea?' and I thought, 'Shivers, what does it mean again?'. You know, that's over the holiday break you forget ... 'Oh gosh, what does it mean again? (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

Veronica states that continual reflection and discussion on the vision was required to normalise it within service practices and procedures. She adds it was a process that needed to be worked through but one that was both exciting and rewarding.

*I think we sort of lost a bit of momentum last year. But those things are now ... normal procedural things, so they become ... practice ... from thinking about it, to putting them into action, to making them concrete has been a process. Yeah. So that's been exciting, and that's been good (Veronica 09/03/08).*

#### **9.4.6 Seeing the benefits**

Although sustaining high energy levels for an extended time period was taxing, this was outweighed by the rewards that became more and more evident over time.

*It is tiring, but I think... the rewards ... understanding the children ... every time you've found a nugget, a gem, you think, 'Oh!!' and it just made you get to the next one and the next one (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

*Yeah, seeing the benefits. Even the revelation of ... 'Whoa ...!' We were picking up the character of the child ... because that child persisted...You're picking up things about the make-up of the child, rather than the weaknesses, you're picking up all these strengths (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

*So there was excitement in the development as well... And you see some of the stories were just ... 'Oh!! That's amazing!' (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

#### **9.5 Te Haerenga/ the Assessment Journey**

The next section outlines the key issues, barriers, enablers that impacted upon the service over the research period.

### 9.5.1 Staffing

Staffing issues were constant and probably the biggest barrier to progress over the three years. Attracting and retaining trained staff was an issue, attracting qualified Māori staff with te reo was almost impossible. Often it was a matter of bringing people with differing skills together who complimented each other: maybe a person with te reo and no qualifications; or qualifications and no te reo.

*... staffing ... having trained staff and even just having the staffing ... I had to get Mum in, more often than not, to be a reliever rather than just the kuia, to speak Te Reo (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

Encouraging staff to become passionate and committed to the vision was sometimes harder. Over the research period with changes in staffing Veronica remained the only consistent staff member and this meant she constantly needed to retrain, and reinforce the vision.

*So it was the continuous energy required to re-train, re-realise the vision or keep the vision burning ... not letting it stop and actually go backwards (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

### 9.5.2 Time and energy

Finding time within the working day and week to complete assessments was a major barrier to developing assessment understandings, practices and the assessments themselves.

*The time, energy ... apart from everything ... you've got your reviews, you've got to do all your policy reviews ... so you've got all this other work to do on top of that learning process (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

*Because of pressures, a lot of things slip ... that's the biggest part in childcare is because of the continuous changing of requirements and regulations and all these things you've got to have in place. You tend to try and concentrate on that and you leave the things that are so important (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

As individuals started at different places with regard to: their knowledge of assessment and Kaupapa Māori theory; ability to make change; energy levels; enthusiasm and individual commitment; progress was variable. Veronica's support was therefore critical and involved introducing theory, encouraging critical analysis, setting completion dates and following up on tasks.

*Veronica provides ongoing encouragement which is an important factor in the professional development of the team. I think her leadership style, which is encouraging, warm, and supportive whilst clearly and firmly articulating expectations is crucial (Research Notes, 19/04/04).*

### **9.5.3 Support for the work**

The service highlights a number of events and structures that supported the ongoing development of assessment thinking and approaches.

#### **9.5.3.1 Presentations**

A confidence boost for the service came when the centre presented a workshop at the 2004 Christian Early Childhood Education Association of Aotearoa national conference in Auckland. The presentation followed the centre's journey and achievements, highlighting their growing understandings about teaching, learning and assessment. The response from conference participants to the workshop was extremely positive.

*The centre [was] invited to present at the CECEAA national conference next year. Kaiako felt proud of their achievements and happy to present to others (Research Notes, 03/11/04).*

*Well we went to the national one [conference] ... because we're Christian and we're Māori as well, there's always that[question] ... how can the two go together" ... it [conference] was predominantly Pākehā ... you could count how many Māoris on two hands. So what it did, it gave them our viewpoint of how we see the child [koru] ... so when they saw that, how we see the child is different to how they see it ... I mean there were people crying in the presentation and one of them,[said] ... you just did it all in a nutshell'. So they'd been thinking about... how they cater for Māori children, ... it was good because it made them see it through a Māori view (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

*Kaiako confident to present their work and to discuss issues around their work... [I] feel they have moved so far ... and they are now confident to stand in front of others to explain what they are doing and how. A real sense of pride in their achievements (Research Notes, 15/11/04).*

The centre later presented their work to Education Review Office reviewers who visited the centre the same year to conduct their review. Kaiako felt proud of their work and when asked by the reviewers if they could have a copy to show their colleagues, the kaiako saw this as a huge compliment.

*And then when ERO came to us last time, they watched it [presentation]. She took that away and showed the rest of her colleagues (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

Kaiako also presented their work to the whānau at a special whānau hui. It was a huge success.

*Veronica said that the whānau were blown away with what was being done. Some, especially the whānau of some of the children who had been focused on, felt empowered by the work (Research Notes, 08/04/05).*

The support of immediate whānau was an important factor in achieving the centre's vision. The ability to utilise the strengths of whānau members was a support when needed, which took pressure off Veronica.

*A & R do all the translations ...I could just call ... when I needed them to be there... ... good family support... during the hard times or during the times when there was just a lot of pressure on (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

#### 9.5.3.2 Role of the researcher

Veronica states having the researcher as a 'sounding board' for emerging thinking was crucial. The researcher not only stimulated ongoing reflection which supported the centre's development, but also understood the theory, practice and realities of the work and the context.

*I suppose always having that question ... that you'd always pose a question when you came back (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

*We discussed the need to talk to someone who understands the topic... staff do not really understand the theoretical nature of the discussion... [It] can be extremely difficult to achieve by oneself. Can lead to frustration and inability to move on without the discussion (Research Notes, 23/3/05).*

### 9.5.3.3 Transition to school

As Veronica was also involved with the primary school, she was able to introduce her emergent thinking to that context. The primary school new entrant class adopted the assessment model as a way of transitioning children to school. Kaiako felt a deep sense of pride that their work was being utilised in the school, and that the school saw value in it. It also provided a vehicle for closer relationships between the groups.

*Veronica explained that the primary school new entrant class had adopted the assessment model [Pītau o te Pikopiko] developed by the early childhood centre (whilst on the project) and have continued to map children's learning journey as they transition from the centre to the primary school. This two-way passage of information has provided important feedback to the centre on the effectiveness of their assessment processes in capturing and extending upon children's learning (Research Notes, 25/03/04).*

## 9.6 Te Whakapiki Whakaaro – Emergent Thinking

A number of themes were explored over the period of the study that have influenced and are integral to the assessment framework. The interlinking themes are whakataukī, and more specifically the whakataukī, 'E kore e hekeheke, he kākano rangatira - I am not declining (like the sun), I am of chiefly stock', and the concept of *Rangatira*. In this section I briefly outline thinking on these themes.

### 9.6.1 Whakataukī

The whakataukī focus brings together the service's philosophy: of sowing seeds so that children will succeed; their view of children (koru who unfurls as they learn); and their service whakataukī (E kore e hekeheke te kākano rangatira).

*Whakataukī encapsulate wisdom, knowledge and understandings that have been handed down to us from our ancestors so there are messages within them for us to learn from. There is still much work to be done on how whakataukī can be utilised whilst maintaining the rangatira focus (Research Notes, 02/01/05).*

Educators were asked to highlight what Māori values were inherent within the stories they had developed. Discussions emphasised whakataukī as a guide to how we should view life.

*Veronica talked about a whakataukī that had stayed in her head over the long weekend. She talked about a whole range of coincidences that had happened that made the whakataukī so real, so true. – ‘We have the seeds of greatness within us’. Veronica made connections with her real whānau and found the seeds of greatness for herself (Research Notes, 08/04/05).*

*Even when we did that whakataukī, you know ... Kore e hekeheke he kākano rangatira...I mean, that just put everything in a nutshell (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

The thinking around whakataukī evolved as kaiako analysed the assessments from a Māori lens. The concept of rangatiratanga began to emerge from this analysis of whakataukī. When asked to articulate their underlying values of their service whakataukī, the concept of ‘rangatira’ emerged strongly. The work was around identifying the characteristics or dispositions of a rangatira. These were; Maia– confidence/competence, Haututu– exploring /seeking, Mahitahi– cooperation/group endeavour, Kawenga– taking responsibility, Manaakitanga– caring /nurturing/loving, Hiringa– determination/perseverance/persistence, Pukumahi–



hardworking/diligence, Whanaungatanga– relationships/connectedness, Rangimārie – peacefulness/overall wellbeing.

The articulation process continued and towards the end of the research period another influence was added to the framing, that of Te Whāriki. This addition combined important aspects of their kaupapa into a coherent framework that reflected the different aspects of who they were, what they valued and their aspirations for the future.

*I think also some of the good stuff was, what was the learning? And how were we going to extend this? Those two questions made that thing more relevant (Veronica, 09/03/08).*

## **9.7 Te Taniko – Te Whāriki Assessment Framing**

The assessment framing developed by the service utilises the Strands of *Te Whāriki* (introduced in Chapter Six: 6.3.1) as the basis for their assessment framing. The common theme of the strands is the concept of mana (discussed in Chapter Six 6.1.1.2). The strands are: Mana Atua, Mana Whenua, Mana Tangata, Mana Reo, and Mana Aotūroa. Kaiako identified what each strand meant to them and how it fits with their philosophy and who they were.

Barlow (1991) describes mana as “the enduring, indestructible power of the gods. It is the sacred fire that is without beginning and without end” (p. 60).

### **9.7.1 Mana Atua – our god/love**

According to Reedy (2003), Mana Atua relates to supporting the child’s personal wellbeing, through understanding their own uniqueness. Mana Atua requires the recognition and respect of the godly characteristics of

children. She states that, “According to Māori there is a divine spirit, a spark of godliness, in each child born into this world” (p. 68). This essence of godliness is from Tāne who breathed life into te ira tangata, the human element, therefore conferring a godly essence to his human descendents (Early Childhood Development, 1999; Reedy, 2003).

In terms of the service’s assessment framing, Mana Atua refers to recognising and respecting the godly characteristics of children. It was also important for kaiako that children recognise their own specialness/divineness and that of others. These concepts link strongly with the centre’s Christian philosophical underpinning to create a cohesive, meaningful assessment framing. The dispositions reflected in Mana Atua include:

- Rangimārie – *peacefulness/overall well-being*
- Ohaohanga – *generosity*
- Ngākau Māhaki – *soft natured*
- Aroha – *love*
- Whakakaute – *respect*

### **9.7.2 Mana Whenua – our place**

Mana Whenua relates to the development of a sense of identity, and belonging (Barlow, 1991; Hemara, 2000). Barlow (1991, p. 61) describes it as “the power associated with the possession of lands; it is also the power associated with the ability of the land to produce the bounties of nature”. Hemara (2000, p. 78) quotes a whakataukī that highlights the importance of land and mana. “Ka wera hoki i te ahi e mana ana ano – While the fire burns the mana is effective”.

Reedy (2003) highlights another aspect of mana whenua that relates specifically to children and childbirth, that of burying the child's umbilical cord and placenta (also translated as whenua) in their land. This act according to (Early Childhood Development, 1999) symbolises a reconnection with ancestral roots - whenua ki te whenua" (placenta to the land) (p. 21). Reedy states that these traditions and practices ensure that "the child has a spiritual unity with the land, with its people, and with the universe at large. A sense of identity is inculcated in the child...The spirit of the land lives in the child" (p. 70).

In terms of the assessment framing Mana Whenua connects to the development of self esteem and confidence in children as a result of a strong identity and sense of belonging to this place. These characteristics are evident in the following understandings:

- Māia – *confidence/competence*
- Rangimārie – *peacefulness/overall well-being*
- Kawenga – *taking responsibility*
- Pukumahi – *hardworking/diligence*
- Arahina – *leadership*

### **9.7.3 Mana Tangata – our character**

Mana Tangata is power that is attained through one's ability and effort to acquire skills and knowledge and to make the most of the opportunities presented (Barlow, 1991; Early Childhood Development, 1999; Hemara, 2000). The following excerpt highlights the role of adults in encouraging the child to make the most of life's opportunities.

Ka whakawhenua ngā hiringa i konei, e tama! Haramai, e mau to ringa ki te kete tuauri, ki te kete tuaatea, ki te kete aronui...

On this earth is implanted all knowledge, o son! Come grasp in your hand the kit of sacred knowledge. The kit of ancestral knowledge, the kit of life's knowledge... (cited Early Childhood Development, 1999, p. 22)

Mana tangata according to Reedy (2003):

encompasses the spirit of generosity and reciprocity; of caring for others and creating enduring personal relationships; of developing beliefs about prosperity that bring about the learning of skills for success and achievement; of developing physical powers through a strong and healthy body; of developing emotional maturity and awareness; of learning to deal with fears and inhibitions, which leads to joy and happiness (p. 69).

For the service, Mana Tangata relates to the development of the child's character, and the virtues, qualities and characteristics that make up the character. This includes concepts such as:

- Mahi tahi – *co-operation/group endeavour*
- Manaakitanga – *caring/nurturing/loving*
- Hiringa – *determination/perseverance/persistence*
- Māia – *confidence/competence*
- Manawaroa – *patience*
- Ngākau Pāpaku – *humility*

#### **9.7.4 Mana Reo – our communicating**

Mana Reo refers to the development and power of language and communication (Barlow, 1991) Mana Reo supports children's wellbeing through empowering them to communicate their thoughts, knowledge

and learnings and so enhances their mana (Reedy, 2003). According to Barlow (1991, p. 114) “Language is the vehicle by which thoughts, custom, desires, hopes, frustrations, history, mythology, prayers, dreams and knowledge are communicated from one person to another”.

Furthermore for Māori, the Māori language was given by the gods to ancestors and so it was sacred. It was a means of communicating with the gods, to know the will and power of the gods. It had wairua and mauri. Barlow (1991) adds that without language one loses power and a unique identity. “Toi te kupu, toi te mana, toi te whenua – Hold on to the word, the mana, the land” (Hemara, 2000, p. 79). “Ko te reo te mauri o te mana Māori – The permanence of the language maintains the authority and land ownership” (Early Childhood Development, 1999, p. 23). These whakataukī emphasise the critical importance of language in retaining mana, land and culture.

Mana Reo supports children’s wellbeing through empowering them to communicate their thoughts, knowledge and learnings and so enhances their mana (Reedy 2003). It emphasises children’s abilities to express themselves, verbally and non-verbally, in English and in Māori, and in this way develop relationships and connections to others. This is reflected in the following attributes:

- Whanaungatanga – *relationships/connectedness*
- Whakahoahoa - *friendliness*

#### **9.7.5 Mana Aotūroa – our learning**

Mana Aotūroa refers to metaphysical or intellectual journeys of self discovery. For young children it can be viewed in terms of the desire to learn, explore and understand (Reedy, 2003). Mana Aotūroa translates to

'light of day' or 'this world'. When the word aotūroa is broken into its three sections, 'ao-tū-roa', "it relates to the infinity of the universe, and implies an extensive breadth of all the elements that make up the universe. Humankind is an important element of the universe" (Early Childhood Development, 1999, p. 24).

Mana Aotūroa is about the development of curiosity and the desire to seek answers. Reedy (2003) states:

The child learns and understands their uniqueness and their similarity with the rest of the universe. They learn that conquering the unknown through the power of the mind is possible; that understanding the physical world is exciting and challenging; that developing and practising the universal ideals of peace.

Compassion and harmony are a responsibility for us all (p. 70)

Mana Aotūroa relates to children's learning; exploring and seeking knowledge and understandings of their world's and expressing these understandings. This is reflected in the following attributes:

- Haututu – *exploring /seeking*
- Auahatanga - *creativity*
- Whakakatā - *humour*

## 9.8 Examples of Te Whāriki Assessment Framing

Following are two assessments that reflect the service's Te Whāriki assessment framing. They included photographs in the original versions. I have only included the English language versions.

### ***Manaia and the Stethoscope***

*Today the weather wasn't that great for any outdoor activities, however that didn't stop Manaia from finding something interesting to do. She found a stethoscope in the family play area and placed it to her ears. She then looked around for someone who would let her listen to their heart beat. She turned to Summerstorm who is playing with a stethoscope also. She tried to lift up Summerstorm's jersey to listen, however Summerstorm was not happy about this and pulled away. Manaia then turned to Lily-Rose who was playing with the blocks and said "Lily-Rose I listen to you". Lily-Rose agreed so Manaia lifted up Lily-Rose's jersey and placed the stethoscope on her back and began counting 1-2-3-4-7-13 and grinning. Once Manaia had finished she turned around and allowed Lily-Rose to have a turn at listening to her heart beat.*

#### ***What learning took place?***

***Rangimarie:*** *Manaia shows a real sense of peace with herself and her surroundings. She is unperturbed by Summerstorm's refusal to participate in her activity and is happy to find another heartbeat to listen to.*

***Haututu:*** *She explores her understandings about the uses of stethoscopes and displays her knowledge of stethoscopes.*

***Whanaungatanga:*** *She continues to develop relationships through the activity with her peers.*

#### ***What Next***

*Encourage Manaia to continue to explore the Childcare centre environment and to continue working alongside her peers as well as the tuakana*

### ***Awesome Fatai!!!***

*(Written by a kaiako in the Baby/ Toddler room).*

*Fatai is a very determined young girl, if she wants something she won't stop till she's got it. For example, last week all she wanted to do was climb up the ladder that the other children were climbing and go down the slide. However her little legs couldn't reach past the second step, and although it seemed hopeless she continued trying till Whaea Charlaine eventually had to pull her away as she was going to hurt herself. Never the less she carried on finding another way to get up onto the park, via the spider ladder, which is lower to the ground and that doesn't go straight up but gradually ascends. It was ingenious! I could not have thought of a better way myself. Fatai is now starting to think more and problem solve things more rather than standing there screaming about it. Its great to watch her developing. Awesome Fatai!!!*

#### ***What Learning Took Place?***

***Maia:*** Persistence to help her do what she wanted and also problem solving it and finding an easier way.

***Rangatiratanga:*** Confidence, determination and strength of mind displayed.

#### ***What Next?***

*To put more obstacles and challenges in front of her, in order to help her develop more mentally and physically.*

## **9.9 He Kupu Whakatepe - Conclusion**

The founders of this service were primary school teachers, who became increasingly concerned about the educational outcomes for Māori children. It was clear to them that a new way of looking at schooling for Māori was required and it needed to occur in early childhood first. The couple also worked on developing a Kaupapa Māori, Christian primary



schooling option for children graduating from the early childhood service. The primary school received full registration as a Christian bilingual private composite school in 1998.

Questions on what it meant to be Māori were the starting place for reflections and instigated an ongoing review of how Tikanga Māori was practiced in the centre. Kaiako recognised that being Māori meant they viewed things differently, through a Māori lens and assessments needed a balance between having 'heart'; which Veronica related to understandings of 'being Māori'; and the ability to write assessments, which she linked with early childhood teacher training. The work not only challenged kaiako to view things through a Māori lens, it affirmed what they were already doing in terms of Māori practices and gave them the freedom to be Māori differently. Being situated in an urban area meant that the service was not bound by tribal expectations and norms, and in fact it needed to utilise whatever resources were available to support their development.

One of the critical changes from the focus on tikanga Māori was a change in the way children were viewed. They began being viewed in a more positive light, as a pikopiko, initially tightly wound then as the child is nurtured and supported, they unfurl and the child becomes visible.

Assessment was a new concept to kaiako and they initially felt uncomfortable with what and how to develop assessments. Veronica claims they mainly focused on 'being like everybody else', attempting to conform to existing early childhood assessment approaches. There was a great deal of apprehension about 'doing assessment right'. Writing for the whānau was a breakthrough that reduced the discomfort with assessment and documentation.

Staffing changes and time requirements were constant issues for the service. Although sustaining high energy levels for an extended time period was taxing, this was outweighed by the rewards that became more and more evident over time. The Mana framework developed by the service can be viewed as embedded within not only a Māori world view, a Christian perspective as well as the Aotearoa/New Zealand early childhood context. It is therefore a fitting framing for the service.

Following is a diagram that illustrates the weaving patterns for Case Study Two.

Ngā Aho	Te Akoranga	Ngā Tuakiri o te Tangata	Te Āhua o te Mokopuna	Aromatawai	Taniko
Māori Ways of Knowing and Being	<p>Founders concerned with educational outcomes for Māori children. Clear that new way of looking at schooling for Māori required.</p> <p>Change for Māori children needed to occur in ec first.</p> <p><i>Vision to provide birth to tertiary education based on Christian and Māori ideals.</i></p> <p>Established KM, Christian primary school for children graduating from the ec service.</p>	<p>Question - <i>What makes you Māori?</i> Starting place for journey.</p>	<p>Change from regarding behaviours, e.g. haututū as naughty, to an expression of leadership.</p>	<p>Prior to 2002 service using checklists and developmental forms.</p>	<p>A number of themes explored over the period of the study: Whakataukī; te Pītau o te Pikopiko; E kore e hekeheke te kākano rangatira. <i>'We have the seeds of greatness within us'</i>.</p> <p>Te Whāriki Assessment Framing links strongly to centre's KM Christian philosophy.</p> <p>Mana key to framing, the Māori child, and world. Is Māori way of describing person's worth.</p> <p>Different forms of mana relate to different dimensions of the child.</p>
		<p>Critiqued assumptions, perspectives of 'being Māori'.</p>	<p>Major changes in the way children were viewed as result of the work. They <i>'bring an invisible roopu' who are always with them - their ancestors'</i>.</p>	<p>Initial work focused on 'being like everybody else', and conforming to existing assessment approaches.</p>	
		<p>Recognised it meant they viewed things differently, through a Māori lens, or heart. Questioned whether this be developed?</p>	<p>Te pītau o te pikopiko'. Initially tightly wound then unfurls and child becomes visible.</p>	<p>Apprehension about 'doing assessment right'. Kaiako, overawed and fearful.</p>	
		<p>Being situated in an urban area meant that the service was not bound by tribal expectations and norms.</p>	<p><i>"Child comes with all this whānau that's basically standing in support of them"</i></p>	<p>Documentation a major barrier – uncertainty with language and writing skills.</p>	
		<p>Created sense of comfort and freedom with who they were and what they were trying to achieve. <i>'Changing Māori reality'</i> requires use of a range of resources.</p> <p><i>"Don't have to prove anything. It's okay to be who you are"</i></p>	<p><i>"Child as a taonga - started to do that transition from service to school and the handing over of the taonga and the beginning of that new journey"</i></p>	<p>Writing for whānau gave an audience. Changed feel, was a celebration, with wow factor. Changed from being a chore, over and above normal work to a source of enjoyment and satisfaction.</p> <p>Re-emphasised the centre's vision, exciting and rewarding.</p>	

## CHAPTER TEN

## NGĀ KAIWHATU


### CASE STUDY THREE - 2005-2008

This is the final Case Study chapter. It outlines the developing understandings of assessment theory and practice of service kaiako as they wove the Kaupapa Māori theory *aho* across the four *whenu*. This weaving, involved kaiako engaging; in their own way with the *whenu*: making sense of, critiquing, questioning, transforming and looking for fit. In accordance with the *whatu* process, aspects of the Kaupapa Māori dimensions are sometimes highlighted or fore-grounded in the discussion, and at other times, although not mentioned specifically, can be seen as integrally embedded within the body of the thesis fabric.

Comments and quotes included in this case study are taken from research notes, and interview transcripts from phases one and two of the study. Unlike the previous two case study services, this service did not begin work on the study until the beginning of 2005. For this reason the case study is not as extensive as the previous two.

The chapter follows a similar format to the previous case studies: *Te Tīmatanga*/Introduction, *Te Akoranga*/Māori Schooling, *Ngā Tuakiri o te*

*Tangata /Māori Identity, Te Āhua o te Moko pūna/The Image of the Child, Aromatawai/Assessment, Te Haerenga/ the Assessment Journey and Te Whakapiki Whakaaro/ Emergent Thinking. The final section Te Taniko/Assessment Framing outlines the service's assessment framing*

## **10.0 Te Tīmatanga / Introduction**

This Hamilton Te Kōhanga Reo was established in a parent's home in 1989 by a small group of parents. In 1992 the whānau opened their first building, and a second building was opened 1995. A third building was opened in 2008. The kōhanga caters for 26 children. The kōhanga whānau have strong iwi and hapū affiliations to Tainui, Ngāti Haua and Ngāti Wairere.

In early 2005 an invitation was extended to kaiako from both buildings of the kōhanga to participate on the Ministry of Education funded *Te Whatu Pōkeka* project and the doctoral research. This invitation was accepted and work began on the project soon after. In July 2005, however, kaiako from one building withdrew from the project because of pressures such as new staff taking up positions and the supervisor of the building being out on practicum. Kaiako from the remaining building continued on the project and this case study relates to their development towards a Kaupapa Māori assessment framework.

### **10.1 Te Akoranga /Māori Schooling**

Although there were other early childhood services in the area the parents wanted a kaupapa Māori environment where their children could be immersed in te reo Māori me ona tikanga. The kōhanga was positioned across the Kaupapa Māori dimensions of conscientisation, resistance, transformation as they sought to make a difference for their children. It was part of the proactive kōhanga movement away from mainstream

early childhood services to services that reflected Māori ways of knowing, being and doing.

The Kōhanga Reo adhered strongly to the kaupapa of Te Kōhanga Reo in that it provided a Māori language immersion environment where tikanga Māori, including values such as manaakitanga, tiakitanga and aroha, were upheld and normalised. (Refer Chapter Four: 4.5.1 for more detail on Kōhanga Reo)

## 10.2 Te Tuakiri O Te Tangata/Māori Identities

The centre supervisor (Manu) makes the point that growing up in a Māori cultural environment meant she could bring her understandings, learnings and meanings to her practice in the kōhanga and thinking on assessment.

*But what I brought with me ... was what I had grown up with, that intergenerational learning from my ... my grandparents brought me up. Those values are quite respectful of Māori and I will challenge anybody who says otherwise (Manu, 12/03/08).*

Other kaiako also brought with them understandings of 'being Māori', which were influenced by both traditional and contemporary concepts, relationships of multiple realities. They also had a range of experiences of working in kōhanga reo. There was a strong sense of 'being Māori' as a lived reality within the kōhanga and the lives of the whānau. This provided a strong entry point for exploring what kaupapa Māori assessment could mean and how it could be reflected.

*So we actually started exploring ... I suppose it constituted and reaffirmed that what I was doing as a kaiako ... in total immersion Māori in Kōhanga Reo (Manu, 12/03/08).*

### 10.2.1 Being Māori differently

Although kaiako felt confident about the opportunity to explore and develop understandings of Kaupapa Māori assessment, presenting these understandings to others was daunting. The question was: “would others see the assessments, as Māori?” This raised further questions: “What does assessment look like for Māori?” “Who says?” These concerns are reflected in Manu’s comments.

*It was a bit scary at the beginning thinking that people will say, ‘Oh what does this girl know?’ (Manu, 12/03/08).*

This prompted reflection on identity and rights, for example, identity as Māori and rights to reflect ‘being Māori’ in one’s own way. Strength came from Manu’s background and her reflections on her right to express who she was in her own way. Her whakapapa made her Māori. This clarity was fundamental to the development of assessment thinking and framings as it provided strength, security and freedom.

There was a sense that what was being developed in the doctoral research and *Te Whatu Pōkeka* project would provide the basis for future development not only in terms of assessment, but more importantly supporting a strong ‘Māori identity’ in children. Furthermore they did not have to adhere to strict definitions of what that might look like. In fact there was a sense within the *Te Whatu Pōkeka* project that identity is derived from a multiplicity of sources including contemporary and historical ways of being. This was very powerful and liberating.

*... I think that the good thing is that our struggling... will have something, hopefully, something to support them [children] for the future ... and not only that, but it's alright to be who you are (Manu, 12/03/08).*

### **10.3 Te Āhua O Te Mokopuna/ Construct Of The Child**

Important to the kaupapa of Te Kōhanga Reo is the recognition of who children are, who they are as Māori: their whakapapa; their iwi, hapū and whānau; their connections to the land, their tūrangawaewae; and what they bring with them to the service. Manu states it was important to know:

*... where they come from ... the past ... the past that brought them to today (Manu, 12/03/08).*

*from where they come from, from who they're connected to and what experiences or tikanga or kawa or traditional practices and experiences at kōhanga ... are they [children] having that linked back into who they are? (Manu, 12/03/08).*

Manu raised a particularly important issue for the kōhanga in terms of assessment practice. It related to the ways in which the kōhanga make connections to what and who the child brings, and how this can strengthen the child's identity.

*But I think it's a big thing, and I think it's something that you've got to ... be aware of when you're talking about the whakapapa of the child ... me getting to know that child... meeting with the whānau or just standing back and watching (Manu, 12/03/08).*



*... we've got thirty-odd children and ... I have to try and get to know them ... maybe from a distance, just from looking at them, or just watching what they do, sitting with them, talking with them (Manu, 12/03/08).*

Manu describes the importance of the child being viewed as powerful and unique to their developing sense of identity.

*They [children] leave [the kōhanga] proud, Māori and knowing ... simply, who they are and where they came from (Manu, 12/03/08).*

What the child already has within them is crucial to understanding how to further strengthening these dispositions or aspects of character. It also provides the basis for support when required.

*... it may not be about how did he do that, but rather the attitude ... all virtues are already within each child; our role is to draw them out rather than teaching them; and to look for and acknowledge virtues in children, and in ourselves (Manu, 19/9/05).*

Manu emphasises that understanding how the child's spiritual traits can impact upon the child's behaviour, is critical to the child's overall wellbeing.

*Yeah, it's a living thing ... So even though they've got that mana, when they get a bit older, their mana it sort of develops a bit more. It's like they're carrying that kete, eh? And they're filling it up (Manu, 12/03/08).*

#### **10.4 Aromatawai/ Assessment**

Prior to their participation in the project, Manu had participated in a Masters of Education study that explored whakapapa as a tool for

assessment from a Māori perspective. She had, therefore, already begun to critique current early childhood assessment processes and the assessment frameworks that the kōhanga was utilising.

*It started well before that [research]. It might have been about three or four years ago (Manu, 12/03/08).*

She states that initially the kōhanga assessment approach was very mainstream with little connection to the kōhanga kaupapa.

*There was already a framework in place ... very mainstream ... just writing out your observations, putting them under the Te Whāriki streams ... And then, from that process, working out an action plan for an individual child.*

A daily diary was used to document the routine happenings such as what the children ate, when they slept, nappy changes etc.

*It was about filling out a daily diary of what the child did ... what they ate (Manu, 12/03/08).*

#### **10.4.1 Te Whatu Pōkeka**

The kōhanga began work on *Te Whatu Pōkeka* and the doctoral research in 2005, the last year of Phase One. They did not participate on *Kei Tua o Te Pae* and were not part of the initial set up or hui discussions on *Te Whatu Pōkeka* or the doctoral research. However, they had, as previously stated, begun to explore assessment understandings.

#### **10.4.2 Being like everyone else**

The initial focus of the work was to learn more about assessment: to be like everyone else, to do assessment correctly. At the time the kōhanga

was utilising a mixture of Te Whāriki and developmental assessments approaches, which included noting developmental milestones and norms.

Manu states:

*because I think I was trying to follow processes or guidelines that were already set in place, and of course, research had showed what 'children at this stage do this sort of thing' ... what we'd call 'milestones' ... You knew what that child was going to do at that age before they even turned that age (Manu, 12/03/08).*

She remembers trying to use the same format as Learning Stories.

*And I was trying to look at ... learning stories where they have a photo and a story about it, and then 'where to next', short term (Manu, 12/03/08).*

Despite employing contemporary assessment theory and practice that linked to *Te Whāriki*, Manu felt there were areas of incongruence, and questions around fit and comfort. The notions of individualism and collectivism, was one area of difference identified by Manu. She claimed the assessments focused on the individual child, which did not feel right.

*We worked them on the individual basis ... things didn't sit well with me (Manu, 12/03/08).*

*I thought, 'Well, that doesn't feel right [individualism]. I can see other things'. You know, for me I started looking within my inner self and I started thinking about ... I think I started thinking more Māori rather than mainstream (Manu, 12/03/08).*

Manu links this critique of the assessment approach to her teacher education, in that it helped her become more critically reflective. Tertiary teacher education was therefore a key stimulus in the critique of what she knew did not fit but could not articulate why. Early childhood teacher education provided Manu with the space to critique early childhood theory and practice including assessment thinking, and supported what might be called a re-imagining of priorities and determining one's own approaches and goals.

*... something doesn't sit right with me with this assessment. ... oh, by that time I had qualified, I became trained and I started to think a bit more ... Reflectively ... that's a good word. I felt I was writing lies (Manu, 12/03/08).*

Māori theorists engaged with during her tertiary teacher education provided encouragement for her to challenge assessment thinking and practices. She questioned why the kōhanga was using mainstream assessment processes, rather than ones that reflected Māori views of the child, identity and learning. It was a process of challenging accepted norms and assumptions and searching for Māori alternatives.

*I started reading Rose Pere, Ranginui [Walker], and also Mason Durie. A lot of what they said sort of took me back to how I was brought up and it ... hit me then ... Here we are talking about all these areas of development ... from European, western research ... and I thought, 'Far out! Why are we trying to compare ourselves to something that's not even us? Why don't we look in our own back yard?' You know, every time we stand up to mihi, we whakapapa, so that people know who we are and where we're from ... why can't we present that in a form, or in a framework that's culturally beneficial? (Manu, 12/03/08).*

### 10.4.3 Spiritual dimension

Manu realised that one of the reasons assessment thinking did not fit was that the spiritual dimension of the child was missing, a dimension that was as vital to the child's holistic wellbeing as any other dimension of the person, and involved the child's ability to think in rational, creative and intuitive ways. Manu highlights that what is missing from current assessment thinking and practice is recognition of the child's ira tangata or wairua.

*I started challenging a lot of what is happening in terms of assessment ... Maybe we've missed something else. Maybe there's something missing from their ira tangata or wairua (Manu, 12/03/08).*

If aspects of the child such as these are not recognised and affirmed, the child's spiritual connectedness is negated.

*And then learning stories became a big thing ... people loved them. And I looked at us and said, 'It doesn't suit us. It doesn't accommodate what we're on about. We're not looking at taking an interest ... We're ... looking at ... our Taha Māori; we're looking at kei te pai te wairua o te tamaiti? (Manu, 12/03/08).*

*Behaviour management ... why is that child misbehaving? Is it because the wairua is not right (Manu, 12/03/08).*

As mauri refers to the person's life force, their spark of life, what makes the person alive and active, it was essential, that mauri be recognised in the assessments. In this way, according to Manu, it could capture the child's true essence.

*I don't think you capture the true essence of a Māori child through a learning story (Manu, 12/03/08).*

The work on the research project required fleshing out what was already practiced in the kōhanga. The assessment developments affirmed what they were already doing, with strong links being made between their philosophy and practices. It was not about creating a completely new framework but was more about reflecting and examining, their philosophical underpinnings against their assessment format, in this way giving validity and legitimacy to being and acting Māori.

*They (kaiako) know it. They know it, they practiced it every day (Manu, 12/03/08).*

#### **10.4.4 Uncertainty**

There was however a sense of unease with the assessment process. Manu describes the word assessment as 'scary' but that it came down to documenting what they were already doing and living.

*I think the whole word 'assessment' is scary to a lot of them. You can talk 'til the cows come home, but ... for us it's living ... That we live it but we don't document it (Manu, 12/03/08).*

#### **10.4.5 Documentation**

As with the previous case studies, documentation was a major barrier in the development of assessment understandings. Kaiako were apprehensive that their assessments would be available to be viewed and perhaps judged by colleagues and whānau. This lack of confidence in

documenting assessments was a barrier, for kaiako with formal qualifications as well as for those without.

*I think a lot of people were a bit stand-offish about presenting their stuff, I mean, I was one of them (Manu, 12/03/08).*

This barrier was eventually overcome as Manu moved past the apprehension to a place of comfort, understanding and clarification.

*And I think, at the end of the day, I was prepared to share what I thought with other people (Manu, 12/03/08).*

#### 10.4.5.1 Te Reo Māori

Working through the whole area of documentation was a learning opportunity for kaiako. In line with the kaupapa of Te Kōhanga Reo, of immersion in te reo Māori, there was a commitment to write all assessments in te reo Māori only. As with the earlier case studies written language skills were variable, and this provided a learning process to be worked through.

*Unfortunately, I write better in English than I do in Māori, and I really love to put everything that we have in Māori. But I mean it's a learning process too (Manu, 12/03/08).*

#### 10.4.5.2 Too much documentation

Manu also believed that there was both too much assessment documentation required that the focus of the assessment was not quite right.

*Too much of it ... Collect your data, analyse it, ... what are you actually seeing ... whereas from a Māori perspective ... I think ... that if you see it, once you've seen it... From there you know ... what's happened ... you know that ... is leadership skill in that child that's just climbed on the top of the chair for the first time (Manu, 12/03/08).*

The outcome of the assessment work for Manu was a growing comfort with documentation and a real sense of pride in what was being produced, but this was not always true for all the kaiako.

*Me, I love it. I could do it all ... only because ... I've become familiar with it. But for others it's a strain (Manu, 12/03/08).*

### **10.5 Te Haerenga - The Assessment Journey**

As previously stated the assessment journey for the kōhanga began well before beginning work on the research project. Manu states that kaiako had difficulty understanding the assessment approaches and tools being utilised at the time so she began exploring Māori concepts and values with them, in an attempt to find a more accessible and understandable approach.

*It started well before that [research]. It might have been about three or four years ago ... being the only qualified person in my staff at that time...talking gibberish ... they couldn't understand the jargon (Manu, 12/03/08).*

*... trying to find something that best suited their needs ... something that they could understand, something that they could work with, something they had knowledge about without having to get trained (Manu, 12/03/08).*



### 10.5.1 Staffing

Manu makes the point that kaiako without qualifications often felt ill-prepared and sometimes pressured to perform and to meet documentation deadlines. This, she argues was due to their inexperience and lack of knowledge on how and what to document.

*I didn't like seeing them being pressured all the time to meet deadlines to do something that they didn't know how to ... write assessments on tamariki (Manu, 12/03/08).*

Although lack of experience and knowledge of assessment was initially a barrier for kaiako, there was a commitment and passion to move forward.

*Barriers to moving forward...due to [a lack of] expertise and knowledge around assessment, however the passion and energy is there to support kaiako (Research Notes, 16/05/05).*

Manu felt that if assessment frameworks reflected kaiako's existing understandings and knowledge, they would be able to understand the process more and be better positioned to contribute to the assessment process.

*Our expectation for our untrained was that they know just as much as we do. And I thought, 'No, no... that's not right'. Rather than trying to put pressure on them and then they can't work to that ability, let's try and find something that they know they're comfortable to work within. And when I spoke to them about it, I think we had four staff at that time, they just clicked straight away. They knew what it was (Manu, 12/03/08).*

Staff turnover, as noted in the previous case study, was an ongoing issue. Manu was required to continually work with new kaiako to acquaint them with assessment theory, processes and philosophy.

*... because the turnover of staff ...it's about going back and supporting. But I think if you force things onto people, no matter how long they've been there ... and they're not really prepared ... they're still not understanding what perspective you're coming from, you're always going to have problems (Manu, 12/03/08).*

### **10.5.2 Time**

The major barrier to assessment development for the kōhanga was lack of time. The kōhanga started late in the project journey so had limited time to explore assessment in depth. There was also a general lack of time during the working day.

*And probably not having enough time to explore more deeply, like it...it was a bit rushed...And that was the worst thing was sort of picking up half way, sort of thing (Manu, 12/03/08).*

### **10.5.3 Support**

One of the important supports or enablers in the development process was having an outside support person who visited regularly to provide support, providing information, encouraging movement and feeding back on developments.

*Having somebody there to keep you on track, especially for the project. [saying] "you know you need to get this done", "Yeah, yeah, okay".... Or meeting up ... talking and making sure that we had something that was really viable to ... to share with the group (Manu, 12/03/08).*

### 10.5.3.1 Hui

Kaiako attended twice yearly hui held with the five participating *Te Whatu Pōkeka* services, where they could discuss progress, problems, supports, events and assessment issues. These hui were to be critical in relieving the sense of isolation and uncertainty around the work, and providing assurance that everyone was on the right track. Manu states they emphasised and solidified in people's minds that 'it was alright to be different', to be who they were. There was a sense that no one was judging and that everyone was accepted as different.

*I thought they were really great... (Manu, 12/03/08).*

As each service presented their work they were affirmed by the group but more importantly the service each realised that everyone else was dealing with the same issues.

*You'd be surprised how everybody's framework actually links (Manu, 12/03/08).*

### 10.5.3.2 Whānau

Feedback from whānau was also extremely positive which indicated to kaiako that they were on the right track.

*They found it fabulous...I spoke individually with every one of them that we did the (assessments on) and I sat them in front of the computer. We did PowerPoint and that would just blow them away ... so blown away they forgot to bring the PowerPoint back (Manu, 12/03/08).*

The assessment process gave whānau an opening to make a real contribution to the kōhanga and the programme, to share their knowledge, understandings and who they were with kaiako. The assessment stories acted as 'conscriptio devices' for whānau involvement and engagement instigating a two-way transmission of stories, which in effect is what happened, and this brought experiences from the community, hapū and iwi into the kōhanga.

*And the good thing involving our parents is them bringing their stories from their iwi to add to that, you know? (Manu, 12/03/08).*

## **10.6 Te Whakapiki Whaakaro - Emergent Thinking**

Discussions continued throughout 2005 on possible assessment approaches.

*A long discussion on what the under two whare [younger children's building] could possibly focus on. Areas of interests...were examining the notion of Whare Tapa Whā as a way of documenting and assessing children's learning. Another area...was whakapapa (Research Notes, 02/05/05).*

Over time the notion of whakapapa strengthened. It fitted with the thinking and understandings of kaiako and whānau. It was an inherently Māori concept, which can be viewed as embedded in the Māori psyche. Furthermore, kaiako felt comfortable with it and understood its meaning.

*Through the idea of Whakapapa we also explored how ideas and interests could evolve ... to create an environment of intergenerational learning within a Pan-tribe context. It was important for us to recognise that every member of our whānau has mana, has knowledge to contribute, and is*

*valued ... Whakapapa, it is about making both the physical and spiritual links of our culture so that the vessel of knowledge continues to keep afloat the existence of te reo me ona tikanga a whānau, a hapū, a iwi (Research Notes, 02/05/05).*

Kaiako believed a whakapapa assessment approach would support the collective including the kaiako and whānau to contribute in their own ways to the child's learning. It also encouraged reciprocal relationships with community, whānau, hapū and iwi.

*The idea of whakapapa would allow for all individuals to contribute to the child's learning and development ... whakapapa was expressed ... as a way of supporting and maintaining the transmission of te reo me ōna tikanga from iwi, hapū and whānau and not just from Tainui [tribal canoe that denotes a specific region] (Research Notes, 02/05/05).*

The articulation of the framework however was not a straight forward process.

*We found ourselves exploring our own understanding of assessment: discussing current forms of assessments staff have found useful...asking ourselves what is it we want to gain from this project, how might this project support our whānau, and what would this look like in practice (Research Notes, 02/05/05 ).*

Furthermore the framework itself changed and evolved over the research period.

*But it kept changing all the time ... (Research Notes, 02/05/05).*

## 10.7 Taniko - Whakapapa Assessment Framing

The following is an outline of the service's Whakapapa assessment framing.

*Puritia ngā taonga a ngā tūpuna mō ngā puāwai o te ora, ā mātou tamariki.*

Hold fast to the cultural treasures of our ancestors for the future benefit of our children. (Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 51)

Whakapapa has many meanings but can generally be viewed as genealogy and history. The Williams Dictionary (2001) definitions of whakapapa include:

- To lie flat
- Place in layers, lay one upon another
- Recite in proper order genealogies, legends etc
- Genealogical table

'Papa' describes something that is broad and flat such as a board or slab and 'whaka' can be translated as 'to enable' or 'make happen'. Whakapapa relates to the idea of placing in layers or laying one on another.

Whakapapa operates at various levels but is most commonly concerned with genealogical narratives, stories that are recounted layer upon layer, ancestor upon ancestor up to the present day, a genealogical layering of one generation of ancestors upon the previous. Apirana Ngata states 'If you visualise the foundation ancestors as the first generation, the next and succeeding ancestors are placed on them in ordered layers' (1972, p.6).

Whakapapa therefore is a continuous life line from those who existed before to those living today. It encompasses everything that is passed from one generation to the next, from one ancestor to the next and, from the

deceased to the living (Berryman, 2008).

According to Mead (2003), Whakapapa links us to: our ancestors; where we have come from; our surroundings; our tūpuna; Ranginui me Papatūānuku; our birth right' our whenua or tūrangawaewae; whānau hapu, iwi; moana, awa, maunga and waka. Whakapapa connects Māori to people and land; past, present and future, to the spiritual world and the universe (Mead, 1992; Te Rito, 2007). Mead (1992) explains the whakapapa of the universe in terms of a movement, from nothingness or potential, to the world of light. L. Smith (2000) makes the point that whakapapa is a way of thinking which is fundamental to almost every facet of a Māori worldview. "Whakapapa is a way of thinking. A way of learning, a way of storing knowledge, and a way of debating knowledge. It is inscribed in virtually every aspect of our worldview" (L. Smith, 2000, p. 234). An example of this is the way the creation whakapapa it utilized to represent the process of conception and birthing, not only of the world but of "*te ōrokohanga*", but the birthing of the child "*te whānau tangata*", and the birthing of learning of the child "*te āhuatanga o te tamaiti*" (Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 50). Marsden (2000, p. 24) makes the point that these birthing concepts emphasise evolving consciousness and learning rather than a physical evolving of matter. The child can be viewed as moving through realms of learning to a space of realisation and understanding thus provide an assessment approach that is deeply embedded within a Māori world view, and which expresses Māori ways of knowing, being, and doing.

The following is a description of aspects of the whakapapa framing defined by the service kaiako which form the basis of their assessment practices.

**Mōhiotanga** – What a child already knows and what they bring with them highlights new beginnings, new knowledge, new discoveries.

*Te kore, te pō,*

**Mātauranga** – This is a time of growth for the child. It denotes a phase of increasing potential, negotiation, challenge, and apprehension when dealing with new ideas.

*Te kukune, te pupuke, te hihiri, te mahara, te manako*

**Māramatanga** – This is when a child comes to understand new knowledge: a phase of enlightenment, realisation, and clarification.

*Te mahara, te hinengaro, te manako, te wānanga, te whē, te ao mārama.*

(Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 49).

### 10.7.1 Mōhiotanga - knowings

Mōhiotanga was the starting place for assessment. It required that the kaiako know the child, know who they are, their whakapapa, their temperament, personality traits, likes/dislikes, interests and maybe most importantly their rich potential for growth. It is elaborated in Te Whatu Pōkeka (Ministry of Education, 2009) where the importance of knowing the child is emphasised:

*Ko wai koe? Nā wai koe? I ahu mai koe i hea?*

*Who are you? From whom are you? Where have you come from?*

I am Māori, a descendant of people who came to Aotearoa from Rangīātea, a place located in the spiritual world of Hawaiiki. (p. 50)

Getting to know the child required that adults not only observe children but that they view children through a whakapapa lens, where the child is surrounded by ancestors and whānau, those who are living and those who have passed on. In this way they acknowledge that the child is the receptacle of all those who have gone before them, a product of their past,



a living connection to ancestors, the gods and the universe. In Te Whatu Pōkeka these ideas are elaborated:

Each child is an individual with individual personality traits inherited from their ancestors. The child is surrounded by those that have passed on and by whānau that guides them on a day to day basis. From these guardians, they have developed their own unique ways of being and of enhancing the world. (p. 51)

I am a unique person with my own mana, mauri, and wairua inherited through my ancestors from our supreme creator, Io-Matua-Kore. Therefore my very being is treasured. (p. 50)

The starting place therefore for assessment framework was: Ko wai koe? Nā wai koe? I ahu mai koe i hea? Who are you? From whom are you? Where have you come from?

It was important therefore that children be seen as connected to their past, their whakapapa their ancestors and their culture. The assessment processes also needed to acknowledge the child's relationships through whakapapa with not only the spiritual world but the physical world through Papatūānuku the land elements, through Rangi the sky elements and through their children to life forms such as plants, animals, insects, and fish. "My ancestors are always there as part of the environment of this spiritual force, yet quite separate and identifiable" (Reedy, 1979, p. 43).

### **10.7.2 Mātauranga - learnings**

In terms of the child's learning, this was a time of apprehension and uncertainty, but also excitement and expectancy. There are two features of this period that have major significance for children's learning and

assessment.

The key to assessment was seen as ascertaining what the child is saying, as opposed to what the child is specifically learning: what are the messages about learning here? What stretching is occurring? What's happening here for the child? Underpinning these questions was the fundamental belief that all children learn, given the right conditions. So what are the right conditions required to enhance the child's opportunities to learn?

*You know, you know the ones who are real maia, real confident and then there's the ones who are quite whakamā (shy). But why are they whakamā? It is for us to try and build their confidence up so that they're not whakamā (Manu, 12/03/08).*

Manu stresses the significance of spiritual characteristics in her comments on what the child is trying to say.

*Rather than thinking that she can show me that she is able to zip a bag, which I could see she could do, or whether she could stand on a chair and tell me what activity she wants to do, I saw other signs... of spiritual personality, which I felt connected my thoughts and observations ...I could see that these linked to what I was trying to describe ... that reflected her wairua...Her 'maiatanga' or confidence (Manu, 12/03/08).*

Ensuring that a child's holistic wellbeing was in balance, so that they were open to learning was central to the kōhanga's assessment frame. To this end, short narratives of children participating in the kōhanga, community and whānau were recorded, collated and layered to create a picture of the child:

*...little snippets. You know, like ... I had about ten little snippets, and writing a whakapapa story ... a pūrākau? ... I can't really say what it was, but having snippets ... it's never ending (Manu, 12/03/08).*

*Through documenting and collecting a number of narratives from a range of voices (child, staff, and whānau), the child's whakapapa begins to grow. Even though each story stands on its own, we believe that understanding the collective meaning tells of something more organic and that assessment from our perspective isn't seen in isolation to each story but rather assessment is a layering of events that have substance and connection to the whole (all of the stories) (Manu, 12/03/08).*

*With a whakapapa, there's a beginning and continuation of existence. In terms of assessment, we begin with the child's whakapapa (linkage to Te ao Māori me ona whānau) that in context began even before the child was born (Research Notes, 22/08/05).*

This process was viewed as a whakapapa for understanding the child, layering children's stories one upon another. This provided a whakapapa platform, demonstrating children's thinking, which was organic, dynamic, and connected. It formed the basis for further development and support.

*How can I support this child's development? (Manu, 12/03/08).*

The second question posed by Manu makes reference to adult responsibilities and practice. It requires that children are exposed to new ideas and experiences, so that thinking, understandings and abilities are stretched and challenged, as well as safe and protected. It requires balance.

*Learning doesn't happen in isolation...it has a whakapapa in terms of people playing an indirect and direct role; children's experiences and environments in every setting play a part in shaping/influencing that child's whakapapa (Research Notes, 08/08/05).*

### **10.7.3 Māramatanga - understandings**

*Māramatanga* is the phase of realisation, enlightenment and clarification. It is not however viewed as the end point, rather as part of a continuously unfolding layering or stream (Marsden, 1992). This is when a child comes to understand new knowledge, a phase of enlightenment, realisation, and clarification.

For the *kōhanga Māramatanga* is the realm of realisation, enlightenment and clarification. It is a time of recognition of the child's being, their power, their uniqueness and identity. It is a time of celebration and pride. As Manu puts it:

*(We see) [A] as a child, as Māori, and as a taonga (Manu, 12/03/08).*

### **10.8 Examples of the Whakapapa Assessment Framing**

The following are two layered stories/assessments that reflect the service's Whakapapa assessment framing. They include photographs and are written in Māori only however I have added an English language translation for this thesis. Despite the analysis referring to a range of attributes, the focus of the framing is the movement through the different whakapapa phases of learning. These stories have been published in *Te Whatu Pōkeka* (Ministry of Education, 2009, pp. 88-91)

***Ko Maru - Te korero tuatahi***

*(Written by Manu - Baby/Toddler Building)*

*I tētahi rā, i waho mātou, ā, ka kite au i a Maru e hīkoi ana ki te taha o ngā kaiako e ngaki māra ana. Ka haere a Maru ki te kimi hoto, ā, ka tīmata ia ki te kōhi i ngā paru ki tōna hoto. Ka karanga atu au ki a ia, me te pātai, “Maru, kei hea ō kamupūtu?” Kāore he whakautu. Ka mahi tonu ia i āna mahi. Ka tīmata ia ki te pana i te hoto, ā, ka rongō i te oro o te hoto e tuki ana i te papa. Ki ahau, he pai te tangi ki a ia, nā te mea, ka haere tonu ia me tōna hoto ki tētahi atu wāhi. Kua huri ōna whakaaro mai i te māra ki te hoto.*

One day we were outside, and I saw Maru walking alongside some of the kaiako working in the garden. Maru went to find a spade and began to gather dirt using his spade. I asked him “Maru, where are your gumboots?” He didn’t reply, he carried on with what he was doing. He then began to push the spade along the concrete and heard the sound it made as it hit the ground. I think he liked it because he continued to do this in other places. His focus moved from the garden to the spade.

### ***Ko Maru - Te korero tuarua***

*(Written by Manu- Baby/Toddler Building)*

*I te tīmatanga, ka piki whakamuri a Maru ki runga i tōna waka. Engari, ka huri whakamua ia kia tika tōna noho. Ko ōna waewae i whakahaere i te waka. Ahakoa paku noa iho te haere o te waka, ka haere tonu. Nā reira ka haere tōna waka mō te wā roa. E pau ana te hau o Maru, ka toro tōna ringa ki ētahi tamariki ki te āwhina i a ia. Ka haere atu ētahi o ngā tuakana ki te āwhina i a ia. Ka rongō au i a M.W. e kōrero ana, “Tino taumaha koe, Maru.” Me te kōrero o H.C. “Āe, tino taumaha koe Maru.” Nā M.W. i hiki i a Maru mai te waka. Ahakoa kāore ahau i rongō i ngā kōrero i waenganui i a M.W. rāua ko Maru, te āhua nei he kōrero pai. Ko te mea pai o*

*tēnei āhukatanga, ko te haere ngātahi a te tuakana me te teina, ā, te manaaki o te tuakana i te teina.*

In the beginning Maru climbed backwards onto his waka. But he turned forward to sit properly. His legs moved the waka. Even though his waka moved only slightly, he continued. He moved like this for a long time. When Maru had finished he reached out his hand to some other children to help him. The other children went to his aid. I heard M.V say “you’re heavy Maru”. H.C also said “Yes, you’re really heavy Maru”. M.V lifted Maru from his waka. Although I did not hear what M.V and Maru said to each other, it looked as though they were having a good conversation. The good thing about this kind of situation is the older children and younger children playing together, and the older children caring for the younger.

***Kei te whakaatu mai a Maru i te aha?***

***Hiringa*** - Kei a Maru te hiringa ki te mahi i āna mahi. Ā, ki ahau nei, kei te piki tōna māiatanga ki ana mahi tākaro i roto, i waho hoki i te whare.

***Pukumahi*** - Āe, pukumahi ia i waenganui i āna mahi tākaro, ahakoa tēhea takaro, tēhea mahi kei a ia tēnei horomata.

***Ūtonutanga*** - Mō ētahi mahi kei a Maru tēnei horomata pēra i te eke waka me te tākaro.

***Tuku marie*** - Pērā ki te noho ki te tūru, te tākaro, me te mahi māra. Āe, kei a Maru tēnei āhukatanga hoki.

***Ngākau atawhai*** - He ngakaunui tō Maru. Tērā pea, koirā te take, ka āwhina, ka manaaki ngā tamariki i a ia.

### **What is Maru showing?**

**Determination** - Maru is determined to do what he needs to do. To me, he is building confidence in playing inside and out.

**Hardworking** - Yes, he is very hard working in all his play, no matter what it is.

**Perseverance** - Maru shows perseverance in some activities like, riding bikes and playing

**Settled** - Like sitting on the chair, playing and working in the garden, Yes, Maru shows this characteristic.

**Caring**- Maru has a loving heart. Maybe that explains why the other children help and care for him.

*Ka ahu ki hea? Me pēhea ahau e tautoko i tōna whanaketanga?*

*Te eke waka Tērā pea me whakaaro mātou ngā kaiako, ki te whakarite he wāhi mō Maru ki te pana i tōna waka. Me whakarite mātou ngā kaiako i ētahi atu waka rerekē māna hei tautoko i a ia.*

*Pakari tinana Tērā pea, ina ka whakapakari ngā pūkenga ā-tinana o Maru, ka pakari ake ia ki te mahi i āna mahi, pērā ki te heke tūru, heke waka ranei.*

*Whakaako kupu hōu Ka tīmata ia ki te whakaputa i ngā kupu o Maru kia ahei ia ki te karanga mō te āwhina, kia ahei ia ki te whakaingoa i ngā taonga pai ki a ia.*

*Tautoko Kia tautoko tonu ngā kaiako i ngā pūkenga katoa o Maru kia puāwai, kia tipu pai ia.*

### **Where to from here? How will I support his development?**

**Riding bikes** - We could think about setting up an area for Maru to push his bike around. We could sort different types of bikes.

**Strengthen body movement** - As Maru's gross motor skills improve, he will become stronger in all his play, like getting down from a chair, and getting down from his bike.

**Whakaako kupu hou** - Maru's language is beginning to emerge. He can ask for help, he can name the play equipment he likes.

**Support** - Continue to support all of Maru's skills and abilities, so that he can grow and reach his potential.

### **Wāriutanga**

*Kei te haere tonu ngā whāinga o Marutuahu. Ahakoa kua tutuki ētahi o ana whāinga, kei te tipu tonu ia. Kua rongohia ahau ki ētahi kupu, pērā i te kupu 'māmā'. Ka whakamahia e ia te kupu 'māmā' mō te 'homai' me te 'whaea'. Kua tīmata a Maru ki te titiro ki ngā pukapuka. I tēnei wā, kei te pānui pukapuka mātou ki a ia, ā, kei te titiro ia ki ngā pikitia noa iho. Kei te pai tēnā. He tīmatanga tēnā. Kua mauria mai ngā waka ki roto i te whare, kia pakari a Maru ki te eke, ki te heke anō hoki i te waka. Ā, kua whai wā ia ki te whakapakari i ōna waewae ki te whakahaere i te waka. Ka puta atu mātou ki waho, ka haere tōtika a Maru ki ngā pahikara nui, i nāianei. Heoi anō, he wero hōu anō tāna i tēnei wā. Nā reira, kei te āta titiro mātou ki a ia me tēnei wero hōu. Kia kaha e Maru! Kei te akiaki mātou i a Maru i ngā wā katoa. Nā tōna tino haututū, nā tōna tino whakamatemate, ka puta mai ētahi painga hōu. Nō reira, kei te kite mātou, i te tipuranga me te whanaketanga o tēnei tamaiti. Te āhua nei, kei te pai haere. Ki ahau nei kāre e kōre ka puta mai ētahi pūrākau hōu mō Maru.*

### **Values**

The aims for Maru will continue. Even though he has accomplished some of his goals, he is still growing. I have heard some words like



“Mama”. He uses Mama for “give me” and “whaea”. Maru has begun to show interest in books. At this stage when we read books to him, he only looks at the pictures, which is good. It’s a beginning. We have also moved the bikes inside, so that he has the opportunity to practice climbing on and getting off his bike. And he has had the chance to strengthen his legs to move the bike. When we go outside, Maru goes straight to the big bikes. So now he has a new challenge, Be strong Maru! We are always encouraging Maru, because of his curiosity, he finds new challenges. Because of this we see the growth and development of this child. He is doing fine, and I am confident new stories about Maru will emerge.

The following is a commentary from Te Whatu Pōkeka (2009, p. 92) on the assessments:

These examples of Marutuahu’s learning indicate that the whakapapa of one’s identity is much more than the connection between people. It identifies the image of Marutuahu as being one of formation and growth through his mana of potential. This image of Marutuahu illustrates the interconnections of each exemplar, working together at separate times and places, towards supporting and nurturing his totality, his mana, tapu and ira tangata of being. His actions show how he uses past knowledge to problem-solve and to develop his understanding.

## **10.9 He Kupu Whakatepe – Conclusion**

Before beginning work on the doctoral research the kōhanga was already firmly positioned within the Kaupapa Māori dimensions of conscientisation, resistance, transformation, as they sought to make a difference for their children. They adhered strongly to the kaupapa of Te

Kōhanga Reo providing a Māori language immersion environment where tikanga Māori, including values such as: manaakitanga, tiakitanga and aroha were upheld and normalised. There was therefore already a strong sense of 'being Māori' as a lived reality within the kōhanga and the lives of the whānau. What was required was the exploration of what kaupapa Māori assessment could mean and how it could be reflected. Uncertainty came with the question would others see the assessments, as Māori? Continued reflection resulted in understandings that they did not have to adhere to strict definitions of what that might look like, in fact as identity is derived from a multiplicity of sources including contemporary and historical ways of being, assessment could also be diverse and context specific.

Important to the kaupapa of Te Kōhanga Reo is the recognition of children as Māori: their whakapapa; their iwi, hapū and whānau; their connections to the land, their tūrangawaewae; and what they bring with them to the service. Manu emphasises that understanding how the child's spiritual traits can impact upon the child's behaviour, is critical to the child's overall wellbeing.

Initially the kōhanga assessment approach was very mainstream with little connection to the kōhanga kaupapa. The initial focus of the work was to learn more about assessment: to be like everyone else, to do assessment correctly and there was little fit. Manu realised that one of the reasons assessment thinking did not fit was that the spiritual dimension of the child was missing, a dimension that was as vital to the child's holistic wellbeing. The work on the research project required extending what was already practiced in the kōhanga.

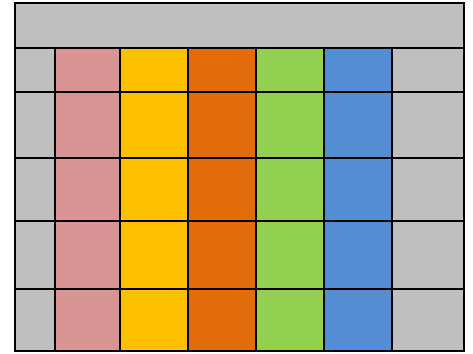
Some of the barriers for the kōhanga were: kaiako feeling ill-prepared and sometimes pressured to perform and to meet documentation deadlines, Staff turnover requiring constant reviewing, and the time requirements of kaiako. A positive aspect of the work was the opening it gave to whānau to make a real contribution to the kōhanga and the programme, to share their knowledge, understandings and who they were with kaiako.

Over time the notion of whakapapa strengthened. It fit with the thinking and understandings of kaiako and whānau. It was an inherently Māori concept, which can be viewed as embedded in the Māori psyche. Furthermore, kaiako felt comfortable with it and understood its meaning. Whakapapa link Māori to: our ancestors; where we have come from; our surroundings; our tūpuna; Ranginui me Papatūānuku; our birth right' our whenua or tūrangawaewae; whānau hapū, iwi; moana, awa, maunga and waka. It made sense.

Following is a diagram that illustrates the weaving patterns for Case Study Three.

Ngā Aho	Te Akoranga	Ngā Tuakiri o te Tangata	Te Āhua o te Mokopuna	Aromatawai	Taniko
Māori Ways of Knowing and Being	TKR positioned within KM dimensions of conscientisation, resistance, transformation, to make a difference for their children.  Proactive movement away from mainstream ece services.  Language immersion environment and tikanga Māori, values: manaakitanga, tiakitanga and aroha were upheld and normalised.	Strong sense of 'being Māori' as a lived reality within the kōhanga and the lives of the whānau.	Recognition of who children are, who they are as Māori: whakapapa; their iwi, hapū and whānau; connections to the land, their tūrangawaewae; and what they bring with them to the kōhanga	Utilising mainstream assessment with little connection to the kōhanga kaupapa.	Over time the notion of whakapapa strengthened. Fit with kaiako and whānau thinking. An inherently Māori concept embedded in the Māori psyche.
		Recognition that did not have to adhere to strict definitions of identity, derived from diverse sources contemporary and historical. Was powerful and freeing.	Importance of the child being viewed as powerful and unique to their developing sense of and identity.	Initial focus to be like everyone else, do it right. Uncertainty as little fit with current assessment. <i>"something doesn't sit right with me with this assessment"</i>	Encouraged reciprocal relationships with community, whānau, hapū and iwi.
		Presenting KM assessment, understandings daunting. <i>"It was a bit scary at the beginning thinking that people will say"</i> .	Emphasis on child's spiritual traits critical to overall wellbeing.	Realised that reason for ill fit was spiritual dimension missing.	Whakapapa connects Māori to people and land; past, present and future, to the spiritual world and the universe: Mohiotanga Mātauranga Māramatanga.
		Recognition that whakapapa made one Māori. Did not have to express same as anyone else.  <i>"I know who I am. I know where I'm from"</i> .	Key is to keep promoting the child's mana to encourage it to develop to its fullest. <i>"it's a living thing"</i> .	Māori theorists inspiration for development.	Stories show Marutuahu's learning and mana. His wairua and mauri are strong and balanced as he confidently engages with other s and his world.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN



### TE TAPA - SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

In Chapter One I introduced the metaphor of whatu kākahu to frame this thesis. I explained the innovative responses of early Māori to their new environment. Through utilising knowledge and techniques from their Pacific homeland, early Māori were able to produce appropriate clothing for the new land and thrive in the new setting. This thesis has also utilised a whatu process to create assessment kākahu appropriate for the twenty first century. The whatu process has involved a weaving of the kaupapa Māori theory elements - conscientisation, resistance, transformative praxis and Māori ways of knowing and being, across and within historical, cultural and educational paradigms and understandings, to fashion assessment kākahu that afforded comfort, warmth and flexibility. This chapter represents the final elements of the kākahu, Te Tapa or side borders. The Tapa not only frames the kākahu, they include decorative patterns and styles developed by the weavers. The thesis Tapa also highlights the unique elements, styles and patterning developed and fore fronted by the thesis kākahu weavers. It is informed by the earlier reflections and summarises the tāniko patterns and decorative elements of the thesis, the research finding. The chapter concludes with a final summation on the weaving of the thesis kākahu. Māwhitiwhiti refers to the understandings gained by the weavers from the weaving process. The

final section of this chapter outlines my māwhitiwhiti, my personal reflections and understandings.

In terms of this research there a number of ethical and methodological considerations related to my positioning within the research and within the context of the researched communities. As discussed in Chapter One, Māori researchers who work 'with', 'for' and 'as' their own marginalised communities can experience competing responsibilities, pressures and obligations. L. Smith (2006) warns that this type of 'insider' or 'socially interested' research has the potential for 'bias' and a lack of objectivity, which can lead to researchers mistakenly believing that their role is one of advocacy rather than research. At this point I need to acknowledge my bias. This research has been a collaborative weaving of assessment journeys. I am also a weaver in the research and my voice or patterning is intimately woven throughout the kākahu, as are those of the Kaiwhatu, the case study kaiako. I acknowledge that at times my voice has come to the fore, despite my attempts to maintain a back grounded positioning. Throughout the research I have endeavoured to uphold the integrity of the research and the voices of the kaiako, however I accept that advocacy and professional support are also features of the thesis, and my role in the thesis. *Te Whatu Pōkeka* was a research and development project involving professional development and action research and aspects of these foci can be seen in the research.

## **11.0 He Kupu Whakataki/Introduction**

This thesis has been about assessment journeys. These journeys are a work in progress and that work continues. The thesis journey began, in 2002, with the critique by members of Te Rōpū Kaiwhakangungu advisory group, on the appropriateness for Māori of current early childhood

assessment theory and practice. The critique led to the development of the research questions. In this summary I will address the questions:

- Why is Kaupapa Māori assessment important? Why should we do it?
- What does Kaupapa Māori assessment look like?
- How can Kaupapa Māori assessment promote and protect Māori interpretive systems within contemporary early childhood contexts?

### **11.1 Why Is Kaupapa Māori Assessment Important? Why Should We Do It?**

The motivation for this thesis, and the participation of all the case study services in the research was: to make a difference, to make a difference for Māori children in early childhood education, in wider education and ultimately in life. Māori students continue to fail in our education system. Changes are required to ensure the full potential of Māori children are realised and early childhood has a role in actualising that potential. Assessment is one of the most powerful vehicles for educational change, and according to Broadfoot (1996b) it will most likely be the most important influence on the shape and quality of education and learning for students. Kaupapa Māori assessment therefore is a powerful vehicle to make a difference for Māori children and address the educational aspirations of Māori people. It is therefore important not only for Māori but for early childhood education.

## **11.2 What Does Kaupapa Māori Assessment look Like? and How Can Kaupapa Māori Assessment Promote and Protect Māori Interpretive Systems Within Contemporary Early Childhood Contexts?**

I have identified a number of key findings, strands and arguments that have emerged from the thesis weaving to produce the overall kākahu patterning.

### **11.2.1 Kaupapa Māori assessment s culturally located**

Kaupapa Māori assessment moves beyond current, culturally situated and culturally responsive perspectives of learning to learning and learners being seen as deeply located, embedded within Māori ways of knowing and being. Māori ways of knowing and being are fundamentally different to those of non-Māori, influenced and shaped by historical and contemporary interpretive systems. It is these interpretive systems or worlds that Māori learners inhabit, enact and reflect in their learning. The systems consist of tools, patterns of reasoning, symbols, language, shared meanings and customary practices which are required to competently participate within a particular social group, community, or culture (Weenie, 2008). The case study services emphasised the embedded or located nature of assessment describing the need for the kaiako to 'have a Māori heart', or 'see through Māori eyes', in order to understand. They acknowledged cultural differences in the ways certain behaviours and actions were perceived, encouraged, discouraged and responded to, and questioned whether it was possible to fully understand and operate within Māori interpretive systems, if one was not Māori.

### **11.2.2 Kaupapa Māori assessment is spiritually located**

A fundamental aspect of Māori interpretive systems or worlds is the relationship between the spiritual and the physical. From a Māori



perspective these worlds are not separate from each other rather they are intimately related with activities in the everyday secular world coming under the influence and interwoven with spiritual powers from the spiritual world. Historical Māori worldviews and ideas of knowledge and learning are understood to have originated in Māori understandings of the universe and the creation of the universe. Berryman (2008) emphasises this stating that all things within a Māori perspective of the world can be seen as having spiritual origins and are directly connected to “Ngā Atua from whence all things were created and have since been developed” (p.244). Whakapapa expresses the genealogical descent of Māori from the divine creation of the universe to the living. These spiritual connections have always been inextricably linked to whakapapa and ‘being’ Māori. Whakapapa is fundamental to Māori ways of knowing and is at the very core of what it means to be Māori. Kaupapa Māori assessment is located within these interpretive systems and therefore must recognise value, promote and protect the deeply spiritual worlds that Māori inhabit. They are worlds where learners are spiritually and physically connected through genealogy - whakapapa: to the inception of the universe, to all living things, to the spiritual world of the gods as well as the physical world - wairuatanga, to people past, present and future, to ancestors who had passed on but live on in the everyday world, to whānau/hapū/iwi, to the whenua - Papatūānuku the earth mother, and to the ancestral language - te reo Māori.

This connectedness of the spiritual to the physical is reflected in all of the case study assessment framings. The spiritual features of the framings including: Māui tikitiki a Taranga, who had godly origins but also carried the seeds of humanity, a physical as well as a spiritual being; the whakataukī, ‘*Kore e hekeheke he kākano rangatira* - We have the seeds of greatness within us’, combined with the concept of mana expresses both

physical and spiritual power and authority; and whakapapa, or the direct links to the gods, stresses the spiritual as well as the physical.

### **11.2.3 Kaupapa Māori assessment involves the reclamation and reframing of historical Māori ways of knowing and being within early childhood assessment theorising and practice**

The impact of colonisation, assimilation, land loss, language loss, urbanisation and twenty first century global and national conditions have worked in different ways and combinations to shape and transform historical Māori ways of knowing and understandings of what it means to be Māori. Contemporary ways of knowing and being Māori are the result of individuals and groups weaving specific combinations of realities, understandings and experiences. As Māori ways of knowing and being provide the context for Kaupapa Māori assessment understandings, individual and shared weavings are critical for the development of Kaupapa Māori assessment understandings and approaches. For the case study participants, 'being Māori' was a 'taken for granted,' and not something many had explored in much detail previously. Most felt confident in their own personal sense of 'being Māori', however, translating this into early childhood and assessment practice required individuals to critically reflect on their personal understandings and perspectives in order to develop shared service weavings of understandings. It involved what Parker (2000) describes as an unmasking of those identities which do not fit, which are not one's own, but have been unconsciously internalised, and reclaiming identities and understandings that may have previously been denied to them, and reframing these for a contemporary environment. This unmasking or reclaiming is evident in kaiako discussions on what it meant to 'be Māori' in practice - routines, practices, rituals, programme development,

activities and events in the service, and why this was important to teaching, learning and assessment.

I am however cognisant that the process of reclaiming and reframing historical Māori ways of knowing and being within contemporary contexts, runs the risk of freezing Māori culture, and locating Māori in what McIntosh (2005) calls “a space and time that may be fictitious and unnecessarily rigid” (p. 42). It can glorify and romanticise traditional culture and knowledge leading to the creation of totalising narratives that are both unanalytical and exclusive. The danger of these types of narrative are that they can generate stereotypical images and perspectives about Māori culture and knowledge, that are on the whole fictitious, but that negate the diversity of understandings evident within Māori people and society, and eliminate the uniqueness of iwi, hapu and whanau. I acknowledge the danger in this work of creating totalizing narratives of Māori identity and am aware of the potential of essentialising traditional Māori ways of knowing and being in a manner that is both singular and rigid, and which allows for easy control by non-Maori groups.

The tensions between unified and diversified narratives of Māori culture and knowledge are I believe in part due to the limited availability and accessibility to diverse Māori cultural perspectives and understandings. It is this scarcity of representation within education that has led to simplistic and singular notions of Māori concepts, values and knowledge. For this reason it is critical that the diversity of Māori perspectives, views, thinking, identities and beliefs are articulated and emphasised. In this way cultural stereotypes of an uncomplicated and homogenous Māori people, with singular and simplified perspectives and values can be challenged and heterogeneous perspectives of Māori ways of knowing and being celebrated.

#### **11.2.4 Kaupapa Māori assessment is heterogeneous**

This weaving of combinations of Māori realities, understandings, experiences and identities, by individuals and groups, emphasises the point that there is no one Māori way of knowing and being, which can be generalized across all Māori communities. Instead there are multiple ways that must be generated and defined by specific communities, based on cultural, historical, political and economic factors. For this reason, developing a 'one size fits all' approach to assessment is inappropriate. Kaupapa Māori assessment must be flexible enough to reflect the heterogeneous nature of Māori children, whānau and communities (Hemara, 2000). Being Māori today involves what May (2003, p. 107) calls the 'primordial/situational dichotomy of ethnicity', where traditional fixed categories of identity can conflict with constantly changing socio-historically bound Māori identities. Contemporary Māori identity is one of both unity and diversity. Māori are unified on some levels and divided by their distinctiveness on others. Māori are, in fact, as diverse as any other people, not only in socio-economic terms but also in fundamental attitudes to identity, and this is reflected in attitudes to teaching, learning and assessment. For the case study kaiako recognition of the diverse nature of Māori ways of knowing and being, provided a sense of freedom not only to be Māori, but to be Māori differently. It allowed them the freedom to develop their own processes and protocols, for their whānau and community. This is highlighted in the 'Handing over of the Taonga' process developed by Case Study Two, but is apparent in all the case studies.

#### **11.2.5 Kaupapa Māori assessment is contextually located**

Kaupapa Māori assessment is not just culturally located it is located within specific whānau and communities. It is context specific in that

what it looks like will be determined by: kaiako, services, whānau and communities; through weaving and negotiating personal and collective understandings of what it means to be Māori, and more importantly what it means to be Māori in this place. For this reason it cannot be fully realised outside of the interpretive systems in which it is located. It is an insider perspective that requires insider understandings. It requires not only the validation and legitimation of the Māori language, knowledge and culture, but also recognition and incorporation of the subtle differences or nuances within different Māori whānau and communities, that may be missed or generalised by those outside the context. It therefore must be instigated not only from a Māori epistemological base but from the context in which it will be used and is located.

For the case studies what became clear over time was that reflecting on one's own realities, truths, and aspirations meant kaiako needed to look within for answers: within their service philosophies, within their understandings of being Māori, and within their backgrounds and personal experiences; rather than developing something completely new, that was positioned outside of their context. This required critical reflection and ongoing dialogue to articulate what they already knew, believed in, understood, and lived.

#### **11.2.6 Kaupapa Māori assessment is complex and multiple**

Kaupapa Māori assessment reflects Māori ways of knowing, being and doing in this place and involves integrating these understandings into early childhood assessment theory and practice. As Kaupapa Māori assessment is articulated within specific communities and contexts it cannot be an 'add on' or affixed to other assessment approaches. This does not mean, however, that existing assessment resources and techniques, such as narrative and formative assessment understandings, cannot be

utilised in conjunction with Kaupapa Māori assessment theorising to support services to weave their Kaupapa Māori assessment kākahu. Kaupapa Māori assessment is complex and multiple and requires recognition of the diversity and the multifaceted nature of contemporary Māori ways of knowing and being. In effect Kaupapa Māori assessment fore-fronts Māori perspectives of knowledge, knowing and knowers which are fundamentally different to non- Māori.

### **11.2.7 Kaupapa Māori assessment reflects Māori perspectives of knowledge, knowing and knowers**

In order to foster learning there must be understandings of what students should learn, together with how they should and why it is important to learn (Moss 2008). James (2006) claims that it is important for teachers to have a view what kinds of learning that are most valuable for the learner and develop approaches to teaching and assessment accordingly.

In the end, however, decisions about which assessment practices are most appropriate should flow from educational judgements as to preferred learning outcomes. This forces us to engage with questions of value – what we consider to be worthwhile, which in a sense is beyond both theory and method (James, 2006, p. 60).

Smith, Teemant and Pinnegar (2004, p. 40) claim that “By definition any process for inferring what students have learned rests on foundational definitions of what it means to know and to learn”. Furthermore the ways in which the learner’s efforts are assessed reflect “a particular view of knowledge and what counts as relevant competencies, goals and results” (Lund, 2008, p.33). Despite the centrality of sociocultural perspectives in early childhood assessment theory, Māori definitions of what it means to know and learn, and what is regarded as relevant competencies, are still

relatively invisible in early childhood education. Kaupapa Māori assessment reflects, promotes and protects Māori perspectives of knowledge, knowing and knowers. Mahuika and Bishop (2010) suggest:

Assessment... is more than simply taking tests or collecting and analysing data, but implies a necessary judgement of what knowledge is valued through decisions about what is assessed and how this assessment is carried out. Such judgements cannot help but have significant implications in culturally diverse nations such as New Zealand. (p. 1)

#### **11.2.8 Kaupapa Māori assessment understandings and practices requires time, passion, ongoing commitment and support to develop**

The development of kaupapa Māori assessment understandings and practices requires time, passion, ongoing commitment and drive, support, and recognition of the realities of life for individuals and the early childhood service. It is not a simple, short term fix. This was apparent in the number of barriers faced by the case study services throughout the research period such as: feelings of isolation and working on one's own, time and energy requirements, life pressures, ongoing staffing changes and disruptions and kaiako feeling ill-prepared and lacking the appropriate assessment and documentation knowledge and skills. The case study services were required to engage in ongoing research and dialogue to critique their existing understandings of assessment and 'being Māori', in order to make space for alternative thinking and concepts. Long term commitment was therefore essential and involved developing a vision, committing to the vision, believing in the vision, and striving to attain the vision. Fundamental to this visioning were the Kaupapa Māori theoretical strands of conscientisation, resistance,

transformative praxis as well as Māori ways of knowing and being. As previously stated these strands do not necessarily manifest themselves in linear ways. Aspects of the process can occur simultaneously, with engagement possible on one or more fronts at once. Individuals or groups may enter the process at any stage, however at some stage in the process there must be a reconciliation of the strands, recognition of the vision, and a commitment to making meaningful change based upon that vision. This is clearly demonstrated with the case study services, as kaiako began their journeys at different places, with different understandings and commitments. In the end however reconciliation of the strands was achieved, resulting in actualisation of their visions and the development assessment understandings and practices that were congruent with service philosophies, Māori ways of knowing and being and whānau and community aspirations.

#### **11.2.9 Kaupapa Māori assessment reflects Māori images of the child**

As a result of the ongoing critique, dialogue, and research, the case study kaiako began to see children and learning in a different light. In fact it transformed their views of children, their perceptions of what children were capable of, and what they brought with them to the service. For kaiako this transformation in thinking and understandings of the child, located the child within Māori interpretive systems and emphasised the importance of knowing the child, who they were as Māori: their whakapapa; their iwi, hapu and whānau; and their tūrangawaewae (Berryman, 2009; Cheung 2008; Pere 1991; Rangihau, 1977; Reedy, 1979). Māori constructs of the child as taonga, precious treasures were also emphasised in assessment framings, culminating in concepts in the development of 'he pikopiko', 'e kore e ngaro he kakano no Rangiātea', 'Māui- mohio', and Mana Ātua. These concepts acknowledged the godly characteristics of children, and recognised the child's spiritual unity with



the land, with the people, and with the universe at large. They also stressed the spiritual traits inherent within the child, such as mana/tapu, mauri and wairua, inherited from ancestors and critical to the child's overall wellbeing, growth and development. Kaupapa Māori assessment brings to the fore the spiritual locatedness of the child and the spiritual traits that are located within the child. Kaupapa Māori assessment is therefore fundamentally different to non-Māori assessment and requires a spiritual plane of analysis, if the child is to be fully realised.

#### **11.2.10 Kaupapa Māori assessment requires a spiritual plane of analysis**

There are many cultural and value referenced interpretive systems. Assessment scholars have acknowledged aspects of these systems in different ways. A Spiritual interpretive system underscores aspects of the Māori world and people not encompassed within understandings of Rogoff's intrapersonal, interpersonal and community/institutional planes of analysis. Kaupapa Māori assessment therefore requires the addition of a fourth plane, a spiritual plane of analysis. This plane would acknowledge, promote and protect: the spiritual traits within the child – the intrapersonal, the relatedness of the child to others – the interpersonal, the relatedness of the child to cultural practices – the community, and would add a spiritual located plane that recognises the relatedness of the child to the universe, to the world of the gods, to ancestors, and to the land. In effect the spiritual plane would provide an overlay of the three existing planes and would include another higher plane.

The case studies have illustrated, in various ways, kaiako working their way to this spiritual plane. All of the assessment framings are located within spiritual as well as physical contexts and acknowledge the spiritual nature of the child and the spiritual relatedness to others.

### 11.3 Māwhitiwhiti – My Final Thoughts

I am aware that assessment experts and critics may dismiss a spiritual plane of analysis as unattainable, ethereal, and more related to fairytales or myth rather than education and assessment. I believe however that there is a need to problematise understandings of assessment as objective and unbiased, and challenge what is viewed as valid evidence of children's learning and development. Gipps (1999) argues that claims of the objectivity of assessment are mistaken. She explains that assessment is far from an exact science and is, in fact, value laden and culturally contrived. "We are social beings who construe the world according to our values and perceptions; thus, our biographies are central to what we see and how we interpret it. Similarly in assessment, performance is not 'objective'; rather, it is construed according to the perspectives and values of the assessor" (p. 370).

Western science has disconnected spirituality from other aspects of individual and institutional existence, and has embedded belief systems that positioned reason, truth and logic over faith and spirituality. As spirituality could not be proved scientifically, it was viewed as illogical and unsophisticated and therefore had no place in educational assessment (Bone 2007; Lyotard 1996). Ife (1995) states modern, Western society "is essentially secular, and has left little room for notions of the sacred or for spiritual values. This can be seen to have denied one of the most important aspects of human existence" (p. 172). Adams, Hyde & Woolley (2008) add that there is little room within contemporary assessment approaches for the recognition and acknowledgement of the spiritual aspects of the child. They state "The spiritual dimension of childhood is not measurable against criterion – referenced attainment targets or inspection criteria; it

may be difficult to quantify, but this does not negate its importance" (p. 55).

According to Smith, Teemant, Pinnegar (2004) there are three sources of evidence on which to base assessment inferences: observing and seeing what students do, listening to what students say, and examining what students produce. A spiritual plane adds 'feelings', 'sensing' or 'intuition' as sources of evidence for assessment judgements. Spiritual traits such as: wairua, mauri, tapu and mana, can be viewed as emanating from people, and sometimes places and objects, and can be sensed by others. For example wairua has been described as a personal force field that can be felt and sensed by others. In terms of Kaupapa Māori assessment it is important to acknowledge one's feelings as well as what one sees and hears, and what is produced.

Furthermore, I suspect that spirituality is already an aspect of early childhood assessment practices, if not the theory. I say this because I believe teachers often use 'gut feelings', or intuition in combination with what they see and hear to assess children's learning and wellbeing. Teachers may not, however, be aware of it or acknowledge it as a spiritual sensing or as a spiritual plane of analysis. I believe also that because spirituality is such a significant feature of Māori ways of knowing and being, Māori tend to recognise it, name it and accept it as part of everyday life therefore for many kaiako a spiritual plane of analysis will make sense, and will already be part of existing assessment practices.

My final comment relates to my experiences of weaving the thesis kākahu. Puketapu-Hetet (2000) claims that weaving is not just an art or a skill to create kākahu; it is a spiritual endeavour that encapsulates the essence of Māori spiritual beliefs and values. She adds that weavers are the conduit

for the gods to create, thus weaving can be seen as a deeply spiritual experience. Weaving this kākahu has been a spiritual experience for me, which I must admit was a surprise. I had no inkling when I commenced this thesis that spirituality would be such a large part of it, in fact it never crossed my mind that it would be any part of the thesis. Te Rau Matatini (2010, p. 42) describes a weaving journey where the patterns emerge as life moves and “Sometimes you start the journey then realise you need to go in a different direction. Sometimes other things in your life change or you end up with other materials”. This is reflected in the thesis kākahu. It is my hope that this kākahu will provide styles and techniques that others may be able to utilise to weave their own assessment kākahu, and in so doing make a difference.

## RĀRANGI KUPU/GLOSSARY

Ako	Learn and teach
Aotearoa	Land of the long white cloud, New Zealand
Arahina	Leadership
Aroha	Love
Atua	God
Hākari	Feast
Haututū	Exploring, touching
Hapū	Sub tribe
Harirū	Shake hands
Hinengaro	Mental processing
Hiringa	Determination
Huarahi	Journey
Hui	Meeting
Iwi	Tribe
Kai	Food
Kaiako	Teacher
Kaikaranga	Caller
Kaikōrero	Speaker
Kaimahi	Workers
Kaiwero	Challenger
Karanga	Call (of welcome)
Kaumātua	Elder
Kaupapa	Philosophy, purpose
Kawenga	Taking responsibility
Kei te pai	Good, alright
Kōhanga Reo	Māori medium language nest
Kōrero	Language, to talk
Koro	Male elder
Koroua	Male elder
Kuia	Female elder
Kura	School
Kura kaupapa	Māori Schools
Mahitahi	Cooperation, group endeavour
Maia	Confidence, competence
Mana	Power, prestige, and authority
Manaaki	Support
Manaakitanga	Commitment and care
Mana Atua	Spiritual power and prestige
Manawaroa	Patience
Mana whenua	Status of people as guardians of the land,
Mātauranga	Māori knowledge, education
Mauri	Life force, spiritual essence

Mihimihi	Greetings
Mokopuna	Grandchild
Ngā	The (plural)
Ngākau Māhaki	Soft natured
Ngākau Pāpaku	Humility
Ohaohanga	Generosity
Pākehā	European
Papatūānuku	Earth mother
Pepeha	Traditional saying making geographical
connections	
Poutama	Stairway to knowledge
Pōwhiri	Formal rituals of encounter
Pukumahi	Hardworking, diligence
Pūmanawa	Spiritual source, creative tribute
Purakau	Ancient legend/story
Rangatira	Leader
Rangimarie	Peacefulness
Ranginui	The sky father
Taha Māori	Māori Side
Tamaiti	Child
Tamariki	Children
Tānemahuta	Guardian of the forests
Tāngata whenua	People of the land
Taonga	Precious, gift
Taonga tuku iho	Treasures from the ancestors
Tapu	Sacred
Tauparapara	Traditional chant
Te	The (singular form)
Te ao hurihuri	The contemporary world
Te ao Māori	The Māori worldview
Te ao mārama	The world of light
Te kore	The void
Te pō	The night, the unknown
Te reo Māori	The Māori language
Te Tiriti o Waitangi	The Treaty of Waitangi
Tikanga	Cultural beliefs and practices
Tino rangatiratanga	Self determination
Tipuna/Tupuna	Ancestors
Tuakana	Older or more experienced
Teina	Younger sibling
Te Whāriki	Early Childhood Curriculum document
Tūrangawaewae	Birth place
Waiata	Singing, song
Waiata tautoko	Support song normally sung after speeches

Wairua	Spirit soul
Waka	Canoe
Wero	Challenge
Whakaaro	Thought, idea, thinking
Whakahoahoa	Friendliness
Whakakaute	Respect
Whakamā	Shy /embarrassed
Whakangahau	Entertain
Whakapapa	Genealogical connections
Whakataukī	Proverb
Whakawhanaungatanga	Establishing relationships
Wharekura	Māori-medium secondary schools
Whanaungatanga	Whānau connections
Whānau	Family or extended family
Whare Wānanga	Kaupapa Māori tertiary institute
Whāriki	Mat
Whenua	Land

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