

Evaluation Indicators for School Reviews

A commentary on engaging parents, whānau and communities

Mere Berryman, Ph.D
University of Waikato
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Introduction

This paper provides a commentary on the underpinning conceptual framework of ERO's *Evaluation Indicators for School Reviews* (2011), focusing particularly on Dimension 6: Engaging parents, whānau and communities. It responds to the following four questions:

- What is the significance of engaging parents, whānau and communities in terms of student learning and outcomes from schooling?
- What dimensions of practice associated with engaging parents, whānau and communities have the greatest impact on student learning and outcomes?
- What are the implications for the conceptual framework that underpins ERO's Evaluation Indicators for School Reviews?
- What are the most important considerations in the selection of indicators of education quality related to engaging parents, whānau and communities and their potential use in evaluation of the school setting?

The underpinning conceptual framework

As one might expect, the underpinning conceptual framework of *Evaluation Indicators for School Reviews* contains some important messages and contextualising principles within which the dimensions are located. These messages and principles include:

- The child is the heart of the matter; therefore, focusing on what matters and making explicit links to student engagement, progress and achievement can contribute to higher quality education outcomes.
- The evaluative questions, prompts and indicators use evidence that is observable and measurable and seek to make ERO's review and evaluation processes clear and transparent. The evaluative questions, prompts and indicators can also assist schools to undertake their own reviews.
- The evaluation indicators are research-based, iterative and reviewable and align with government and ERO priorities.
- The evaluation indicators link to those for early childhood, kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa Māori, ensuring consistency across the review process.

ERO is committed to honouring the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and the aims of Ka Hikitia. It also seeks to uphold the National Administration Guidelines and the Pasifika Education Plan 2009-2012, and to recognise and affirm all students, including those with differing identities, languages, backgrounds, abilities and talents, including those who have special educational needs.

The evaluative questions, prompts and indicators are built around six dimensions of good practice:

- Student learning – engagement, progress and achievement
- Effective teaching
- Leading and managing

- Governing
- School culture that is safe and inclusive
- Engaging parents, whānau and communities.

It is understood that review is an ongoing, cyclical process, and that these dimensions are overlapping rather than discrete and should be viewed holistically. However, the koru diagram encourages the reader to view the dimensions as discrete and disconnected.

Some initial considerations

It is hard to disagree with any feature of the underpinning framework, but when I look at my focus dimension, Dimension 6 (Engaging parents, whānau and communities), what strikes me most is the loss of potential if the dynamic, interdependent nature of the different aspects is not made *relationally* explicit and cogent. The risk is a linear, tick-the-box response, with ongoing misinterpretation and disconnects. Further, if the different dimensions are not understood as embedded within these principles and contexts, and interrelated, could they be seen as in priority order, with those at the top being most important? From what one sees in schools, and the ongoing educational outcomes for Māori, this is so.

A relational response

Many scholars, both Māori (Bishop; Durie; Macfarlane) and non-Māori (Glynn; Consedine & Consedine) have argued that the Treaty of Waitangi models a partnership; such a partnership could lead the education system forward for all New Zealanders. But while the Treaty is located up front in *Evaluation Indicators for School Reviews*, its position as a bicultural response that was promised but never really understood is further reinforced. The Treaty sets out a relationship between the Crown and Māori, but in ERO's document Māori are 'they', and supporting Māori to live fulfilling lives as Māori sounds like something that needs to be done to or for 'them'. The document recognises that Māori continue to underachieve in the current system; as a response, it points to ERO's own *He Toa Takatini* before moving on to *Ka Hikitia* and the NAGs. The *Pasifika Education Plan* comes next, and then finally, diverse students.

Several questions suggest themselves at this point:

- Where are the non-Māori students?
- What does this direction to policy achieve?
- Who has the power to define this direction?
- Why are Māori aligned with Pasifika and diversity?
- When we do this, what happens to Māori as the Treaty partner?
- What happens to non-Māori as the Treaty partner?

If the dual-cultural relationship at the core of the Treaty continues to be ignored, the multiple cultural identities in our communities and the need for them to be a part of this dual relationship are also likely to be ignored. Dimension 6 could help us better understand

this relationship but its terminal location, far from the Treaty section, makes it seem disconnected and low priority.

The current Dimension 6

Like the other dimensions, Dimension 6 begins by posing a number of key evaluative questions. These consider how well the school gathers and uses information about the needs wishes and aspirations of parents, whānau and community; how effectively it provides these groups with information about their children and about the school; how well it engages these groups in the life of the school; and, how well it engages with and makes use of community resources, agencies and other educational institutions.

The introduction suggests that research shows effective home–school partnerships and engaging with parents, whānau and communities are important, especially for children “whose social class, culture, and/or ethnicity and cultural heritages differ from those predominant in the school.” Listening to parents’ aspirations for their children and consulting and communicating in an appropriate and timely manner are also important. It is suggested that schools and teachers who value and maintain effective two-way communication and who provide meaningful information and guidance are effective in enhancing students’ educational and social outcomes.

Self-review processes are seen to be important for ensuring that schools can identify which parents are involved, what they are involved with, and how their perceptions of the school’s culture and learning institutions can contribute to improving the schools policies, programmes and practices. A list of relevant papers and other resources is provided.

Next comes a range of evaluative prompts, examples of indicators, and possible sources of evidence designed to help a reviewer answer the key evaluative questions. These are organised under the following headings:

- Gathering information from the community.
- Using information in making decisions.
- Forming partnerships with parents and students to share information about learning, progress and the school.
- Engaging parents and whānau.
- Engaging the Māori community.
- Engaging Pacific and other community groups.
- Relationships with the wider community.

Again, while it would be difficult to disagree with any of this material, I want to pose another consideration: when it comes to the relationships that are formed, and who gets to define and legitimate them, the school retains all the power.

1. What is the significance of engaging parents, whānau and communities in terms of student learning and outcomes from schooling?

Parents, whānau and communities are the direct conduit between students and the formal education system and they continue a long heritage of working together to bring professional and home communities together to promote the best education possible for every child – or, indeed, they do not (McNaughton & Glynn, 1998). The *School Leadership and Student Outcomes BES* (Robinson, Hohepa & Lloyd, 2009) has a chapter entitled, Creating educationally powerful connections with families, whānau, and communities, in which the authors draw from extensive research to show that school leaders should concentrate on developing *educationally powerful* connections with family, whānau and communities. By establishing these types of connections, school leaders can:

- gain access to a greater range and depth of resources to support the work of their schools
- potentially enhance outcomes for all students, especially those who have been underserved or are at risk
- achieve large positive effects on the academic and social outcomes of students.

Some kinds of engagement with families and communities can be counterproductive, however, so the authors identify the importance of promoting engagement that is effective.

Communities usually identify with and practise deeply held cultural values. When these cultural values and standards are different from those of the school that their children attend there is potential for misinterpretation and mistrust. Schools that seek cultural and spiritual guidance from their communities with the aim of developing mutually respectful relationships, and who communicate by first listening, rather than telling and asking, are more likely to develop effective ways of dealing with educational or moral issues when they arise.

While the *School Leadership and Student Outcomes BES* finds that the highest effect sizes for student learning are obtained by schools that collaborate with their Māori communities, this is not the norm. We still have a lot to learn about how the school system can respond effectively to Māori community values and aspirations and truly provide learning environments where “Māori students can enjoy and achieve education success as Māori”. Dimension 6 therefore should be seen as an area for learning and system acceleration.

The Ministry of Education has developed a range of policies over the past 20 years in an effort to encourage the development of partnerships between schools and their parents, whānau and communities. This has been especially so for Māori. This drive to connect schools with these communities has been informed by extensive research indicating that such partnerships have the potential to considerably improve learning outcomes for students. However, while policy details *what* schools need to do, and research indicates *why* connections with whānau are important, what is currently lacking is a Māori perspective on *how* such relationships might be achieved.

The terms *partnership* and *collaboration* are widely used to describe the concept of home–school connections. Brooking (2007) suggests that home–school partnerships “refer to ideas and initiatives schools have implemented that involve parents, families and whānau in their children’s learning, in an effort to form closer relationships between schools and homes” (p. 14). McNaughton and Glynn (1998) propose that collaboration implies an interdependence between parents and teachers. They are specific about *what* should be shared between the partners:

In our view collaboration ideally entails shared expertise between educationalists and family caregivers. That expertise requires shared understandings about goals of teaching and learning, and about processes of teaching and learning. It requires also shared actions relating to goals and understanding. This sharing is not unidirectional, but reciprocal, so that agents in each setting are able to learn from and complement each other. In our view this does not undermine the expertise of the teacher. Indeed, the modification of teachers’ expertise required by shared understanding with caregivers enhances professional expertise (p. 4).

Partnership and collaboration imply a degree of power sharing, so schools need to consider what this means for engagement with whānau and communities. This is particularly important in that partnerships between whānau, communities and schools have historically been determined and dominated by the school (Bishop & Glynn, 1999).

The critical importance of establishing these learning partnerships has been highlighted in numerous New Zealand based research studies. The authors of the *Family and Community Engagement BES* (Biddulph, Biddulph, and Biddulph, 2003) surmised that parental, family, whānau and community involvement in education could provide opportunities for greater improvement in student learning outcomes than could the school on its own:

The research evidence suggests that effective centre/school-home partnerships can enhance children’s learning in both home and centre/school settings. The positive impacts of such partnerships (especially those focused in the early years) on children’s achievement can be substantial, compared with traditional institutionally-based educational interventions alone (p. 172).

In chapter 7 of the *School Leadership and Student Outcomes BES* (Robinson, Hohepa & Lloyd, 2009) the authors draw from extensive research to provide three reasons why school leaders should develop partnerships and connections with family, whānau and communities. The first is consistent with the suggestion in Biddulph et al. (2003) that school–family partnerships have the potential for large positive effects on learning outcomes. Reasons two and three are as follows:

Second, some kinds of engagement with families and communities can be counterproductive. Schools can invest considerable time, energy, and resources in activities that end up having minimal or even negative impact on student outcomes. It is important that school leaders promote engagement that is effective.

Third, by establishing educationally powerful connections, leaders gain access to a greater range and depth of resources to support the work of their schools. (p. 142)

Robinson et al. (2009) base their discussion about the impact of whānau–school connections on 37 studies, syntheses and meta-analyses. Effect sizes were used to illustrate the impact of these connections on student achievement. A benchmark for judging effect sizes is provided by Hattie (2009) who suggests that .35 is the effect size one could expect from a year of ‘average’ teaching and .60 for a year of ‘excellent’ teaching.

Robinson et al. found that the overall effect of family, whānau and community connections (excluding homework) on student achievement was .42, indicative of moderate impact, but their analysis of different types of connection found a large degree of variance in the effectiveness of the specific strategies used by schools. For example, joint interventions involving parents and teachers had the largest impact on student achievement, with a very high effect of 1.81, while homework had a weak effect of .22. An effect of 1.81 is most impressive when it is considered in relation to Hattie’s benchmark. Other family/whānau–school interventions that had an effect greater than an ‘average’ year of teaching included teacher designed homework with parents (effect = 1.38), strategy to access family and/or community funds of knowledge (effect = .93), teacher feedback on homework (effect = .81), parent intervention (effect = .63), parent involvement (effect = .47), and parent–child communication about school (effect = .39).

These findings from the research provide critical, statistical evidence that family, whānau and community connections with schools are important because they have the potential to dramatically raise student achievement. It is very clear that, “there is great potential for leaders to counter patterns of under-achievement by building school-family connections that are explicitly related to the core business of teaching and learning” (Robinson et al., 2009, p. 143).

In 2013 the Ministry of Education reiterated a major focus on raising the achievement of Māori students, who (together with Pasifika students, special needs students and students from low socio-economic areas) it identified as priority learners (Ministry of Education, 2012). In *Ka Hikitia: Accelerating Success 2013–2017* (Ministry of Education, 2013), the drive to connect schools with their Māori parents, whānau and community can be seen in the concept of *Productive Partnerships*, which is one of the five guiding principles that underpin the strategy. A productive partnership is defined as a two-way, mutually respectful relationship that:

starts with the understanding that Māori children and students are connected to whānau and should not be viewed or treated as separate, isolated or disconnected. Parents and whānau must be involved in conversations about their children and their learning. They need accessible, evidence-based information on how to support their children’s learning and success (p. 17).

Addressing disparity and raising the achievement of Māori students is currently a high priority. Brooking (2007) says that the Ministry views better partnerships between the homes of Māori students and schools as an integral component of meeting this priority:

It has long been known that families have a significant effect on their children's achievement, and are their children's first teachers ... Schools traditionally have operated reasonably independently of families, some more so than others, but many are now trying to form closer links with their families and communities, so that both can work together more, for the good of the child in all respects, including learning and achievement ... Raising student achievement is a major focus of the Ministry's work, particularly for Māori and Pacific students, and it is believed that increased parental involvement could help address this (p. 14).

2. What dimensions of practice associated with engaging parents, whānau and communities have the greatest impact on student learning and outcomes?

The findings summarised in Chapter 7 of the *School Leadership and Student Outcomes BES* indicate that:

- Proactive strategies to create and sustain educationally powerful school–home connections can have a significant impact.
- Where schools do not provide leadership to facilitate such connections, business-as-usual may actually do educational harm (e.g. when parents try to help with homework and inadvertently undermine achievement).
- With effective assistance, parents can promote the achievement of valued student outcomes in ways that support and resource the work of the school. This is true at both primary and secondary levels.
- In general, the largest positive effects are found when schools – usually in association with an external researcher – develop the capacity of parents to support the children's learning through programmes that are designed to teach them specific skills (for example, the skills that promote reading and language development).
- Joint parent/whānau and teaching interventions have the highest overall effect size (1.81) and reflect interventions designed to help parents or other community members support children at home and school and that simultaneously provide teachers with professional development.
- Professionals, family, whānau and community members are taught how to use smart tools and their learning is systematically evaluated. The evaluations help the researchers refine the tools and ensure that the accompanying processes support effective, independent use of the tools at home and at school.
- The success of school–whānau connections and the learning designed to support them is dependent on the mahi tahi (collaborative) processes that foster relational trust.
- Ako – reciprocity in learning and teaching is central to building connections. Research has shown that the 'how' of leadership is addressed by making the learning of parents

and teachers a deliberate focus – paralleling the children’s learning – and by creating effective models for facilitating adult learning.

- School leaders have an important role in aligning interventions with parents and teachers as such interventions promote the kind of school–home and community learning that enables effective educational connections.

Design characteristics that appear to be important include:

- having learning as a primary focus
- providing parents with information and training (for example, modelling and reinforcing appropriate strategies) that enhance their skills in a specific curriculum area
- supplying materials for use at home
- helping families access resources such as books
- raising families’ awareness of the benefits of working with their children
- aligning school–home practices so that parents’ actions support school learning
- raising parents’ expectations for their children’s achievement
- helping to propagate a supportive approach to parenting.

Successful home–school partnerships are characterised by:

- families being treated with dignity and respect
- programmes adding to family practices, not undermining them
- structured, specific suggestions rather than general advice
- supportive group opportunities as well as one-to-one (especially informal) contact.

3. What are the implications for the conceptual framework that underpin ERO’s evaluation indicators for school reviews?

Discourses and metaphors: making sense

Bishop et al. (2005, 2007) have applied the concept of discourse to their work. Discourse refers to the sets of ideas that, influenced by historical events, influence in turn one’s practices and actions – and thus how one relates and interacts with others and how one then understands and explains those interactions. They have found that discourses and metaphors are a major influence on the images and experiences that teachers and Māori students have of the other, and, therefore, on the relationships and interactions that exist between teachers, Māori students, and their home communities.

Burr (1995) makes the point that “numerous discourses surround any object and each strives to represent or ‘construct’ it in a different way ... claims to say what the object really is, claims to be the truth.” However, claims as to what is the reality, what is the truth, “lie at the heart of discussions of identity, power and change” (p. 49). Burr suggests that the meaning behind what we say “rather depends upon the discursive context, the general conceptual framework in which our words are embedded” (p. 50). One’s actions and behaviours, how one relates to, defines and interacts with others, are determined by one’s

discursive positioning, that is, the discourse within which one is metaphorically positioned. Discursive positioning, therefore, can determine how we understand and define other people with whom we relate (Bishop et al., 2007; Shields et al., 2005). Within this context, Heshusius (1996) explains that metaphors are used to

“make sense out of reality and construct reality. People’s lives, their thoughts, actions, and experiences, are generated by metaphorical images, the very vehicle for shaping the content of consciousness” (p. 5).

To Heshusius, metaphors are

“a deeply creative act, an act that gives rise to our assumptions about how reality fits together, and how we know” (p. 4).

While these references are quite old, they are still highly relevant in this context, and our failure to effectively learn from and apply these insights continues to matter.

Fundamental to discourses is power (Burr, 1995), given that within discursive positioning and in the development of relationships and interactions with others, some discourses can be and are privileged over others. Foucault (1972) argues that when metaphors from the language of the majority discourse dominate, the minority discourse will be understood in deficit terms. Foucault suggests that instead of thinking of discourses as mere linguistic systems or texts we should understand them to be discursive practices where power relations are extolled in the sets of rules and conditions that are established between groups and institutions. These power relations become embedded and are explicit in economic and social practices and other patterns of behaviour (Bishop et al., 2007). Indeed, these assumptions of superiority are both explicit and implicit in the metaphors and discourses of the colonisers, many of which continue to theorise Māori in deficit terms.

Metaphors therefore can and do assist us to consider and reflect upon our understandings (theorising) and subsequent actions (practice). In the past, the metaphors that English-medium (kura auraki) educators have relied upon have come from a western worldview. In contrast, educators in kura kaupapa Māori have relied upon metaphors that have come from a Māori worldview, and their relationships with their home communities are quite different: the community is seen as part of the school and vice versa. This may well explain why some families continue to be marginalised in our schools and others are not. While we talk about partnership, the majority partner has generally continued to define what this looks like.

Pōwhiri

In *Partnerships with Indigenous Communities: Modifying the Cultural Mainstream* (Glynn, Berryman, Walker, Reweti & O’Brien, 2001), the pōwhiri is used as an analogy for the process of inclusion, based on respect for differences. The pōwhiri provides a metaphor for establishing relationships with indigenous people based on mutual respect and trust. The authors suggest the following four guidelines:

1. The relationship needs to be initiated by the indigenous people, with people from the dominant culture taking the less powerful, responsive role. They are not in charge. They are visitors in someone else's space.
2. Interaction needs to occur within cultural space over which indigenous people have control. This is to ensure that indigenous languages, metaphors and cultural processes are validated, affirmed and take precedence.
3. Majority culture members need to demonstrate respect for the cultural space and cultural context in which they find themselves. They need to adopt the less powerful position, concentrating on listening and understanding, and not controlling and directing proceedings.
4. Proposals for new initiatives or for collaboration on a new project, however important they may seem, should not be presented unless or until these prior processes have taken place. There is a further parallel here with a personal relationship. It is the less powerful partner (in this context, the indigenous people) and not the more powerful partner who determines whether any such initiatives are appropriate and effective.

Other Māori metaphors can be used to provide a framework for working in partnership and collaboration with whānau and community. The six that follow might be worth considering.

Taonga tuku iho

In a Māori worldview, taonga tuku iho literally mean the collective treasures of our ancestors. In a metaphoric sense they refer to the accumulated knowledge and cultural aspirations Māori have for themselves and for their future generations (Smith, 1997). Within these treasures or aspirations are the very kawa or epistemologically based principles and predetermined patterns of relationships and interactions that have guided the way Māori do things and monitored the actions of whānau members. Within taonga tuku iho, Māori knowledge, language, culture, and ways of knowing and doing are valid, legitimate and normal (Bishop et al., 2007).

Mana whenua

From one iwi to the next, mana whenua are recognised as the tribal guardians of the specific tracts of land upon which their ancestors settled. From a Māori perspective, the worldly power and prestige of mana whenua, as guardians and holders of the land, should continue to be acknowledged and respected. When this happens, the active participation and commitment of the mana whenua to different groups who have an ownership relationship with their land, can develop into reciprocal relationships of support and strength. Schools, for example would do well to develop a mana whenua relationship with the particular iwi or hapū who maintain guardianship over the land on which the school is situated.

Kanohi kitea

The whakataukī, he kanohi kitea (the seen face) suggests the importance of being seen and known to Māori in their own cultural settings, not just school settings. Often the metaphor kanohi ki te kanohi (face to face) has been applied instead, and this reflects the unfortunate fact that for some Māori communities the only time they see the school is when the school wants something. Being seen within the Māori community as he kanohi kitea is a much more respectful way to start and maintain a relationship.

Whakawhanaungatanga

Whakawhanaungatanga is the process of establishing links, making connections, and relating to the people one meets by identifying in culturally appropriate ways whakapapa linkages, shared heritages, points of engagement, or other relationships. Establishing whānau connections is kinship in its widest sense. Whakawhanaungatanga reinforces the commitment that members of a whānau have to each other while also reminding them of their responsibilities and obligations to all (Berryman et al., 2002). As well as providing the space to acknowledge one's ongoing relationship to each other, whakawhanaungatanga also provides the context to reaffirm one's commitment to any shared agenda or enterprise.

In a metaphoric sense, Mead (2003) asserts that whanaungatanga reaches beyond actual whakapapa relationships to include relationships with people who are not kin but who, through shared experiences, feel and act as kin. Within such relationships one may receive support from the collective, but one has a responsibility to contribute one's support in return.

Koha

Koha is the cultural act of repaying obligation or contributing by gifting (koha). Koha traditionally came in the form of food and other resources; today it is more likely to come in the form of money. While there is no obligation to provide koha, there is also no obligation to accept koha. Bishop (1996) identifies koha as an appropriate metaphor for the research relationship: the researcher offers the project to the participant(s) as a maioha (gift) and the participant(s) choose whether to accept it. Cram (2001) suggests that if researchers enter such a relationship then it will be seen as ongoing with "no boundaries or time constraints" (p. 43). Koha can also apply to the education being received by tamariki mokopuna.

Mahi tahi

Mahi tahi is a term used to describe the unity of working towards a specific goal or the implementation of a task, often in a hands-on fashion. Whereas kotahitanga is the state of being united, mahi tahi is the act of carrying out the task or activity for which you have come together. The solidarity that mahi tahi engenders in a group of people is powerful and this kind of relationship is known to sustain itself well after the goal has been met or the project completed (Berryman et al., 2002). The philosophy of mahi tahi comes from

traditional times, when working together was vital for such activities as construction, food production, child rearing and warfare.

Kotahitanga

As a collective, any group can set and pursue goals, and each member will have a role to play in achieving common goals. When all members unite to achieve a shared objective the objective is more likely to be attained.

Before going further, it is important to stress that simply using Māori metaphors and culturally appropriate iconography is not enough. In the next section I consider what might be involved when trying to develop culturally responsive contexts to engage more effectively with whānau.

4. What are the most important considerations in the selection of indicators of education quality related to engaging parents, whānau and communities?

In 2011 I asked Ted Glynn, a Pākehā educator and scholar who had worked with Māori over many years, what he understood about making connections to and engage with Māori communities. From a series of conversations four common themes emerged:

- identify who you are
- build relational trust
- listen to communities
- respond accordingly.

We had previously identified these themes or principles as important in an earlier paper in which we had proposed the pōwhiri metaphor (Glynn et al, 2001). A decade later, we agreed that these principles are now even more important. For kura kaupapa Māori they are foundational, resulting in a qualitatively different relationship between kura and whānau, but they are still not recognised in most kura auraki settings. The explanations that follow draw from our conversations.

Identify who you are

Whether you are a school leader, a researcher or a teacher, Māori communities want to know *who* you are – not necessarily *what* you are, but *who* you are. Rituals of engagement such as pōwhiri and hui provide powerful opportunities for Māori to *see who you are*. Knowing who you are helps the community ascertain what connections they may have with you and where you are coming from.

Build relational trust

Māori communities exist within a complex network of interconnected relationships. To enjoy respectful relationships with Māori, schools need to invest in building relationships, and to *contribute* before they *take out*. When schools put effort into developing good

relationships with Māori elders, those elders can legitimate their presence in Māori communities, especially if these elders are mana whenua.

School leaders and teachers who want to work with Māori communities must be prepared to accept that there are no boundaries between the professional and personal worlds. When you commit to a project, you commit to the kaupapa (agenda) of the project, and you commit to the people that you are working with. This means that they have access to you when they need you – you can't protest that 'as a professional' you only work on particular days and between particular hours. This means leaders and teachers have to come to grips with the concept of the 'collective' and their role in it, and accept that they will need to live their lives rather differently. Glynn illustrates these points using hui as a context:

You know all of the stereotype things that Pākehā say about Māori they live together; they work together and all that. But the point is that it is a whole way of being and if you stay around long enough your own life shifts like that too. You know that something's gone wrong in that term when you go to a hui and you find that perhaps two hours goes by and they're still doing the whakawhanaungatanga they're still going around. And you know that there's been a big change in yourself when you think yeah that's okay, fine we've still got half an hour. Then what I've seen a number of times in that last half an hour, it all comes together. Suddenly everyone says this is what we need to do, this is what we're going to do, someone puts it up and it happens. But I can still see colleagues of mine getting more and more anxious you know, this is supposed to be a four hour hui and we're still telling stories, and we're doing whakawhanaungatanga and gosh its lunch time, when are we going to start? And from then I do some more reading and thinking and you realise of course it had already started.

Listen to communities and respond accordingly

Whenever you engage with Māori, depending upon where the interaction is occurring, be good hosts/guests, follow the correct etiquette/tikanga and listen respectfully to what whānau want.

You learn more by being silent and listening than you do by speaking and the irony is that if you listen hard you find you can speak more. So many Pākehā that I know, quite a few who have official positions in education and they take their official selves with them to a pōwhiri and rather than listen they're expecting to speak because of who they are or because of their job or their status. They go there expecting to speak and I think that's a big mistake.

Listen so that you can work with, and not against whānau. Non-Māori typically tend to focus on *taking from* a hui messages that meet their own agenda instead of *listening to what is being said* and considering *what they can put in*. Ted has seen non-Māori colleagues become frustrated in situations where they have not been required to speak, but rather to listen:

Like the saying I took my harp to the party and nobody asked me to play, and whereas the point was, it didn't matter if you had your harp or not, you went to listen to the music that was there. And they lost that opportunity because they're so busy thinking when am I going to be asked to do this and when can I share all this knowledge. And what they don't appreciate is that by going there they're showing a commitment, they're showing a willingness to take part, they're showing a willingness to listen and they've actually done a lot of good. But their own mind is so hell-bent on those other things that they don't actually appreciate what's going on.

Developing relationships and responding respectfully within the context of these relationships is critical when working with Māori communities and whānau. It is important to allow whānau space and time to consider:

- Whether they are interested in what you are saying/offering
- Whether they would like to take you up on your offer.

If schools genuinely allow whānau to be self-determining, then they need to be open to the possibility that Māori communities might not necessarily want what the school is offering. If the school offers an initiative that is not taken up it is important that the school remains committed to working together with the whānau or wider community to find a solution or course of action that is mutually acceptable. When relationships between schools and their Māori communities are characterised by reciprocal respect and care there is greater likelihood that the Māori community will seek and provide support on its own terms. The same may well be true for other ethnic groups, within the Treaty relationship.

Before embarking on the process of building collaborative and educationally powerful connections with Māori communities, here are some considerations to bear in mind:

- To maximise the relationship between schools and their Māori communities, the Māori communities need to be part of determining the rituals of encounter.
- Historically, schools not whānau have defined how Māori parents and whānau can and will participate. Whānau have often chosen not to participate.
- Schools need to provide spaces (both metaphorical and physical) for whānau and school to talk and work together for the benefit of Māori students. These spaces:
 - are mutually beneficial, providing opportunities for leaders and teachers to learn about the community they serve and potentially to access knowledge held within the Māori community that has traditionally been untapped.
 - present an opportunity for the school to build the capacity of the Māori community to contribute to learning.
 - say to whānau: You belong here, we want you here. We have some knowledge; we recognise that you too, have knowledge. By working together we can achieve a lot more.
- Responsibility for creating the contexts for relationships to develop and flourish should not be delegated to just one person.

- Māori parents already engage with schools in settings where their children are successful (think kapahaka and sport), so to encourage greater engagement, schools need to ensure that Māori students are participating and succeeding in academic contexts (including the classroom).

A culturally responsive pedagogy of relations

These findings are closely aligned with what Te Kotahitanga calls a ‘culturally responsive pedagogy of relations’. Evidence from Te Kotahitanga Phase 5 schools demonstrated that when a culturally responsive pedagogy of relations is embedded in classrooms and across the school, Māori students are more likely to experience educational success (Alton-Lee, 2015). When considering home–school relationships and interactions with whānau, hapū and iwi members, school leaders and teachers will find it helpful to evaluate the extent to which their theorising and actions reflect a culturally responsive pedagogy of relations. More specifically, to what extent are the following true of their school:

- Power is shared between self-determining individuals within non-dominating relations of interdependence
- Culture counts
- Learning is interactive, dialogic and spirals
- Participants are relationally connected to one another
- There is a common vision for what constitutes excellence in educational outcomes (Bishop et al., 2007).

Bishop and Glynn (1999) proposed a framework that encompasses five issues associated with power relations in education: initiation, benefits, representation, legitimation and accountability (IBRLA). Using the IBRLA framework, they suggest a model for planning and evaluating educational activities in schools and classrooms in relation to the Treaty of Waitangi principle of partnership (p. 199). The model could be adapted and applied by ERO and schools as the basis for discussing, planning and evaluating how they engage in the process of developing educationally powerful connections with whānau and communities.

While there is no one right way for a school to develop relationships with its home communities, the evaluation indicators should take into account how a school has sought to engage with its communities and how this has played out in practice in terms of both cultural appropriateness and a culturally responsive pedagogy of relations.

The IBRLA model will allow a school/ERO to test how power has played out in these processes, and whether power is finally really being shared with the school’s communities. As schools stop attempting to ‘do to’ families (as they have done in the past) and begin forming more effective relationships with them and their communities, and as they allow families the power to contribute on their own terms, it may well be that ways of accelerating the achievement of students who have long been marginalised will become more apparent.

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