

Saturday, 6 February 2021

## Experiences of Māori Teachers Working in English-Medium Schools

Christine Rubie-Davies &amp; Hana Turner-Adams

EDUCATION AND  
SOCIAL WORKEDUCATION AND  
SOCIAL WORK

### Māori Teachers

- Māori population 16.5%; 9.3% of teachers
- Most work in mainstream schools
- Often isolated
- Expectations



2

EDUCATION AND  
SOCIAL WORK

### Expectations

- Cultural and pastoral leadership
- Kapa haka
- Pōwhiri
- Supporting non-Māori colleagues
  - Māori students
  - Curriculum
- Time allowance? Remuneration?

3

EDUCATION AND  
SOCIAL WORK

### Objectives

- Experiences of Māori teachers
- Benefits and challenges
- School leaders support



4

EDUCATION AND  
SOCIAL WORK

### A History Lesson

- Mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century Māori education
- Native Schools – junior teaching assistants some high school
- 1940 4 Māori students entered teacher training
- Increased to 60 following WWII
- Māori medium schools 1980s

5

EDUCATION AND  
SOCIAL WORK

### Obligations

- Demand for teachers to respond and meet educational needs and aspirations of Māori students
- Required to use te reo me ona tikanga Māori in their practice (Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2017, p. 17)
- Required to meet Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations: Partnership, participation, protection

6

## How do Māori teachers experience mainstream schooling?



7

## Methods

- Generic qualitative inquiry approach
- Anonymous online open-ended survey
- 16 teachers, 14 female
- 10 primary, 3 secondary, 3 early childhood
- 12 Bachelor's, 3 Masters
- Experience: 50% 1-5 years; 6 years ->20 years

8

Access to support from other Māori teachers	
Expectations, roles and responsibilities	
Acknowledgement of work	
Supporting student learning	
Racism	
Attrition	
Retention	
Self-determination and autonomy	

9

## Access to support from other Māori teachers

- 1-10 teachers per school; mean 3.8
- *Not having other Māori teachers to feed off [is a challenge]*
- *I had a great team to work with. We would always get together to have a chat about anything.*
- Māori early childhood teachers were all working in isolation

10

Role or responsibility	Number
Interacting with and advocating for whānau Māori/organising whānau hui	6
Kapa haka	8
Pōwhiri	3
Te reo me ona tikanga Māori consultant/specialist	6
Karakia	1
Management role (e.g., HOD; senior leader)	4
Bilingual/whānau unit	2
Responsible for all things Māori in their school	4

## Expectations, roles, responsibilities

- 1-30 hours; mean 5½ hours
- Expert on all things Māori
  - *[Expected that] I know absolutely everything to do with 'things' Māori.*
  - *How can one person like me speak on all the issues of Māori and tikanga ...Am I Māori enough to do this?*
- Unreasonable expectations and assumptions
  - *Some schools send the hard-to-teach Māori kids to the Māori teacher to 'fix up'.*
  - *You are Māori, you take kapa haka. ...If they looked at my CV, you will see no mention of 'I love to take kapa haka'*
  - *Overall advocate for Māori whānau and Pasifika families, and all other minority groups*

12



EDUCATION AND  
SOCIAL WORK

## Acknowledgement of work

- 9 received management units (\$5000), middle management allowance (\$2000) or Māori Immersion Teacher Allowance (\$4000)
- 5 extra non-contact time or 'thank you'
- 2 no acknowledgement
- *You could grow tomatoes, call yourself Head of Environment and receive a Management unit. [But] for me to argue that the bilingual unit should receive a management unit? I had to walk away from my job and give that role to someone else because the top didn't want me to have more [management units] than the DP.*

13



EDUCATION AND  
SOCIAL WORK

## Supporting student learning

- Acknowledgement Māori language and culture had its rightful place in mainstream
  - *We have a culturally diverse kindergarten, and I love that I am able to share what I know with our tamariki from all over the world. I love that our language is celebrated as this was certainly not the case when I was growing up.*
  - *"I love the children, all children, but I am drawn to upholding the mana of Māori children .... playing my part in setting them up with high expectations for their future education".*
- Pride in Māori students
  - *Working with taurua Māori who naturally converse in te reo or English, depending upon who they are conversing with—seeing our taurua Māori me kaiako carrying their culture with them throughout the day.*

14



EDUCATION AND  
SOCIAL WORK

## Racism

- Most subjected to or witnessed racism
- *On my first day in a new school, my team leader referred to Māori and Pasifika students as 'bloody coconuts'. I should have called him out, but I was just too shocked.*
- *A BOT member took his kids out of our school because I was opening another bilingual class. His statement: 'It's getting too Māori here...'*
- *The BOT and Senior Management hold ideas that frankly are racist...Schools make the 'culture' uninviting to anyone who isn't white; it's toxic. But the Pākehā teachers don't understand this because it is a white-cultured school.*

15



EDUCATION AND  
SOCIAL WORK

## Māori language and culture lesser than

- *We always come beneath English.*
- *You always had to push for Māori rights using school policies.*
- *[There was a] lack of commitment from the other teachers to ensuring whānau Māori and Pasifika and minority groups were valued, respected, and honoured. Although there were some teachers who tried, the majority did not and were racist.*

16



EDUCATION AND  
SOCIAL WORK

## Teacher attrition

- Insufficient support, lack of commitment to Te Tiriti, worn down by mental and physical exhaustion
- *Māori teachers get hōhā or burnt out having to deal with so much.*
- *I won't work in mainstream early childhood education again. I left because there is a noticeable lack of authentic commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Whānau Māori were not respected - including myself—yet [we] were expected to be performing seals on certain occasions...*
- *Kaiako Māori who leave the profession do so because they work in schools where colonization remains the status quo, and they become powerless.*

17



EDUCATION AND  
SOCIAL WORK

## Retaining teachers

- Māori teachers stay because...
  - *They have passion for their students*
  - *There's still too much to do!*
- And some advice
  - *...work alongside more kaiako Māori, [where they] have the collective strength to make changes - and be happier in their work. Maybe, then they'll stick around as long as I have (39 years).*

18

## Māori self-determination and autonomy

- *I firmly believe in the catch cry: 'By Māori, for Māori, with Māori' 'cos Pākehā don't know, nor will they ever know, what it means to be Māori... they won't break down the barriers that constrain us...*
- *My one reason for moving into 'management' in 2013 was to safeguard the establishment of the reo rua unit which was initiated and co-founded by myself and my teina ...In true consultation with our Māori community we built a kaupapa which focused on taurira Māori learning as Māori to enable high Māori student achievement.*
- *Māori teachers need to be in safe spaces where being Māori is respected and honoured.*

19

## Conclusions

- Large time investment not adequately compensated for
- Cultural shifts needed at school or centre level
- Leaders need to acknowledge extent of work, provide support
- All teachers have a duty to use te reo Māori me ngā tikanga-a-iwi – not just Māori teachers
- By 2040, one million New Zealanders will be able to speak basic te reo Māori
- Requires additional Māori teachers

20

