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Evaluation of Te Kōtahitanga – Phase 3

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August 2007

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Wellington, New Zealand
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ISBN: 0-9582633-5-3

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Executive Summary

Māori educational underachievement is a major issue for New Zealand society and concern to adequately address the problem is justifiably, widespread. Te Kōtahitanga contends that the central issue in Māori educational underachievement is teachers positioning themselves in non-agentic positions because of their adherence to deficit theorising. Hence, its remedy is equally simple – by changing teachers' attitudes to Māori students and their culture teachers will come to use the power of their own agency to see, 'wonderful changes in Māori students' behaviour, participation, engagement and achievement in their classrooms' (Phase 3 Report, 2007, p.189). The currently high level of political support for Te Kōtahitanga has major implications for teachers, students, pedagogy, school organisation, and teacher training in New Zealand. It also has the potential to re-kindle public debate regarding the wider issues of professional autonomy and teacher accountabilities.

Whilst this review is broadly supportive of the goals sought by the Te Kōtahitanga writers, it is highly critical of both the Phase 3 Report and its operationalisation as a professional development programme for teachers. These criticisms fall into three major groupings:

a) the claims made for the success of the project are by no means conclusively confirmed by the data presented.

b) the project's location within the recent school effectiveness/school improvement paradigm together with its strong and uncritical adherence to a culturalist ideology render many of its assumptions and remedies highly questionable.

c) the data produced by the questionnaire distributed as part of the review process casts considerable doubt on its viability as a professional development programme, without major modifications.

The first section of this review contends that whilst Te Kōtahitanga provides a timely reminder to those currently involved in education that student achievement may be improved by developing sound and flexible learning-teaching relationships, the writers ignore the fact that such strategies have been a feature of many New Zealand secondary schools for some decades. Likewise, the claim that secondary schools have historically failed to listen to Māori aspirations is difficult to sustain. More significantly, Te Kōtahitanga is based on the proposition that a) teacher effects are central to Māori educational underachievement, and that b) teachers substantially contribute to Māori student failure. These are over-simplistic conclusions that disregard considerable evidence to the contrary. The data provided by the Phase 3 Report does not adequately support Te Kōtahitanga's claim to dramatically improve the academic performances of Māori students due in part to the failure to provide for adequate control groups, especially given the operation of several other programmes in secondary schools.

This discrepancy, however, is but a symptom of deeper, underlying problems. In the second section of this review, it is suggested that there are two major underlying reasons for Te Kōtahitanga's dogmatic adherence to a single 'magic bullet' solution

to Māori students' underachievement. The first reason is that the project is situated within a global school effectiveness/school improvement research paradigm, whose drawbacks it largely shares. It exemplifies a process of blame and redemption; surveillance and control. By substituting 'teacher' for 'child', it aims to save the teacher for society and to rescue society through the teacher. Accordingly, it contributes to the displacement of collaborative professionalism by imposing externally imposed notions of 'best practice'. The second and more fundamental reason for the insistence on a single major cause of Māori educational underachievement, however, is that the Te Kōtahitanga writers display an uncritical adherence to the ideology of culturalism. Hence, the highly contestable view that teachers pathologise their students through failing to empathise with Māori culture is a central tenet of culturalist faith that permeates both methodology and data.

Many of the problems noted above were amplified in the teacher responses to a survey conducted by NZPPTA in April/May 2007. These responses are analysed in section three of this review. They reveal that, whilst teachers strongly sympathised with the broad aims of Te Kōtahitanga, they also identified a number of serious flaws with the project as a professional development programme. Many respondents drew attention to what they saw as an intense and unjustifiable pressure placed upon them both to opt into Te Kōtahitanga, and to stay in, resulting in alienation and sometimes victimisation that detracted from staff collegiality and ultimately led to de-professionalisation. Teachers also draw attention to weaknesses in data collection and presentation, and expressed concern about time commitment and resourcing.

Review Introduction

1. Context

I accepted an invitation to review the Te Kōtahitanga project for the New Zealand Post Primary Teachers' Association (PPTA) in November 2006 for two major reasons. First, it has long been recognised that the relatively poor educational achievements of Māori students should be a central concern for all those committed to the full realisation of social equality in New Zealand (see for instance Nash, 2006b). The increasing urgency of this task was illustrated recently in a *New Zealand Educational Review* article which observed that more than half the Māori boys leaving school had not even attained NCEA level 1, a failure rate twice that of pakeha boys (Gerritsen, 2007). Paul Callister, in a recently published critical examination of New Zealand policies designed to achieve greater equity between groups, reminds us that, 'if a society has a goal of reducing ethnic-based disadvantage, then all the potential ways if achieving this goal should be explored' (2007, p.97). This comment underlines the attractiveness of significant national and mainstream professional development initiatives such as Te Kōtahitanga yet, as Callister warns, these, 'need to be monitored to make sure they are helping overcome disadvantage and not adding to it' (2007, p.97). Furthermore, given that Te Kōtahitanga is based on a kaupapa Māori ideology derived from culturally essentialist views that, since the late 1980s, have been highly influential in government education policy, it should be subject to the same rigorous criticism that applies to all ideas in the public policy domain (Rata, 2006, p.30).

The second reason for my having agreed to review Te Kōtahitanga is that the research that informed the project has directly led to the most highly visible professional development programme now operating in New Zealand mainstream secondary schools. Its current prominence owes much to the well-publicised claims of its designers to be able to solve the problem of Māori students' underachievement through focusing exclusively on students and teachers. As early as 2004, its chief designer, Professor Russell Bishop, termed the project a 'win-win' for both groups (*For teachers*, 2004). The release of the final Phase 3 Report in March 2007 was accompanied by considerable media interest and approval, stimulated in part by Ministry of Education publicity. Bishop describes recently released statistics on Māori boys' under-achievement as 'a time bomb', arguing that '… something dramatic has got to be done' (Gerritsen, 2007, p.2). There is something of an anomaly in that whilst Bishop suggests that the project has not yet produced sufficient data to prove conclusively that it could improve outcomes for Māori students, he nevertheless clearly signals that changes in teacher attitudes towards Māori boys in particular, are the key to the problem. Be this as it may, the fact is that given these recent very public expressions of support for the project, Te Kōtahitanga is likely to have major future implications for classroom pedagogy, school organisation, and teacher training. It is also very possible that the project will re-open public debate regarding the wider issues of professional autonomy and teacher accountabilities. As a national teacher advocacy body centrally concerned with these areas, PPTA needs independent information that might better inform any subsequent decisions regarding the degree of endorsement the organisation might wish to give to projects such as Te Kōtahitanga in the future.

Following two very useful project definition meetings in Wellington and my own preliminary research work, it became clear that a comprehensive, independent and scholarly review of such a major project as Te Kōtahitanga would be useful only if it took into account several major factors such as the origins of the project, its evolution, its educational and political context, and the various ways in which these impacted upon the project's approach to professional development. Moreover, because Te Kōtahitanga is also a professional development (PD) programme involving mainstream secondary teachers, the views and experiences of participating teachers were actively sought.

2. Structure and methodology

A. Critical study of the documentation

The release of Phase 3 of Te Kōtahitanga in March 2007, followed by the Phase 2 Report a month later, represented the latest instalment in a series of Te Kōtahitanga reports that began with the publication of the Phase 1 report in 2003. In turn, all of the published reports were informed by a number of previous publications by the project's designers. Secondary school teachers are highly educated professionals who are constantly engaged in critically examining the major ideas and assumptions that underpin their practice. Accordingly, this review seeks to highlight in some detail both the sequencing of the various Te Kōtahitanga reports and publications in addition to describing the various theories that underpin them, so that readers can progressively build up a theoretically and empirically informed picture of the overall project, its aims, intentions, structural arrangements, funding and organisation.

B. Survey of teachers

The views of teachers involved in Te Kōtahitanga are a significant factor in assessing the project's overall effectiveness as a professional development programme. At the outset it was agreed that an effective survey of teachers would need to include a comprehensive range of teachers' views. In turn this raised the question of how these could best be obtained, especially given that some teachers might well be reluctant to articulate any concerns they might have without some assurance of anonymity. The collection and storage of survey data, together with issues of privacy and anonymity were thus key considerations. It was therefore decided to proceed with a questionnaire survey, to be conducted entirely through PPTA, utilising the organisation's existing communication networks. Both PPTA staff and myself were jointly involved in developing this questionnaire, which was introduced to a meeting of Branch representatives charged with distributing the survey to participants in the Auckland offices of PPTA on 31 March 2007. The questionnaire itself is reproduced in this review as Appendix A. The extensive data the questionnaire yielded is discussed in Section Three.

C. Advisory body

An advisory body consisting of Dr Judie Alison (PPTA Advisory Officer-Professional Issues), Ms Bronwyn Cross (Deputy General Secretary – Policy and Advocacy), Dr Elizabeth Rata, University of Auckland (Māori protocol), Professor Howard Lee, Massey University (educational policy and statistics), and Dr John Clark, Massey

University (ethical issues) was appointed to oversee the review process and to critically comment on the draft document. The reviewer would also like to acknowledge the expert assistance of Ms Lynette O'Brien (PPTA Researcher), who not only entered and collated the questionnaire data, but also furnished the cogent and revealing tables, graphs and other statistical information that appear in this review. In addition, the review benefited considerably from the insightful commentaries of two researchers with experience in quantitative and qualitative data analysis, both of whom critically examined the data and statistics presented in the Te Kōtahitanga Phase 3 Report. Much of the material presented in the final pages of Section 2 is derived directly from their work. Although for various reasons they preferred to remain anonymous, the reviewer would like to express his indebtedness to their professional expertise and to their willingness to offer assistance. Last but by no means least, the reviewer is grateful to those participant teachers and others who took the time and the trouble to complete what was a comprehensive exercise in soliciting professional opinion from those who are, or have been, centrally involved with Te Kōtahitanga in our schools. Without your support this review would have been so much the poorer. It goes without saying, however, that the responsibility for the way the material is presented and the inferences that are drawn lies with the reviewer.

D. Structure and referencing

This review is divided into three sections. The first section describes the Phase 3 Report in the context of the overall Te Kōtahitanga development history, and critically examines some of is underlying assumptions and claims. The second section considers the project's location within a global school effectiveness/school improvement paradigm, and its adherence to culturalist ideology, both of which have significant implications for the research and professional development aspects of Te Kōtahitanga. The third section concentrates on the responses to the questionnaire and what these might mean for the future of Te Kōtahitanga as ongoing professional development.

Finally, for the purposes of this review it should be noted that oral testimony is distinguished from other quoted material by being placed in italics.

Section One
Te Kōtahitanga in perspective

1. Origins and development of Te Kōtahitanga

The final Te Kōtahitanga Phase 3 Report released in March 2007 represents the culmination of a professional development project that began in 2001 when the Ministry of Education (Research Division) provided funding to investigate how Māori students experienced the varying influences on their educational achievements. Following the completion of a short scoping exercise, a longer-term research project comprising three phases was introduced. Phase 1 involved the construction of a series of narratives of experience. Phase 2 described the trial of a professional development model designed to implement changes in classroom relationships and interactions. Phase 3 added to this the detailed measurement of changes in student achievement that were recorded (Bishop et al, 2003, p.3). As the final Phase 3 Report (2007) was built on the findings of each successive phase, this section of the review incorporates a sequential examination of the major ideas that underpin Te Kōtahitanga, as these are described in the previously published Te Kōtahitanga documents: the Phase 1 Report (2003), and the Phase 2 Report (2007).

A. The Phase 1 Report (2003)

The Phase 1 Report describes how the initial Te Kōtahitanga scoping exercise centred on the proposition that a better understanding and analysis of Māori student experiences in classrooms might lead to improved teaching/learning, in turn resulting in greater Māori student achievement. Consequently the Report seeks to identify those underlying teacher behaviours and attitudes that make a difference to Māori achievement especially in Years 9-10 because, 'this is the crisis location for students where the statistics on low achievement, retention and suspension problems are at their worst' (p.1).

The Report includes a lengthy discussion of what is dismissively labelled throughout this document and its successors as 'Deficit Theorising'. The Report cites Lovegrove's dated (1966) conclusion that Māori problems at school were more to do with 'the generally deprived nature of Māori home conditions than to inherent intellectual inferiority' (p.6), but goes on argue that later researchers merely refined this analysis in suggesting that it is actually limited resources in Māori homes that are a major factor in Māori students being ill-prepared for the 'scholastic necessary' of the modern classroom:

> These theories collectively can be labelled 'deficit theories' in that they blame the victims and collectively see the locus of the problem as either lack of inherent ability, lack of cultural appropriateness or limited resources; 'in short, some deficiency at best, a pathology' at worst. The general pattern of the solutions that they propose suggests that the 'victims' need to change, usually to become more like the proponents of the theories. Further, these are cul-de-sac theories, in that they do not offer any way out that is acceptable to Māori people (p.6).

Conversely, the Report sympathetically cites research by Lingard (2002), Mitchell, Cameron and Wylie (2002), and Hattie (2002), that emphasises the need for teachers to lift their expectations of student achievement (p.70), but it concludes that

none of these analyses addresses the need for teachers to address their own cultural deficit theorising or overall issues of power imbalance. Nor, contends the Report, do they suggest how they may be actively participating in the systematic marginalisation of Māori students. Hence, Te Kōtahitanga embraces narrative pedagogy:

> …an approach in which young people are able to recollect, reflect and make sense of their experiences from within their own cultural context and preferably in their own language. In such ways their interpretations and analyses become 'normal' and 'accepted' as opposed to those of the teacher who takes a 'curious', 'not-knowing', 'wait and see' position (p.19).

The 2003 Report also introduces the four discourses of students, whanau, teachers and school principals that are subsequently repeated and amplified in the later reports. In the discourses, participants articulate, conceptualise and theorise their experiences through 'Collaborative Storying', a Kaupapa Māori strategy that authorises the differing voices of research participants being heard (p.27). The Report claims to be 'authorising Māori students' educational experiences' in order to identify how influences on achievement are played out in daily lives through talking with Māori students (and other participants in their education), about what is involved in improving their educational achievement (p.3). In the eyes of Te Kōtahitanga's designers, this made student narratives especially 'legitimate'. The most significant factors identified by students are classroom pedagogical interactions, particularly teacher attitudes that led many students to articulate their resistance to the 'overwhelming denial of them as Māori' (p.31). This is a view according to the data presented in the Report, which was supported by whanau and, to a lesser extent, by principals. In contrast, however, teachers are claimed to have identified students' deficiencies as being the major barriers to students' progress and achievement, thus revealing a strong preponderance of 'pathologising' of Māori students' lived experiences which, the Report argues, limited teachers' interactions with Māori students (p.28). Teachers are also claimed to be 'problematising' Māori students' underachievement, explaining it largely in terms of student/home deficiencies (deficit theorising). The Report labels these views 'positionings' resulting in teachers, 'abrogating responsibility for effecting change because the causes of the problem were perceived as lying outside the area of teacher agency' (p.81). Despite identifying teacher behaviour as the main culprit in Māori educational underachievement, the Report denies that this is merely, 'blaming the teachers'. Rather 'given the history of colonialism in this country and the preponderance of deficit theorising amongst educational researchers and theorists … such positionings on the part of teachers is understandable' (p.81).

The Phase 1 Report thus clearly emphasises the central problem as being, 'teachers positioning themselves in non-agentic positions through their deficit theorising that is a major influence on Māori children's academic and other achievement' (p.81). For this reason a professional development process was developed incorporating a progressive sequence that was to subsequently become a Te Kōtahitanga trademark feature. This included participation at an initial four-day induction hui; feedback on plans developed at the hui; observation, feedback and feed-forward on the lessons observed; a follow-up session that focussed on co-construction of new approaches; and shadow-coaching in classrooms to support implementation of new strategies decided upon in the co-construction meetings. This was followed by a second observation with feedback and follow-up strategies (p.130).

The 2003 Report claims that:

> The results of this study show that it is feasible within a relatively short period of time, to improve Māori students' educational achievement. The results add to both local and international literature that shows that changing how teachers theorise their relationships with Māori students and how they interact with them in the classroom can have a major impact upon Māori students' engagement with learning and short-term achievement (p.198).

These and similar claims were to be instrumental in the extension of Te Kōtahitanga from the initial pilot sample, to 12 schools by the end of 2005.

B. The Phase 2 Report (2007)

The Phase 2 Report was somewhat surprisingly released shortly after the Phase 3 Report. It describes how the Te Kōtahitanga research moved from an initially small sample of teachers, to become a larger-scale project within the wider school setting, and involving a greater number of teachers. In this phase Facilitators (staff released from normal teaching duties to undertake Te Kōtahitanga training in order to implement the project in their schools) were introduced, the justification for expansion being that cultural changes needed to take place across learning institutions involving all staff rather than just 'target teachers'(p.2).

The Report also advocates developing professional learning communities focused on student learning rather than professional communities of teachers focusing solely on themselves and on their teaching. Whole school involvement was actively sought to change professional practices and the professional intervention process extended. Co-construction meetings were to guide teachers to critically reflect on the data gathered, these being supplemented by observation, feedback, goal setting, and shadow coaching. The Report's main conclusion, however, reiterates the necessity for teachers to challenge their own and others' 'deficit theorising' (p.5) thereby 're-positioning themselves within alternative discourses' - a 'necessary condition' in improving the achievement of Māori students (p.6).

C. The Phase 3 Report (2007)

The Phase 3 Report was launched publicly in March 2007. The Report draws on what is described as the counter-narrative of kaupapa Māori to develop alternative pedagogies and to locate solutions within Māori cultural ways of knowing (p19; p.34). It details a new pedagogy that draws on a kura kaupapa Māori approach that 'repositions teachers within different contexts where students' sense-making processes offer new opportunities for them to engage with learning' (p.15). It goes beyond this, however, in its call for all those involved in education in New Zealand to reposition themselves in relation to emerging aspirations for autonomous Māori voice. The explanatory diagram entitled, 'Addressing power imbalances in classrooms' (Figure 1.1, p.17), derives from an earlier study by Bishop & Glynn, 1999 (p.162). In their discussion of these issues of power imbalance, the writers assert that, 'when teachers share their power with others', they will come to better understand the world of the 'others', thus facilitating the creation of culturally appropriate contexts for learning (p.17).

Once again the discourses of the four groups, students, whanau, principals, and teachers, are highlighted, with the writers claiming that these discourses collectively encapsulate both the problem and the solution to Māori educational underachievement. The students' discourses are said to centre on the relationships they had with their teachers as the most influential factor in their ability to achieve in the classroom (p.18). Likewise the whanau is claimed to identify the major influence on Māori students' educational achievement as being the quality of their children's relationship with their teachers, especially the need for teachers to accept that Māori people have their own cultural values, aspirations and ways of knowing (p.19). School principals also drew primarily upon the discourse of relationships to identify teacher attitudes as the most crucial, especially the low expectations of Māori students held by many teachers, and their failure to fully recognise Māori cultural aspirations (p.19).

The Report claims that a critical reading of these four narratives of experience identified three main discourses: the discourse of the child and home; the discourse of structure and systems within the school; and the discourse of relationships and classroom interaction patterns. The main influences on Māori students' educational achievement that people identified were said to vary according to where they positioned themselves within the three discourses (p.23). The Report argued that this positioning revealed two broad groupings: the first comprising those who cited in-class relationships as being most important and the second group, those who cited Māori students/homes/backgrounds as being a significant factor. Following Shields, Bishop and Mazawi (2005), the Report asserts that:

> What is problematic for education is that it is mainly the teachers who position themselves in significant numbers within this second group. In so doing, a large proportion of the teachers were pathologising Māori students' lived experiences by explaining their lack of educational achievement in deficit terms, either as being within the child or their home, or within the structure of the school (p.23).

In contrast with teachers, students are apparently very clear about how teachers, by changing how they interact with them, can create a context for improvements in educational achievement. These 'practical solutions' of students and others who position themselves within a relationship discourse are contrasted with the allegedly limited and impractical solutions offered by teachers (p.25).

The remedy to this dilemma is the Effective Teaching Profile (ETP) shown in Figure 1.4 (p.26). This depicts effective teachers as those who first 'positively and vehemently reject deficit theorising as a means of explaining Māori students' educational achievement levels' and second, 'know and understand how to bring about change in Māori students' educational achievement and are professionally committed to doing so'. This can be achieved through Manaakitanga (teachers caring for children); Mana motuhake (the development of group and personal identity); Whakapiringatanga (including the careful organisation of specific individual roles and responsibilities required to achieve individual and group outcomes); Wānanga (the dynamic sharing of knowledge rather than traditional approaches); Ako (including a dialogic relationship which includes teachers learning as well as teaching); and Kōtahitanga (involving a collaborative response towards a commonly held vision, goal or outcome). ETP is claimed to address Māori people's concerns about current pedagogic practices as being 'fundamentally monocultural and

epistemologically racist', because it 'developed out of the cultural sense-making processes of people previously marginalised by the dominance of colonial and neo-colonial education relations of power' (pp.32-33).

This first chapter derives much of its theoretical stance from Freire's influential book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972). It draws particularly on an oft-cited passage on p.21 of that book that refers to the need for educators to harness power from the weakness of the oppressed in order to liberate oppressor and oppressed, in order to argue that the answers to Māori educational underachievement do not lie in the mainstream. According to this chapter, for the last 150 years, 'mainstream practices and theories have kept Māori in a subordinate position, while at the same time creating a discourse that pathologised and marginalised Māori people's lived experiences' (p.34). Thus, multiculturalism and biculturalism can only go so far, because the real answers to Māori educational underachievement lie elsewhere in the sense making and knowledge generating processes of the culture that the dominant system has marginalised. Somewhat strangely, the chapter refers obliquely to this particular Freire passage on p.34, which perhaps suggests that somehow the passage itself had originally been cited in its entirety but was subsequently deleted from the final document.

Whereas in Phase 1 professional development was introduced to teachers by the research and professional development (RPD) team as facilitators, and in Phase 2 professional development was introduced collaboratively by the researchers and trained facilitators, Phase 3 professional development was undertaken by facilitators supported by the RPD, RTLBs and school support services staff, to implement ETP in the classrooms of participating teachers through a sequence of professional development activities. This followed on from formal and informal introductory meetings where the project was outlined to each school's principal and staff. Once a school undertook to participate, it selected a facilitation team who were provided with professional development support in their schools (p.35).

As the implementation of the ETP largely follows the model described and previously explained in the Phase 1 report (2003), comment here will be confined to some significant features that are described in more detail in the Phase 3 document:

a) the induction hui is usually held at a local marae with elders present and involved in training. A crucial activity is the highlighting of the specific goal of raising Māori student participation and achievement, accomplished through an examination of Māori student experiences of schooling and teachers' discursive positioning.

b) feedback to individual teachers is expressly designed to provide a means of monitoring the degree to which teachers are incorporating the desired interactions and relationships detailed in the ETP into their teaching. Facilitators then provide specific feedback on the effects of these interactions on Māori students in terms of work engagement, completion and outcomes. There are three stages of progression. In the first stage the initial teacher response is, 'usually for them to be rather passive and receptive of the data, what it shows and what it might mean for their practice' (p.41). In the second stage teachers begin to understand for themselves, leading to a third stage

where teachers and facilitator became co-constructors of the knowledge and understandings (p.41).

c) in contrast to the direct intervention that characterised Phase 1, Phase 3 followed a rather different procedure. Here, the team progressively stepped back to allow others to work directly in schools with teachers. There are again three stages: the first where the team trained facilitators; the second where it supported facilitators to operationalise the ETP with target teachers, and the third where facilitators worked with target teachers to operationalise the ETP with Māori students.

A feature of the Phase 3 Report is the reported views of those teachers and students who took part in Te Kōtahitanga. This oral testimony is provided in chapter seven, although for reasons of space only a small proportion of the considerable data collected by the team appears here. As one might expect, the data provided in the report largely backs the Report's claim that 'through a critical examination of their own theoretical positioning teachers begin to understand the impacts of deficit theorising on Māori students and on others within their own practice' (p.133):

'I totally reject deficit theorising. I have advocated this for a long time' (Teacher 1, p.133).

'*And the whole issue of deficit theorising, I can see I didn't know much about it before I came into teaching. Then when it began, I realised how it could be so easy to fall into that pattern, especially if you are tired and you have got a lot on, instead of finding the good things and emphasising them, it can be so easy to fall and look at the bad side'* (Teacher 11, p.134).

There was evidence provided in the report that teachers were inspired by their facilitators, had learned much from them, and felt comfortable with their relationship. Two examples are cited below as indicative of the data included in the Report:

'*I was so impressed with our head facilitator in the school. It is obvious that she is passionate about the whole programme. And her passion and desire to get us all on board just came through loud and clear'* (Teacher 10, p.140).

'*I feel very lucky to be working with the facilitator. First, she is an amazing person. And her gentleness and positiveness has really helped so much in the school environment where people can become volatile at times, because they are being challenged"*(Teacher 6, p.142).

In the report, there is also a clearly expressed desire from participants to see Te Kōtahitanga expanded into more schools because 'bringing all teachers into Te Kōtahitanga was seen as important' (p.142). Failure to do this could give rise to problems because, as one teacher revealed:

'*It is more difficult to talk about your colleagues even if you are the head of department and you have those regular meetings and you know the people who are not on board and that is what concerns me more than the people who are on board*

with some reservations, but are still having a crack at it. It's the people who you know are reluctant to join up' (Teacher 12, p.142).

The data provided in the Report also clearly illustrates the contention of the writers that teachers who use the entire range of relationships and behaviours to be found in the ETP can teach Māori students more effectively than otherwise. The student interviews included in the Phase 3 Report convey a sense of increasing student satisfaction with their academic progress. The Phase 3 Report is, therefore, able to conclude that 'from the student interviews we learned that when Māori students have good relationships with their teachers, they are able to thrive at school' (p.185).

Moreover, given the weight the successive Te Kōtahitanga reports place on the necessity of radically changing teacher attitudes, the teacher interviews reproduced in the Phase 3 Report reveal the many positive experiences afforded to teachers through the professional development induction hui, the in-school professional development profile, and the support they received from facilitators. Teachers were said to have been discursively challenged and responded positively because they could see the positive impact on Māori learning that came from their having changed the ways they reacted to, and interacted with, their students (p.152). The data gathered thus allows the report writers to conclude that:

> The teachers' interviews indicated effective Te Kōtahitanga teachers have undergone a philosophical shift in the way they think about teaching and learning. Anti-deficit thinking, agentic positioning, and the six elements of the ETP are the essential threads in this new approach to teaching, here termed a Culturally Responsive Pedagogy of Relations (p.185).

In view of this conclusion and its supporting interview data, the data presented in section three of this review from the teacher questionnaire will prove especially interesting.

2. Initial observations

Since 2003, the Te Kōtahitanga designers have emphasised the central role of the teacher in raising Māori educational achievement. This view rests on two major assumptions: a) that professional development programmes of this nature can generate considerable academic gains amongst Māori students and b) that the main reason for Māori students' underachievement is their cultural alienation in monocultural 'mainstream' secondary schools. If these assumptions are indeed true, then Te Kōtahitanga would be well on its way, as indeed Professor Bishop claimed in a recent television documentary (TV3, 20/20, 2007), towards finally solving the problem of Māori underachievement, and in less than a generation. It is, therefore, vital in an independent review of this nature, to thoroughly explore the extent to which these claims can be supported by evidence. Accordingly, this section critically examines the arguments and evidence presented for several Te Kōtahitanga claims. These include the assertions that the programme has introduced a 'new', innovative pedagogy into hitherto 'traditionalist' secondary schools; that teacher expectations are the major factor in student achievement; that secondary schools contribute to the continuing cultural alienation of Māori students; and that the data presented in the Phase 3 Report confirms the view that Te Kōtahitanga has already been instrumental in significantly raising Māori student performance across the curriculum.

A. Pedagogy

From a general pedagogical point of view, Te Kōtahitanga provides a timely reminder to all currently involved in education that the quality of classroom interactions continues to be very important. For example, it is pointed out with some justification that the achievement of Māori students, as with any group of students, may be improved by developing learning-teaching relationships where certain key notions are present. Thus, power is shared where learners can initiate interactions, choose learning styles they feel comfortable with, and where there is collaborative critical reflection. Culture counts where learners feel 'safe' and their knowledge is valued. Learning is interactive and dialogic, where learners are co-inquirers, learning is active, problem based, integrated and holistic. Connectedness is fundamental to relations where teachers are committed to their students and community and where school and parental aspirations are complementary, leading to the creation of a common vision in achieving excellence for Māori in education (p.15).

As important as it is to reiterate these values, however, it can hardly be claimed they are as novel as the Report writers sometimes imply. In fact it is particularly irksome to see, in chapter four of the Phase 3 Report (2007), the writers actually showcasing their complete lack of any historical awareness of post World War Two developments in New Zealand secondary education, especially in their section on ostensible shifts from traditional to discursive interactions (pp.65-66). Here, the Phase 3 Report seems to suggest that Te Kōtahitanga has made the significant discovery that Māori students 'wanted their teachers to use a range of teacher interactions, and not just focus on using instruction, monitoring and negative behavioural feedback' (note 13, p.64). The implication here is that no new pedagogical or curriculum innovations existed in schools at all before this particular PD intervention was introduced. Hence, we read that, prior to the project having had an impact, 'the overall pattern of classroom interaction … (was) one dominated by instruction and monitoring: in short, transmission classrooms' (p.66). However, the data supplied in Figures 4.2 and 4.3 (pp.68-69) reveals that:

> the teachers moved along the continuum from traditional to discursive teaching, from an initial pattern where the teachers was in control over most, if not all, of the variables involved in learning, to a situation where the teacher was working more with groups and individuals in such a way that they could respond to, and offer direction for student's learning and on towards situations where learning could be co-constructed (p.69).

Perhaps the writers are unaware that as early as 1943, the Thomas Committee critiqued the then over-emphasis on academic technicalities and formalistic, subject-centred teaching methods that so often failed to recognise individual and cultural differences (New Zealand Department of Education, 1943). The Currie Report (1962) largely reiterated these sentiments. In 1969, the PPTA Curriculum Review Group under the leadership of Peter Boag produced a series of booklets that radically challenged traditional secondary school practices (NZPPTA, 1969; NZPPTA, 1974). In these it was argued that 'if we wish to produce assured, self-respecting young people, capable of independent growth, we must begin by respecting them as individuals' (NZPPTA, 1969, p.10). Mutual respect between students and teachers entailed that teachers would have to be prepared to do things with students rather than to them or for them, as well as understanding their interests, knowledge, attitudes and values (p.11). In addition, the Review Group believed that teachers

should be prepared to 'thoroughly reappraise' the detrimental impact of the individualistic and competitive values that characterised society in general (p.12); that 'the interchange of ideas between school and community should be a steady dialogue' (p.76) and that the system had largely failed Māori and Pasifika parents (p.80).

By the 1970s many teachers and indeed, many Department of Education subject advisors as well, had been sufficiently influenced by the educational radicalism of the day to read critical education commentators such as Illich, Freire, Postman and Weingarter, to name just a few. By the early 1980s, provoked by reaction to an incident involving the Auckland Engineering Students' Haka party and the Te Taua Community Group, Hiwi Tauroa's well-publicised report, *Race Against Time* (1982) was calling urgently for the elimination of cultural bias in the education system through a re-examination of educational philosophy and classroom strategies not too dissimilar to that now demanded by Te Kōtahitanga (pp.53-54). It was recommended, for instance, that future training programmes include as a priority, an acknowledgement of the dangers of racial stereotyping, and new bicultural education programmes based on an appreciation of Māori principles and culture (recommendations 5-7, p.56). Schools were urged to develop a positive philosophy towards pupils of different cultural backgrounds and to respect their values. Principals and staff were enjoined to constantly review their organisation and practices in order to eliminate restrictive cultural bias. This was to include school-based in-service training for all staff. Schools were also enjoined to encourage Māori culture in school subjects and school practices whilst school-based ceremonies were to reflect Māori customs, and encourage more Māori community involvement (recommendations 9-23, pp.57-58).

Many secondary schools appear to have acted upon these recommendations. Moreover, since the mid-1980s, there have been a number of successful attempts to distribute advice on multicultural strategies to teachers (see for instance, Hunkin, 1985), to the extent that more than a decade ago, Hohepa, McNaughton and Jenkins observed that an increasing number of educators were then identifying group learning as a preferred mode of learning for Māori (Hohepa et al, 1996, p.38). The emphasis in Te Kōtahitanga on the importance of culturally appropriate pedagogical practices is, therefore, clearly in agreement with a now considerable body of research that relates pedagogy and curricula to cultural aspirations, but in the early twenty-first century this is surely no longer groundbreaking news.

This brief historical survey suggests that the Phase 3 Report is on somewhat shaky ground in claiming, in such an uncompromising manner, that a largely pakeha education system has <u>invariably</u> failed to listen to Māori aspirations. The Report is perhaps on safer ground in revealing that there have been, are, and will probably continue to be, teachers who exhibit poor cultural understanding, and who largely fail to appreciate cultural differences. It is also undoubtedly the case that some schools have historically been far better than others in fully recognising their Treaty obligations, and in catering for the diversity of their clientele. The real value of Te Kōtahitanga then, is that it does force all of us in education to question whether what we are currently doing is indeed sufficient. But rather than simply finger-pointing and apportioning blame, it would surely have been more constructive to recognise that many changes have already occurred in secondary schools, but then go on and ask

why, if these changes have at least to some degree been already implemented within the education sector, have across-the-board improvements in Māori educational achievement still largely failed to appear.

One reason that this more complex question has not been taken up by the Te Kōtahitanga writers is possibly that answering such a complex question comprehensively and honestly would inevitably lead to a serious questioning of any research that claims to have found a single cause and a sure-fire cure for student under-achievement. All the Te Kōtahitanga reports from 2003 on assert the major cause of under-achievement as being poor teacher interactions with Māori students – the direct result of recalcitrant teachers who persist in clinging stubbornly to what the report writers contemptuously dismiss as 'deficit theorisation'. In turn this is claimed to reflect a failure to recognise Māori cultural aspirations that is ultimately rooted in a history of colonialist oppression. It therefore follows that the magic bullet solution lies in creating effective teachers who, by recognising their discursive positioning can change their attitudes and their pedagogy, resulting in dramatic improvements to Māori students' academic performance. Unfortunately, there are a number of problems with such logic.

B. Teacher effects

Although the Te Kōtahitanga writers emphasise the central role of the teacher in raising Māori educational achievement, the evidence on teacher effects seems ambiguous to say the least. The international literature is divided, but in the New Zealand context, Nash and Prochnow have critiqued Professor John Hattie's recent claim (2003) that 'teachers make a difference'. Hattie considers that students account for about 50 percent of the effective variables in student achievement, home for 5-10 per cent; schools 5-10 per cent; peer effects 5-10 per cent; and teachers for about 30 per cent (Nash & Prochnow 2003). Nash and Prochnow, however, point out that, 'attributions of causality made on the basis of statistical correlations are entirely dependant on information not formally included in the model' (Nash & Prochnow, 2003, p.184). They caution that research falling within this paradigm accepts, often with little question, the extremely problematic assumption that properties of teachers and teaching can be 'identified, quantified, and isolated as a causal agent in the generation of learning' (p.184). For Nash and Prochnow, questions such as what kind of teacher behaviour is to count as feedback, how such objective behaviour is subject to contextual definition, and whether it should be the students' rather than the observer's interpretation that matters, are all of vital importance, yet in none of the Te Kōtahitanga reports are these questions fully debated.

There is, however, as Nash and Prochnow go on to illustrate, a strong political dimension to the claim that teacher effects are the major influence on student academic progress. They highlight a Ministerial press release asserting that 'research indicates that effective classroom teaching can explain up to half of a child's educational achievements'. They also draw attention to an editorial in the mass-circulation weekly *Sunday Star Times* entitled, 'It's the teachers, stupid'(Nash & Prochnow, 2004). Nash and Prochnow point to the current dominance of Hattie's research, the key assumptions of which substantially inform the New Zealand Ministry of Education's own position (2004, p.177). Given the current political climate

this view is unlikely to be seriously challenged for, as Nash observed in a later publication (2006), the wide dissemination of the Bishop et al research and the Te Kōtahitanga ideology to the teaching profession and the media is a clear indication that the Ministry still much prefers evidence that suggests that if teachers only raised their expectations of their Māori students, then inequality would somehow be reduced (Nash 2006).

C. Cultural alienation and Māori underachievement

A number of New Zealand sociologists, education policy analysts, philosophers and historians over the last twenty years and more have theorised and documented the significance of what the Te Kōtahitanga designers choose to contemptuously dismiss as 'deficit theory'. The late Roy Nash has been demonstrably the leading researcher in this area over the past two decades (see for instance, Nash, 1993). As Nash argued, 'if we are to move closer to our shared goal of equality of results, it will be necessary to admit the reality of class differences in cognitive socialisation and their long-term effects, and devise strategies to deal with this source of inequality/difference' (Nash, 2003). More recently Nash demonstrated that the evidence that Māori students underachieve at school simply because they are alienated by monocultural mainstream secondary schools, is fundamentally flawed (2006). Nash based this conclusion on a number of factors. First, he looked at how the Ministry of Education endorses the Te Kōtahitanga position through public statements such as Secretary of Education Howard Fancy's 2005 address to a school principals' conference claiming that the Bishop et al research demonstrated how close to four out of five Māori students identified their relationships and interactions with teachers as the biggest difference to whether they achieved or not. Nash was particularly critical of the way the Te Kōtahitanga researchers collected and categorised their discourse data. He emphasised that, despite appearances to the contrary, Bishop et al had not actually asked Māori students to rate the influences that made a difference to their work, resulting in 80 per cent of them giving the highest rank to the quality of their teachers. Rather:

> The data presented are, in the words of the text, frequencies from groups of students …. rather than of individual responses, and there is a clear reference to the 'number of narratives where such a factor was found' (p.42). Moreover, as the report states, 'the meaning of the narratives that the interview participants had attributed' (p.42), was determined by the researchers, not by the students. *This somewhat clumsy expression is an acknowledgement in context that it was the researchers, not the students, who allocated utterances to certain categories of 'discourse'. The interview participants attributed no meaning of that sort to their statements* (Nash 2006, p.17). {Italics mine}

Nash also had major concerns about the highly edited transcripts from focus groups, pointing out that whilst it is relatively easy to get students to talk about their teachers, researchers often experienced considerable difficulty shifting discussion into the private domain of the home (Nash, 2006, p.18). This was due to the fact that they were required to make an act of *disclosure*, because the relationship they had with their parents was fundamentally different from that they experienced with teachers. Although Nash was clearly referring to the earlier Phase 1 Report (2003), his concerns are also relevant to the Phase 3 Report (2007), especially given that this document presents similar data based on identical conclusions.

There is a further related problem here in that none of the Te Kōtahitanga Reports provides any comparison with narratives of experience from non-Māori students. The assumption is made that there is something distinctive about Māori students' narratives, yet without a control group we cannot be sure that the narratives do not equally well describe the experiences of many New Zealand students, for instance, Pasifika students, Asian students, working-class students, to name just a few. The Te Kōtahitanga analysis sets out in some detail what the Māori students apparently wish to experience from teachers. This includes fair treatment, high expectations, less emphasis on traditional teaching styles, being informed as to how well they were doing, and being appreciated for themselves, yet surely this would apply to many if not the majority of secondary school students. Moreover, evidence from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) published by the OECD in 2001, differs significantly from Te Kōtahitanga in its conclusion about students' perceptions of their teachers. Based on a sample of 2,390 Pakeha and 641 Māori students, the PISA findings revealed that the only difference between the two groups that tended towards significance was that more Māori than Pakeha students 'strongly agree' that most teachers treated them fairly (Nash, 2006, p.20).

Nash also suggested that the data from the Progress at School project (Nash & Harker, 1988), though dated, was likely to still be the best available. Extrapolating from this data, he pointed to the significance of cross-cutting factors such as social class, observing for instance that when Year 9 test scores and social class were taken into account, being Māori 'contributed little more than one test score' (Nash, 2006, p.21). He also warned of the dangers inherent in simply assuming that when Māori students spoke bitterly of their school experiences, this automatically proved that their lack of success was caused by unfair treatment by teachers. Instead Nash contended that there are 'conditions at home, at school, and within the peer group that must all be modified if the effective barriers to … learning are to be removed' (Nash, 2006, p.25). There appeared, therefore, little logical justification for the statement that 'almost four out of five' Māori students attribute their learning difficulties to 'face-to-face relationships and in-class interactions with their teachers' (Nash, 2006, p.26).

Nash however, went further, in claiming that Bishop et al merely presented, 'the case for the prosecution', in the process ignoring research evidence that conflicted with their basic assumptions to the extent that the various published reports became, in Nash's words 'propaganda – for such it must be called' (Nash, 2006, p.27). These are indeed strong words, and in order to assess the validity of the charge, we need to look more closely at the statistical evidence provided in support of Bishop et al's claim that the achievement of Māori students has already been dramatically raised through the work of the Te Kōtahitanga programme to date in participant schools.

D. The evidence for success

Chapter 9 of the Phase 3 Report presents the data that is used to back up the claims that Te Kōtahitanga has achieved its goal of dramatically reducing and even eliminating Māori underachievement across the range of curriculum subjects. It is vital, therefore, that the statistics provided be subject to careful analysis. In 2005, Nash expressed serious reservations about the claims for the raising of Māori student achievement made in the Te Kōtahitanga Phase 1 Report (2003), arguing

that there were glaring contradictions between the claims made, and the evidence actually presented:

> The authors' own model of what interpretation to give their non-experimental research (with its lack of controls and 'limits to casual effects') is hard to distinguish from that which could legitimately be given to controlled experimental research. Indeed, the statement from a research group that, 'professional development had an impact on raising student achievement', would convey to readers that this finding had, in fact, the status of reliable scientific knowledge. The fact that it does not is even rather shocking. It is not considered good scientific practice to assert that something is so and let the reader discover by 'careful reading' that this is an 'interpretation' given to findings from a non-experimental study and 'more in the nature of a hypothesis' (Nash, 2005, pp.24-24).

Unfortunately, the Phase 3 Report suffers from many of the same problems identified by Nash in the earlier document. Two researchers with expertise in data analysis provided valuable analyses of this aspect of the Phase 3 Report to the reviewer. Their conclusions, summarised in the remainder of this section, are particularly concerned with chapter nine, on student achievement results, and chapter ten, which provides a conclusion and recommendations. In defence of the Te Kōtahitanga writers, however, it should be recognised that there is little research available that is able to make links between teacher professional development and student achievement (as demonstrated by the Timperley, Wilson, Barrar & Fung, BES work, in progress), notwithstanding the claims of some school effectiveness/school improvement literature. It should also be mentioned that the Te Kōtahitanga writers themselves admitted that their study was 'quasi-experimental'. The selection process was non-randomised and used non-equivalent groups because the selection of schools and the teachers was out of their hands (p.174). They also conceded that 'we should not get too excited by the early signs of achievement gains being made by Māori students' (p.193). Nevertheless, there are also numerous claims in the Phase 3 Report to the effect that Māori students have experienced 'continuous improvement in numeracy and literacy performance during Phase 3 of the project' (p.187), and that if teachers reject deficit thinking and its associated pathologising practices they will see, 'wonderful changes in Māori student' behaviour, participation, engagement and achievement in their classroom' (p.189). And as we have already noted, the publicity that has accompanied the release of the final report emanating both from the project's designers and the Ministry has certainly suggested that considerable gains can be achieved in a relatively short period of time.

Given the ambitious nature of these claims, it is relevant to point out that Te Kōtahitanga does not appear to have yet produced a satisfactory or unambiguous way of measuring effects on student achievement. To claim that it has indeed done so, is to invite criticism and ultimately, scepticism.

First, one might question why AsTTle is used for numeracy and ESA for literacy, when the teachers involved in Te Kōtahitanga teach largely the full range of subjects offered by schools. The use of AsTTle for Maths teachers in Te Kōtahitanga is probably acceptable, but this is not necessarily the case for any other subject teachers. It might also be pointed out that there do not appear to be any breakdowns of the data showing which of the schools were in the Literacy or Numeracy initiatives, yet without knowing this information, it is difficult for an independent reviewer to accurately assess the extent of gains specifically attributed to Te Kōtahitanga.

As indicated above, Nash expressed concern over the lack of a credible control group in the Phase 1 Report (2003). Similarly, in the Phase 3 Report, the claim on p.174 and elsewhere in chapter nine to have established a de facto 'control group' for the numeracy is rather weak. The reason is simply that teachers not involved with Te Kōtahitanga are not necessarily similar to the teachers involved with the project. In fact this is the whole purpose of having a control group - when all factors are the same with the sole exception that one group is being 'treated' and the other is not. As it stands, there may well have been all sorts of differences between the two groups portrayed here. We simply do not know from the evidence provided. Furthermore, claiming that the AsTTle norms for all Māori students and all students serve as 'control groups' appears to be a very strange use of the term. This example did not seem to match the Cresswell definition at all and in turn, this made tables 9.1 and 9.2, pp.175-176 meaningless.

Second, the information on pp.174-176 seems to imply that the effect size was significant, yet it appears to be .24 whereas Fashola & Slavin's threshold seems to have actually been .25. Moreover, exactly what did 'perhaps twice than expected' mean, given that it did not seem to be revealed in the data presented? And note 30 at the bottom of p.176 that claims that, 'these groups of Māori students are very similar because the critieria for inclusion of the students in their category were whether their teacher was in the project or not', does not provide a sufficient explanation, for it actually raises more questions than it answers.

Third, although on p.183, ESA might well 'measure skills that are needed across many subjects' it does not necessarily measure skills that were taught across many subjects. It is very possible, for instance, that these skills were taught much more proactively in some subjects than others. Furthermore, when one examines the list of subjects of participants presented on p.55 of the Phase 3 Report, these skills were not required at Year 9 and 10 in PE or Arts at all, and probably very little in Maths, Horticulture/Agriculture, Technology, Business and Computers. As this accounts for quite a few of the teachers, what then does the data presented actually reveal? The Report also only presents data from eight schools in 2004 and six schools in 2005, not all twelve, which seems strange. The data that was collected was presumably for students across the schools, not just those who were in the classes of teachers in Te Kōtahitanga. Perhaps this is not surprising, as there is no way of distinguishing between those who had a single teacher in Te Kōtahitanga, and those who had all their teachers in Te Kōtahitanga, to quote an extreme but nevertheless relevant example. Moreover, one might well ask which of these schools were involved in other major projects such as the Literacy Project and which were not? This latter question becomes particularly important where the Te Kōtahitanga designers used data across whole student populations rather than just, for argument's sake, mathematics teachers or teachers engaged in teaching literacy skills in Te Kōtahitanga. Which project can, therefore, legitimately claim the most credit for gains? Furthermore, if in both years the non-Māori students also made considerable gains, to what extent might any of this outcome be directly attributable to Te Kōtahitanga? These doubts are heightened by the claims in this chapter that all students on average performed significantly better (pp.176-179; p.183), raising further questions about how much of the increase in performance can be directly attributed to the project.

A basic problem with the data and discussion provided in chapter 9 centres around the use of effect sizes. Much of the literature cited in the chapter is concerned with comparisons *across* groups, not *within* groups. The difficulty, however, is that effect size is a function of both the difference between means and the standard deviation. Hence, the larger the standard deviation, the smaller would be the effect size even if the mean difference is the same. To take one example here, the AsTTle mathematics data presented in Table 9.1 and Table 9.2 in chapter 9 clearly illustrates this particular problem. On this occasion, the difference between the two reported effect sizes was almost entirely due to the substantial difference in the standard deviation between the Te Kōtahitanga and non-Te Kōtahitanga groups. If the effect sizes were going to be used to compare these two groups, then the standard deviation used in the calculation needed to be 'pooled' and the gain scores evaluated against that pooled figure. When this is done, however, it becomes clear that little significance can be drawn from the data provided as to the specific impact of Te Kōtahitanga membership on AsTTle Mathematics test scores.

Moreover, the discussion section in chapter 9 seems to be based on a misinterpretation of the effect size statistic. The Te Kōtahitanga group were more similar to each other (i.e.: they had a smaller standard deviation) than was true for the non-Te Kōtahitanga group for both pre-tests and post-tests. No valid conclusions can therefore be drawn from the reported mean scores. The small differences in gain scores between the two groups are not actually significantly different from zero (effect size of 0.06). The other tables in the chapter (9.3 - 9.6) once again reveal no significant difference in the performance of Māori and non-Māori students in the participant schools. Consequently, there is no solid evidence whatsoever for the claim that Māori students in the Te Kōtahitanga participant schools are achieving in any way differently from other students.

Two related criticisms can be made of chapter 10, which presents a summary and conclusions (p.185ff). First, it must be emphasised that the claim in the last paragraph on p.185, that 'Te Kōtahitanga teachers' understanding of and appreciation for the kaupapa of the project … and the support they receive within their schools is directly related to improving Māori students' outcomes' is simply not proven, given the problems with the data discussed above. That meant that Figure 10.1 is also suspect. It should be noted that the project's designers do admit on p.183, that 'other variables may have influenced this change over time', but they then go on to claim that, 'the evidence suggests that Te Kōtahitanga contributed to this significant growth in literacy skills for Year 9-10 Māori students of teachers involved in the project' (p.183). Finally, on p.185, to reiterate the concerns raised in a number of points already made above, there seems to be a flaw in the weighting that is given to the 'effective implementers of the ETP'. It is unclear from the baseline data provided just what kind of teachers these particular individuals were *before* Te Kōtahitanga was implemented. For all we know, many of these teachers may well have always used highly discursive pedagogies, had excellent relationships with students, and been culturally aware as well, as indeed many of the teachers who responded to the questionnaire attest to (see Section Three below). Hence, claiming credit for their success may be fallacious. The point here is that we simply do not know.

In a recent and provocative article *in Education Review*, Massey University educational philosopher, John Clark, summarised many of the flaws in the assumptions made by the Te Kōtahitanga research team:

1. It was not logically possible to 'prove conclusively', especially with limited data, that teacher attitudes were indeed the key to student progress. In this respect, its designers fell into the trap of positivist verification, for empirical evidence could never prove conclusively that X (teacher attitudes) could improve Y (Māori students' outcomes).

2. If the casual chain was as described by the Te Kōtahitanga writers, then it was difficult to understand how focusing on teacher attitudes would achieve what was claimed, because the evidence suggested that teachers played only a very limited role in that chain.

3. Placing the site of intervention in the school was to excuse both government and Ministry from taking responsibility for social, economic and educational policies which impacted upon students' lives (Clark, 2007).

If one adds to these concerns the statistical anomalies conveyed in the Te Kōtahitanga data, it then becomes doubly necessary to look beyond the problems and issues raised in this first section, for these are but the visible symptoms. To understand why they occur so persistently, this review emphasises the need to probe more deeply into the underlying causes. In order to do this it needs to be appreciated that the Te Kōtahitanga project was from its outset driven by two major imperatives - one a paradigm, and the other an ideology. The paradigm is often termed school effectiveness/school improvement. Research within this paradigm views teachers and schools as the most important influences on student achievement. Hence, they rather than systems or governments are largely to blame for underachievement. The ideology is that of cultural essentialism. This views cultures as total ways of life. It therefore inexorably follows that teacher failure to understand Māori cultural aspirations is the key factor in Māori students' underachievement. Taken together, both the paradigm and the ideology endow Te Kōtahitanga with a powerful moral and political imperative that makes the project far more than simply another professional development programme, or just one further academic critique of educational policy. Two quotes from a recent publication co-edited by Te Kōtahitanga's principal designer, Professor Bishop, amply sum up its potential to attract support across a broad spectrum of political opinion:

> 1. Hence, we are convinced that if we change the environments, discourses, attitudes, positionings, and relationships within our schools, we will create the conditions under which all *groups of students* - whether identified by differences in ethnicity, gender, religious preference, socioeconomic status, or lifestyle - will achieve outcomes that are similar in range and scope to those of their peers (Shields et al 2005, p.142).
>
> 2. There has developed, in recent years, a line of research that attempts to address educational achievement gaps through changing what happens in the classroom, without attending to underlying issues of discourses and positionings. These analyses do not deal with the problem identified in our case studies, the need for policymakers and educators to address their positioning within cultural deficit theorizing, not do they deal with the overall issues of power imbalances and how

> teachers themselves often participate in the systematic marginalization of minoritised students in their own classrooms… Unless educators engage in considerations of how dominance manifests itself in the lives of minoritised students (and their families), how the dominant culture maintains control over the various aspects of education, and the part they themselves might play in perpetuating this pattern of domination, albeit unwittingly, they will not understand how they and the ways they relate to and interact with minoritised students may well affect learning (Shields et al, 2005, p.142).

Accordingly, the next section of this review examines how each of these imperatives shaped the language, theorisation, methodology, and main conclusions of Te Kōtahitanga from its beginnings to the present, severely compromising not only its research conclusions, but also its value as a professional development project.

Section Two
Location and ideology

1. Te Kōtahitanga as school effectiveness/school improvement:

A. Historical development of school effectiveness/school improvement

Te Kōtahitanga sits firmly within a powerfully resurgent international paradigm committed to educational progress through both school-level reform and teacher professional development. In recent years the terms 'school effectiveness' and 'school improvement' have often come to be used interchangeably to refer to this paradigm. Given the chequered history of mass education systems, it is perhaps not surprising that school effectiveness/school improvement has taken centre-stage in educational policymaking across the globe during the last decade. Mass compulsory education systems around the world, including in New Zealand, were originally established to prepare students for the workforce. In this context, school credentialing has historically served as a gatekeeper for entry into skilled employment and the learned professions (McKenzie, Lee and Lee 1996). In turn this has encouraged the practice of seeing schools and particularly teachers as the most important and even as the sole factor in student academic achievement to become historically well entrenched. During the late nineteenth century the so-called 'Payment by Results' scheme was a particularly pervasive bureaucratic response to this imperative. During the twentieth century schools and teachers were increasingly held accountable by educational bureaucracies and by politicians for the physical and emotional well being of students, as well as for their academic achievement (Openshaw, Lee and Lee, 1993).

Moreover, many educational progressives, in rejecting the traditional school with its restrictive curriculum and repressive discipline, came to emphasise the importance of changing teacher attitudes in the interests of students. Charles E. Silberman's influential *Crisis in the Classroom: the Re-making of American Education* (1970), and William Glasser's *Schools Without Failure* (1969) were books that fell within this tradition. Incidentally, senior New Zealand Department of Education officials cited both as they sought to review the secondary school curriculum during the early 1970s (Renwick, 1973). So too were the series of books and reports produced under the auspices of the New Zealand Post-Primary Teachers' Association, which included *Education in Change. Report of the Curriculum Review Group* (1969) and, *The Secondary School Curriculum: 3. The Challenge is Change* (1972). As reformist and radical as these publications were for their times, however, they incorporated a prophetic warning to the effect that any future educational reform should recognize

> …the school as a unit, with its approved curriculum based on its own needs, and evolved by its own staff. If we fail to secure that, we simply fall from one formalism to another, from one dung-hill of inert ideas into another' (A.N. Whitehead, 1932, cited in New Zealand Post-Primary Teachers' Association 1972).

This caution notwithstanding, the period from the late 1960s on was to witness several influential international critiques of research that focused solely on the agency of schools and teachers. In the United States publications such as James Coleman's *Equality of Educational Opportunity* (1966) and Christopher Jencks

Inequality: A reassessment of the effect of family and schooling in America (1972) were to become classics whilst in the United Kingdom, the Plowden Report, the Bullock Report, and the research findings of scholars such as Basil Bernstein, highlighted for many teachers and policymakers the relative powerlessness of the school in the face of all-pervasive socio-economic factors and home influences.

Indeed, the rapid resurgence of the current school effectiveness/school improvement paradigm from the 1980s on, with its direct political links to educational policy initiatives and its supposedly scientific emphasis on the centrality of the teacher's role in enhancing student performance in achieving state-mandated outcomes, was to have its genesis in attempts to counter the overly deterministic views of radical theorists and historians. In the United Kingdom, a major school-based research programme led by Michael Rutter was to initiate a new global wave of school effectiveness/school improvement literature. Its findings deserve careful attention, especially given that the Te Kōtahitanga programme shares many of Rutter et al's assumptions, despite the two projects being separated by three decades and half a hemisphere. Based on their research into twelve London secondary schools, Rutter et al argued that students' choices of school and the experiences they had in the classroom were central to academic achievement. In directly challenging the work of Coleman, Jencks, Bernstein and the Plowden Report, Rutter et al were endorsing a 'commonsense' view that choice of school was all-important, because institutional climate and classroom management skills were crucial to academic success and personal well-being. Student behaviour was strongly associated with the style of discipline adopted by teachers, whilst teacher expectations and standards were highly correlated to students' academic success (Rutter et al, 1979, pp.177-204). Rutter et al's results were thus held to '… carry the strong implication that schools can do much to foster good behaviour and attainments, and that even in a disadvantaged area, schools (could) be a force for the good' (Rutter et al, 1979, p.205). Not surprisingly, these conclusions were seized upon by Margaret Thatcher's newly elected Conservative Government to counter Labour claims of falling standards due to a sudden reduction in educational expenditure. Rather, it was teachers who made the difference, not increased educational or social welfare expenditure (Soler & Openshaw, 2006, p.58).

By the beginning of the twenty-first century, the United Kingdom's increasing emphasis on school performance and accountability was having an impact on other nations, both large and small (Thrupp, 2005). Meanwhile, across the Atlantic, the presidential election campaign of 2000 witnessed Republicans and Democrats calling for greater school accountability, leading to the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act through Congress and its subsequent signing off into Law by President George W. Bush. The passing of this Act resulted in the subsequent compliance of states and localities with a comprehensive system of school accountability for student performance at all educational levels (Peterson & West, 2003). More recently Thrupp has observed that in New Zealand too, there is now on the part of both government and Ministry of Education, 'a similar insistence that quality teaching and management is a more important influence on student achievement than social structures'. He also notes the new emphasis on so-called 'designer leadership', performance management for teachers, increased state intervention in failing schools, and new training programmes for principals and aspiring principals (Thrupp, 2005, p.7, p.121).

A major attraction of the school effectiveness/school improvement paradigm and the various intervention strategies it promotes has been that they allow once more for the possibility of the reformist classroom. It is this precisely this development that gives projects such as Te Kōtahitanga the powerful political legitimacy that they perhaps would not have enjoyed to the same extent say, twenty years ago. Despite the selective use of research by the Te Kōtahitanga researchers that attempts to portray school effectiveness/school improvement literature as essentially unproblematic, however, the underlying assumptions of its leading advocates have been seriously challenged. In the words of two recent critics, school effectiveness/school improvement is, 'epistemologically problematic and politically promiscuous and malleable' (Slee & Weiner, 1998, pp.2). This section of the review continues by setting out some of the reasons why this is so, with particular reference to the way these characteristics are exemplified in Te Kōtahitanga.

B. Te Kōtahitanga and current critiques of teacher effectiveness/school improvement

Some researchers (for instance, Hopkins, 2001) have attempted to distinguish between school effectiveness and school improvement on the grounds that the latter improves upon the former by adopting a 'bottom-up orientation', a qualitative research methodology, an emphasis on the dynamics of organisational processes and a concern with seeing educational outcomes as problematic. Others such as Wrigley (2004), however, have pointed to the essential similarities between the two that renders them largely indistinguishable. These similarities range from the uncritical acceptance of quantifiable outcomes, a flawed attempt to separate contextual from school factors and unquestioned adherence to an input-output model (Wrigley, 2004), to an unjustifiable preoccupation with performance management, target-setting, and managerial school leadership (Thrupp, 2005). Moreover, despite recent attempts by school effectiveness/school improvement advocates to soften the message, many intervention strategies within this tradition still continue to employ the rhetoric of educational crisis. This involves promoting the view that the teacher is an impediment to student progress and hence, a legitimate target for externally designed intervention strategies in ways that appear to reflect a profound mistrust of teachers as responsible professionals.

i. The rhetoric of educational crisis

School effectiveness research is often given currency by the often-distorted reports of the shortcomings of public education. These promote a discourse of school failure and encourage a strong sense of educational crisis. In turn this leads to the eager adoption of school effectiveness/school improvement interventions by politicians and policymakers who have publicly pledged firm action to resolve the crisis rapidly and comparatively cheaply (Slee and Weiner, 1998). Te Kōtahitanga exemplifies this former tendency very early on in the Phase 3 Report. Chapter 1 follows Smith (1997) in referring to Māori communities facing 'the twin *crises* of language demise and educational underachievement (p.7). Two pages further on we have no fewer than three references to a crisis in education for Māori: 'the general *crisis* in schooling for Māori as well' (p.9), 'a wider *crisis* in Māori education' (p.9), and a 'Māori educational *crisis* in mainstream settings' (p.9). Readers learn on p.12 that, 'in Māori medium educational settings, whanau intervene in the educational *crisis* in a way quite

different from an SES intervention'. Hence, by p.16 of the Phase 3 Report they are already well acquainted with the contention that Te Kōtahitanga will seek to 'mediate the ongoing educational *crisis* facing Māori people in mainstream education'. The news from the schools, it seems, is all bad – like the title of a recent critical chapter on historical revisionism in New Zealand – it is always winter, and never Christmas (see Butterworth 2006).

ii. Blame and redemption: surveillance and control.

The rhetoric of educational crisis serves a particular function in school effectiveness/school improvement literature. Rea and Weiner have claimed that: 'by substituting 'teacher' for 'child', school effective/school improvement literature is unashamedly redemptionist in tone, with the dual aim of saving the teacher for society and rescuing society through the teacher' (Rea and Weiner 1998, p.23). In New Zealand, the 1986 Report of the Education and Science Select Committee into the quality of teaching (the Scott Report) was an early manifestation of this trend (Education and Science Select Committee 1986). Likewise in Te Kōtahitanga, it is constantly emphasised that, 'deficit theorizing by teachers is the major impediment to Māori students' educational success' (p.32). However, redemption is held out as a possibility because, 'teachers are able to shift their discursive positions by positively and vehemently rejecting deficit theorizing as a means of explaining Māori students educational achievement levels' (p.24). Although the Phase 3 Report cites Foucault's (1972) work on dominant discourses, there is no acknowledgement of his contribution to the international literature on the creation of a culture of surveillance and control that he contends will seriously compromise professional autonomy (see for instance, Foucault, 1983). Moreover, the recent critical literature on the advent of the National Literacy Strategy in England and the increased emphasis on teacher accountability that followed in its wake graphically illustrates how the notion of teachers working 'intuitively' and being sensitive to the needs of their students has been replaced by a notion of 'best practice', through regulation and performance indicators (Soler and Openshaw, 2006). Analysis of key documents in the implementation of national literacy and numeracy strategies manifests three factors: a central concern about the behaviour of teachers in the classroom, an assumption that change was both urgent and necessary, and that it was possible to bring about change through the science and technology of teaching rather than through reflection (Coldron and Smith, 1999). The Te Kōtahitanga professional development intervention manifests similar features, albeit overlaid by a parallel and essentially incompatible discourse about the need to subvert cultural hegemony.

iii. The Politics of Reductionism

As well as having serious implications for professional autonomy, Te Kōtahitanga also has significant conceptual problems arising from its location within the school effectiveness/ improvement paradigm. As already noted, Te Kōtahitanga falls into the reductionist trap of claiming that a single factor, teacher behaviour, can be isolated through the somewhat formulaic remedy represented by the Effective Teaching Profile. The pedigree of the ETP is thus clear, for contemporary and subsequent critiques of Rutter's *Fifteen Thousand Hours* centred on the tendency of the research team towards reductionism, a process whereby complex phenomena were oversimplified to produce the 'obvious' solution to academic underachievement:

better schools and more effective teachers. In turn this led to managerial goals being substituted for a more fundamental debate about curriculum and pedagogy. Wrigley, in a critique of the tendency of many school effectiveness/school improvement researchers to fall into the trap of reductionism, argues that:

> The complex process by which economic and cultural features of the extra-school environment are carried into the school through the individual and collective consciousness of pupils, reworked by teachers' assumptions and reactions, and transformed into school cultures cannot be modelled by statistical methods which attempt to parcel out responsibility between societal, school and individual factors (Wrigley, 2004, op.232).

Despite the existence of much research indicating that teachers and schools are at best only one factor in the complex equation that equals academic failure, Rea and Weiner have pointed out that, in the United Kingdom, the main research conclusions of much school effectiveness/school improvement research, '– principally that schools can act independently of local or socio-economic contexts – are understandably popular with policymakers' (Rea & Weiner, 1998, p.22). This point has already been made in the previous section of this review, but it is worth reiterating at this point that such clear-cut findings are politically attractive precisely because they enable any inadequacies in the school system to be blamed on to poor teachers, bad leadership, and failing schools. Its relevance lies in the fact that it has become increasingly true in New Zealand as well, if recent Ministry of Education statements are anything to go by. But viewing the teacher as a panacea for complex problems that are social and political as well as educational in this way poses a particular danger in this country, given that the contemporary political context actively encourages school effectiveness/school improvement strategies promoted by the New Zealand Ministry of Education that focus almost exclusively on teacher performance.

The particular costs of uncritically accepting this view as it is currently promoted in the Te Kōtahitanga reports and its accompanying publicity were actually foreshadowed in the politics of New Zealand's 'reading wars', which provide a pertinent example of the way in which research evidence has been harnessed for expressly political purposes. For this reason it is briefly recounted here (see for instance, Openshaw, 2007). In 1996, the incoming Labour Government emphasised the evocatively named strategy of *Closing the Gaps* in order to address the perceived inequalities in New Zealand society. Given the existence of this strategy, any research suggesting that more effective teaching methods would effectively close existing gaps inevitably held a strong attraction for politicians and educators alike. Developed in the late 1990s, the similarly evocatively named *Picking up the Pace* was a professional development programme contracted by the Ministry of Education to University of Auckland academics and associated professional staff. Intended to improve the reading levels of children in low decile schools, and implemented in metropolitan South Auckland, *Pace* was designed to provide teachers with a course of in-service professional development that would support current Ministry policy initiatives (Nash, 2003; Harker, 2003).

A major contention of the *Pace* research has been that teacher expectations are largely responsible for the disparities in reading attainment between Māori and Pasifika students on one hand, and Pakeha students on the other. Despite its claims

to success, however, a number of university-based researchers have remained unconvinced. Leading literacy researchers Bill Tunmer and James Chapman have argued that whilst whole language experiences may be suitable for children with an abundance of cultural capital, phonologically-related knowledge, skills, and strategies are particularly important for some beginning readers who may not possess such advantages (Tunmer et al 2004). However, a more complex theory of inequality/difference remains politically unpalatable to whole language supporters and their allies within the New Zealand Ministry of Education, as well as to those who embrace culturalist theories to explain educational disparity. As the next section of this Review will demonstrate, many Māori academics, as part of the newly emergent middle class capitalist neo-tribal elite, have come to embrace identity politics (Rata, 2003). As already noted in this review, such ideological positioning entails emphatically rejecting 'deficit theory', along with any suggestion that there are social class factors that might militate against the supposedly unified nature of Māori experience and culture, thereby challenging their leadership (Nash, 2006).

In turn, this provides justification, not only for the maintenance and extension of whole language-based reading programmes, but also for further tightening the regime of surveillance on teachers. Until fairly recently, this would have been legitimated on the grounds that they were clearly not implementing successfully the government's policy goal of 'closing the gaps.' More recently, however, Cullen has noted that both Te Whaariki and the co-constructionist perspective, promoted by the work of Auckland University researcher Stuart McNaughton (2002), have legitimated a policy shift in the early years of this decade as 'closing the gaps' became less politically acceptable as a political slogan for addressing Māori educational underachievement due to its supposed deficit-orientation. As a result the Ministry of Education has moved to a so-called 'credit view' of minority groups. According to this 'new' politically-sanitised view, teachers are perceived to 'make a difference' by acknowledging cultural meanings and practices (Cullen, 2007 pp.112-113). The Ministry of Education's claim that 'what happens in classrooms through quality teaching and through the quality of the learning environment generated by the teacher and the students is the key variable in explaining up to 59%, or even more, of the variance in student scores' (Ministry of Education (2006, p.13), is thus given a powerful reinforcement in the form of what superficially appears to be the simple social justice of culturalism. It is therefore appropriate that it is to this ideology that the remainder of Section Two of this review now turns.

2. Te Kōtahitanga and the ideology of cultural essentialism

The first part of this section has located Te Kōtahitanga firmly within a problematic, school effectiveness/school improvement paradigm. Te Kōtahitanga designers, however, might well respond that the project more clearly embodies the left-liberal ideals of the post-modern state than might typically be claimed of most recent school effectiveness/school improvement literature. They could emphasise, for instance, the importance of developing a culturally responsive pedagogy of relations that addresses issues of power inequalities:

> From the theoretical position of Kaupapa Māori research, and an examination of appropriate Māori cultural metaphors, we suggested that this will be accomplished when educators create learning contexts within their classroom; where power is shared between self-determining individuals within non-dominating relations of

> interdependence; where culture counts; where learning is interactive, dialogic and spirals; where participants are connected to one another through the establishment of a common vision for what constitutes excellence in educational outcomes (Executive Summary, Phase 3 Report 2007, p1).

This stress on social justice, utilising indigenous cultural metaphors, serves several purposes. It provides its designers with strong political leverage. It enables them to respond effectively to the charge that Te Kōtahitanga as an intervention strategy merely shares certain less desirable features of the school effectiveness/school improvement paradigm. Moreover, given the New Zealand bicultural context they are able to incorporate recent critics of school effectiveness/school improvement. These critics seek modifications that might effectively challenge the knowledge/discourse and power effects of institutional life, thus bringing the movement more into line with contemporary educational political rhetoric. The major problem with Te Kōtahitanga, however, is that in addition to being located within a problematical research paradigm, it is also driven by an uncritical adherence to the ideology of culturalism. Te Kōtahitanga's conviction that teachers pathologise their students through failing to empathize with Māori culture, leading in turn to the low academic achievement of Māori students, is a fundamental tenet of the culturalist faith. This single-minded 'blame-the-teacher' ideologically-driven determinism unfortunately rules out genuine power-sharing between teachers and Te Kōtahitanga researchers, thus undermining professional self-determination and prohibiting the development of a common vision that might better serve the interests of students in the longer-term (see Section Three of this review).

Culturalism is, literally, the ideology of ethnic politics (Rata & Openshaw, 2006). Its supporters thus have little real room for the 'different, diverse and hybrid identities' that characterize contemporary student bodies recognized by many researchers (for instance, Lingard et al., 1998). Accordingly, the Te Kōtahitanga Phase Three Report views cultural, social, economic and political disparities as being between two distinct entities: 'the descendants of the European colonisers (pakeha) and the indigenous Māori people' (Phase 3 Report 2007, pp 7-9 passim). Culturalist supporters, including the Te Kōtahitanga writers, also tend to ignore the growing international critique of culturalist ideology (for instance: Friedman, 1994; Barry, 2001; Kuper, 2002; Nanda, 2003). Instead they treat culturalism and the educational solution that derives from it as essentially unproblematic.

In Europe, Professor Jonathan Friedman has argued that culturalism and religious fundamentalism are actually parallel movements in identity politics, sharing common characteristics (Friedman, 1994). In culturalism, ethnic identity becomes a type of sacred identity, blessed by tradition and evocative of a special destiny for those 'of the faith' (Rata & Openshaw, 2006). Practitioners of both culturalism and fundamentalism observe similar rituals and share in the use of evocative, almost mystical language to emphasise the group's transcendence of the present into a timeless continuity between past, present and future (Keesing, 1989). And as Adam Kuper has argued, the irony is that culturalism first took root in nineteenth century romantic nationalistic reactions to the Western European Enlightenment's universalist claims: hence 'culture is always defined in opposition to something else…an authentic, local way of being different that resists its enemy – globalising, material civilization' (2001, pp. 14-15).

In her critical study of current Indian responses to modernity that has much relevance for New Zealand, Meera Nanda observes that Hindu nationalists see themselves as trying to free Indians from colonialism at a mental and cultural level in order to complete the process of political and economic decolonisation (2003, p.10). Nanda sees many post-World War Two expressions of indigenous nationalism as sharing some of the characteristics of pre-war fascism. Both are particular responses to the forces unleashed by the introduction of modern industrial capitalism in societies with either weak and/or discredited liberal traditions. Both subscribe to a similar brand of mystical, antirational and holistic ideas regarding the cultural unity of their respective societies. Both have broad appeal precisely because, for the disadvantaged masses, they espouse the sacredness of natural and social orders whilst also furnishing a theoretical foundation for critical reflection on the excesses of individualist and acquisitive societies for many indigenous intellectuals (2003, p.10).

The particular notion of culture that is so fundamental to Te Kōtahitanga appears to be derived from a similar ideal. Thus, citing Quest Rapuara (1992), the Phase 3 Report asserts that:

> Culture is what holds a community together, giving a common framework of meaning. It includes how people communicate with each other, how we make decisions, how we structure our families and who we think is important. It expresses our values towards the land and time and our attitudes towards work and play, good and evil, reward and punishment (Phase 3 Report 2007, p.30).

It is noteworthy that there is no room in any of these examples, for socio-economic differences, class distinctions, differing values, or regional differences *within* a given culture. What is good for one person within a culture, is good for all. Once again, the frequently unacknowledged irony in this and similar assertions is that, in many liberal democracies, including New Zealand, this ideology of culture was originally developed by *Western* intellectuals to justify the practice of ethnic politics. In the post-war years, culturalism found its new expression in the West during the May 1968 revolt of Parisian students. This subsequently reverberated around the world, and occurs more recently still in some forms of postmodernism (Rata and Openshaw, 2006). Globally speaking, culturalism epitomises a post-1970s trend in liberal democracies whereby ethnicity has become a political category. The result has been the development of ethnicised public policies justified by appeals to the primacy of culture. The underlying assumption is that public policies based upon ethnicity are the most effective way to address the complexities of social disadvantage and to achieve fairer wealth distribution goals (Rata and Openshaw, 2006; Callister, 2007). And as we saw in Section One of this review, the Te Kōtahitanga Phase 3 Report expressly ethnicises the message of Freire's *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, asserting that the answers to Māori educational achievement rests with a kaupapa Māori analysis that is:

> … both a means of proactively promoting a Māori world-view as legitimate, authoritative in relationship to other cultures in New Zealand, and also is suggested here as a means of addressing educational disparities in New Zealand (Phase 3 Report, p.10).

Hence, 'a Māori understanding of self determination' is seen as 'a means of addressing the seemingly immutable problems of disparate achievement levels within mainstream educational institutions' (p.10). However, it has been argued (Rata and

Openshaw, 2006), that this and similar claims for cultural authenticity are often derived from culturalism, which holds that individuals within ethnicised groups can be represented only in terms of their ethnic identity. Bishop and Glynn's influential book, *Culture Counts* (1999), which introduced many of the concepts and ideas that were to shape Te Kōtahitanga, provides an early example of this view in action. The student interviews selected for inclusion in the Phase 1 Report (2003) and again in the Phase 3 Report (2007) illustrate its progressive development. In his critique of the Phase 1 Report, Nash observed that in contrast with the allegedly discrepant discourses of recalcitrant teachers, the student discourses seemed both romanticised and fragmentary. There was also no concession made to the proposition that much of the behaviour depicted and celebrated in the Report appears to reflect the impact of a powerful contemporary culturalist symbolism on modern youth.

Erich Kolig is one among several recent researchers in New Zealand who has seen the practice of cultural politics in terms of its emergence as an oppositional force to a perceived Western cultural hegemony (Kolig, 2007). In ways that clearly resonate with Nanda's study, Kolig illustrates how the assertion of Māori indigenous rights, as with similar assertions of culture elsewhere in the world, have become 'potent symbols of cultural closure difference and boundary erection'. One example lies precisely in adolescent experiences of attitude formation, which may produce consequences such as visible boundary markers that in extreme cases develop an exclusivist nature that may indicate a refusal to seek any form of rapprochement with other groups (Kolig, 2007, p.27). This particular phenomenon is actually quite well reflected in the responses of the Te Kōtahitanga student sample. These illustrate that the current New Zealand emphasis on cultural distinctiveness and difference at the expense of acknowledging commonality, and the tendency of educators in particular to iconise symbols of difference, has great appeal for young people who are already preoccupied with identity formation.

The view that there are indeed distinct, separate and compartmentalised cultures has become embraced by New Zealand policymakers to the extent that the country represents an outstanding example of the global process of ethnic politics at work (Rata and Openshaw, 2006). In a number of articles for national and international journals, Elizabeth Rata has examined the process of Māori ethnic elite emergence to the point where its continuing influence on the New Zealand state is accepted uncritically and often unconditionally. What is particularly relevant for this review is Rata's demonstration that kaupapa Māori is the intellectual expression of political and economic claims made in the interests of the neo-tribal elite, but justified in the name of oppressed Māori (Rata, 2006, p.36). Because Te Kōtahitanga constitutes such an outstanding contemporary demonstration of the ongoing political strength of Kaupapa Māori, all of its reports to date have been able to effectively bypass the complexity of factors involved in academic underachievement highlighted by the last thirty years of sociological and historical research in New Zealand and elsewhere, and instead promote a simplistic causal explanation – that of teacher failure to understand and emphasise with the culture of their Māori students leading in turn to academic underachievement. Thus:

> the usefulness of other explanations is rejected out-of-hand and subjected to the ethnic adversial 'them and us' discourse of kaupapa Māori ideology. Important research is dismissed pejoratively as 'deficit theory … contribut(ing) to Māori-pakeha inequality (Rata, 2006, p.37).

The Te Kōtahitanga Phase 3 Report clearly epitomises this particular train of thought on p.43 when it speaks of current pedagogic practices as being 'fundamentally and epistemologically racist.' It therefore follows that, 'the answers to Māori educational achievement and disparities do not lie in the mainstream, for given the experiences of the last 150 years, mainstream practices and theories have kept Māori in a subordinate position, while at the same time creating a discourse that pathologised and marginalized Māori people's lived experiences' (p.34). Counter narratives such as kaupapa Māori then, have the political power to provide alternative pedagogies that are claimed to have developed out of, 'the cultural sense-making processes of people previously marginalized by the dominance of colonial and neo-colonial education relations of power' (p.34). Anything else can be dismissed as 'traditional research', as in Table 3.1 (p.58). This adherence to kaupapa Māori views, however, creates major problems for the implementation of the project in mainstream schools. On p.15 and again on p.34 of the Phase 3 Report we are presented with a picture of 'an educational setting where students are able to participate on their own terms', but the fact is that this is not actually possible for *any* group of students, Māori or otherwise, especially if this is seen to impinge on the rights of other students. And if the answers to Māori educational underachievement do not lie in the mainstream, then where does this leave a project that claims to be all about having found the solution *in* the mainstream?

Moreover, a further consequence of the emphatic rejection of other explanations has been the closing down of debate concerning the causes of educational failure at the policy level. In New Zealand this process can be clearly seen in the way Māori MP Hone Harawira recently reacted to the release of statistics on the underachievement of Māori students. Complaining about a tendency to talk about Māori students from a deficit model in tones which echoed the sentiments of Te Kōtahitanga Phase 3 in its emphatic rejection of any cross-cutting factors such as family resources or social class, Harawira warned that 'if anyone had dared to come to my kura and talk like that I would have dropped them, then hauled them out on the road and had the police come to take them away' (NZPA Press Release, 14 March 2007; New Zealand Labour Party Press Release 2007). However, it can be argued that ruling out any explanations of Māori educational failure that focus on family resources, socio-economic conditions, or on social class in this way is attractive to the Māori elite and to many politicians precisely because it shifts critical scrutiny away from themselves and on to schools and teachers (Rata and Openshaw, 2006).

Certainly rigorous policy debate *within* education has the potential to challenge the uncritical adoption of single-cause explanations for Māori educational failure of this nature. Unfortunately however, a major barrier, and one clearly exemplified by the success of Te Kōtahitanga in gaining so much uncritical support from within the education sector, is the degree to which pakeha educational liberals themselves have come to so readily ally themselves with identity politics, thus facilitating their co-option by the very neo-liberals they claim to oppose. My own historical research into this phenomenon has revealed that a cumulative process somewhat analogous to Christian evangelism first occurred amongst New Zealand educators in the late 1960s. During the next two decades this was actively facilitated by culturally 'authentic' collective experiences, involving a mixture of individual conscientisation, collective experiences such as marae visits, together with constant mentoring by already committed culturalists to avoid individual slippage (Openshaw, 2006). An

analogous process can be seen at work, albeit in a more intensive, concentrated form in the Te Kōtahitanga Phase 3 Report. Here we are told that:

> Changing teachers explanations and practices (theoretical repositioning within discourse) about what impacts on Māori students' learning involves providing teachers with the opportunity to challenge their own deficit theorizing about Māori students (and their communities) through real and vicarious means in non-confrontational ways. It is a fundamental understanding to this project that until teachers consider how the dominant culture maintains control over the various aspects of education, and the part they themselves might play in perpetuating this pattern of domination, albeit unwittingly, they will not understand how dominance manifests itself in the lives of Māori students (and their communities) and how the way they relate to and interact with Māori students may well be affecting learning in their classroom. Therefore, the professional development devised by the researchers includes a means whereby teachers' thinking can be challenged, albeit in a supported way (Phase Three Report 2007, p.37).

In order to challenge teachers' thinking 'albeit in a supported way', there is embodied in the Te Kōtahitanga Phase 3 Report's professional development implementation strategy a carefully sequenced Effective Teaching Profile implementation ranging from an Induction Hui, to one-on-one, and sometimes two-on-one, co-construction sessions (see chapters two and five). The direction that teachers must move in response to this strategy is clear from the frequently emotive and over-generalised phrasing of the Phase 3 Report. On p.27, the Te Kōtahitanga team claim that 'we were told, time and again… that negative, deficit thinking on the part of teachers was fundamental to the development of negative relations', and on the same page that students saw, 'negative relations being an assault on their very identity as Māori people'. On the very next page we learn that 'in many ways, it is a sad irony for Māori people living in modern New Zealand that Māori haka is used in international sports clashes to signal defiance and self-determination, whereas when Māori students display their aspirations for self-determination in a defiant manner at school, they are punished rather than understood' (p.28).

If all this is indeed true, then stern measures can be made to seem entirely justified. These 'stern measures' are exemplified in the Phase 3 Report's description of how a *treatment integrity procedure* was introduced in term 3 of 2004, focusing specifically on the feedback provided following observation and co-construction sessions (chapter 5, p.86; p.88). The Te Kōtahitanga designers observe that, 'although teachers might say and write positive feedback themselves in the appropriate space on the observation sheet, they might well be *thinking* (italics mine), quite differently (p.110). This significant discovery obviously leaves room for a further tightening up of existing Te Kōtahitanga indoctrination procedures designed to apply further pressure on reluctant teachers to fall into line with the project's culturalist ideology, especially because, on many of the taped feedback sessions 'deficit theorising about Māori students was still evident on many of the tapes and there is a clear need to take care of how we respond to it' (p.110). These revelations concerning the place of facilitators in treatment integrity also raises the question of whether all of them have received the necessary training for such a highly sensitive role. One is hardly encouraged by the way the Report dismisses resistance from teachers as symptomatic of their being deficient in some way, or even racist. Apart from the obvious retort, several cautions should be issued here. Facilitators may not understand a particular teacher's subject context. Resistant teachers may well have identified the flaws in the Te Kōtahitanga model itself. And why should there be

something suspect in teachers and facilitators spending time focussing, 'on discourses of relationships and interactions with *all* students' (p.111)? Is this not what successful teaching is all about, even if it runs counter to culturalist ideology? And given that this *is* mainstream schooling, anything less is likely to provoke a public outcry.

Given the strength of culturalist orthodoxy in some teacher education circles and among education policy making officials, any public criticism from teachers regarding this type of bullying is likely to be withheld, or even silenced. Those who persist may well be accused of being outdated, culturally insensitive, or racist. They may also find their career paths restricted, or simply not be appointed to positions for which they might otherwise be, well suited (see section three). Even so, Te Kōtahitanga's supporters might still want to argue that *the ends,* schools experiencing improved learning outcomes for Māori students because of strengthened relationships between teachers and students resulting in increased student engagement with learning (Phase 3 Report 2007, p.243), *justify the means*. The international evidence, however, is against this. In *Culture and Equality*, British researcher, Brian Barry, observes that this process in contemporary Western Europe carries costs in that the anti-liberal and anti-universal rhetoric of multiculturalists is not uncongenial to the reactionary right as a strategy because, 'diverting attention away from shared disadvantages such as unemployment, poverty, low-quality housing and inadequate public services is an obvious long-term anti-egalitarian objective' (Barry, 2001, pp.11-12). And in her study of Hindu nationalism, Nanda concludes that India is not unique either because, 'this insulation of traditional values from rationalisation and secularisation, while traditional economies are falling apart, is the root of all reactionary modernisms' (2003, p.262).

Moreover in New Zealand, as Nash's critique of Te Kōtahitanga illustrates, the dominance of culturalism serves the interests of ethnic politics - thus it contributes more to the maintenance of ethnic boundaries than it does to any material improvement amongst the disadvantaged (Nash, 2006). Rather, Nash makes a plea for the tools of theory and method to be used in the service of *explaining* social disparities in education, rather than serving as objects of struggle in a political contest. This includes the rules of conduct for empirical evidence and logical argument, because:

> the transformation of the social order can only be achieved through actions directed at its effective mechanisms and it is for that reason that a realist sociology is imperative. To misrepresent the nature of the social world is, in fact, to deny oneself the opportunity to change it (Nash, 2006, p.169).

Nash's work (see section two) shows how culturalist educators actually hold that 'the criterion of an acceptable theory is not its correspondence with the nature of the world, but its possible political consequences'. With reference to Māori failure in New Zealand education, Nash argued that 'many writers involved in the development of Māori education take for granted that cultural theory alone explains the causes of educational disparities and make no attempt to examine its empirical or theoretical foundations' (Nash, 2006, p.169). Moreover, Paul Callister in a recent (2007) publication has been the latest in a growing number of researchers to highlight the serious methodological issues involved in attempting to determine ethnic-based disadvantage in New Zealand. With particular reference to Māori, Callister points to

the difficulty of defining exactly who belongs to a given ethnic group, the complexities involved in the measurement of ethnic-based disparities, the elusive causes of disadvantage, and the problems of determining exactly what goal is to be achieved (pp.15-46). Callister concludes that ethnic-based special measures have the greatest chance of being accepted by the public and ultimately reducing disadvantage if:

1. the justification is well thought out and clearly articulated.
2. there is an adequate level of public acceptance for the justifications provided
3. the target group can be transparently and clearly defined
4. membership of the target group is a very strong predictor of disadvantage
5. evidence exists that the special measures can be implemented effectively
6. the effects of the special measures are monitored carefully; and
7. a means of determining when the special measures are no longer needed exists or specific time limits are put on the measures (2007, p.100).

On nearly all these counts, Te Kōtahitanga, driven as it is by the ideology of culturalism, falls far short of the ideal. Worse, its claims can never be falsified, for if the predicted results are not achieved by a particular school or by a specific target teacher, then it can always be claimed that, unwittingly or even wilfully, the ideals of Te Kōtahitanga were not fully implemented. This ideology of culturalism thus drives the project to the extent that it becomes a faith to be followed unquestioningly and completely by teachers, rather than a research-based programme to be critically assessed and then modified, where appropriate.

Section Three
Te Kōtahitanga as professional development
The teacher questionnaire responses

The previous section of this review examined Te Kōtahitanga's location both within the teacher effectiveness/school improvement paradigm, and as an expression of culturalist ideology. Te Kōtahitanga, however, is also an outstanding example of an initially relatively modest research project involving a limited number of participants being subsequently translated into a large-scale professional development programme that ultimately came to involve 12 participating schools, more than 3,200 students, and 422 active teacher participants by the end of 2005 (Phase 3 Report 2007, p.52). This process in itself raises significant ethical issues. Moreover, the ultimate success of Te Kōtahitanga will be determined by its perceived worth as a professional development (PD) programme by teachers themselves. Here it is worth bearing in mind when reading this section the frequently cited warning of the late C.E. Beeby. Beeby, perhaps the nation's most respected senior educational administrator, argued that 'qualitative changes in classroom practice will occur only when the teachers understand them, feel secure with them, and accept them as their own' (Beeby, 1979).

For all these reasons it is vital that any independent review consider the extent to which Te Kōtahitanga has been able to gain the understanding and acceptance of the very teachers charged with implementing its ideals and practices. The 30-question survey carried out by PPTA in April/May 2007 consisted of seven sections:

A. Professional development questions (questions 1 – 8; 9a and b)

B. The main theories and beliefs underpinning Te Kōtahitanga (questions 10a, b, c and d; 11a and b; 12-13)

C. Processes of Te Kōtahitanga (questions 14a, b, c and d; 15a and b; 16a and b; 17a and b).

D. The ways in which Te Kōtahitanga has directly influenced you and your students (questions 18 – 26).

E. Resourcing (questions 27a and b; 28-29).

F. Further comments (question 30).

In addition, a final section (G) asked for demographic information from respondents.

Approximately 1,000 questionnaires were sent out, and 308 responses were received. These included 225 responses from teachers currently participating in Te Kōtahitanga, 39 teachers who were no longer participants, and 39 teachers who were never participants. (5 of the 8 principals who responded to the survey did not answer this question.) Ex-participants and non-participants were asked to answer only some of the questions (see questionnaire in Appendix A).

The response rate was relatively high for a survey of this nature, suggesting that teachers strongly desired to express their professional opinion on the various aspects of such a highly visible PD programme as Te Kōtahitanga undoubtedly has been. Whilst not all respondents answered every question, the information received was informative. Nearly all school subjects were represented in the responses, with the largest numbers coming from English (52), mathematics (38), science (32), and technology (23). Those aged 50-54 constituted the largest single age cohort, followed by those aged 55-59 and 44-50 respectively. The overwhelming majority of respondents classified themselves as European New Zealanders (209), with 14 describing themselves as Māori, and 45 as 'other'. In addition some respondents ticked more than one ethnicity, 11 adding 'Māori' and 8 also describing themselves as 'New Zealander'. The gender breakdown was 182 female and 96 male. When asked about their current position in the school, 110 described themselves as classroom teachers, 127 middle managers (HOD, teachers in charge of subjects), 34 deans or guidance counsellors, 22 principals or deputy/assistant principals, and 15 specialist teachers (SCTs, RTLBs or special needs teachers).

In the interests of ensuring confidentiality, each response was allocated a number and this number has been used when citing responses from individuals. As a further precaution, any words or phases that might identify respondents, including references to individual schools or to geographical location, have been deleted from the comments reproduced in the review, where possible. For similar reasons, no respondent has been identified by professional position where the numbers involved are sufficiently small to risk identification (i.e. facilitators, principals).

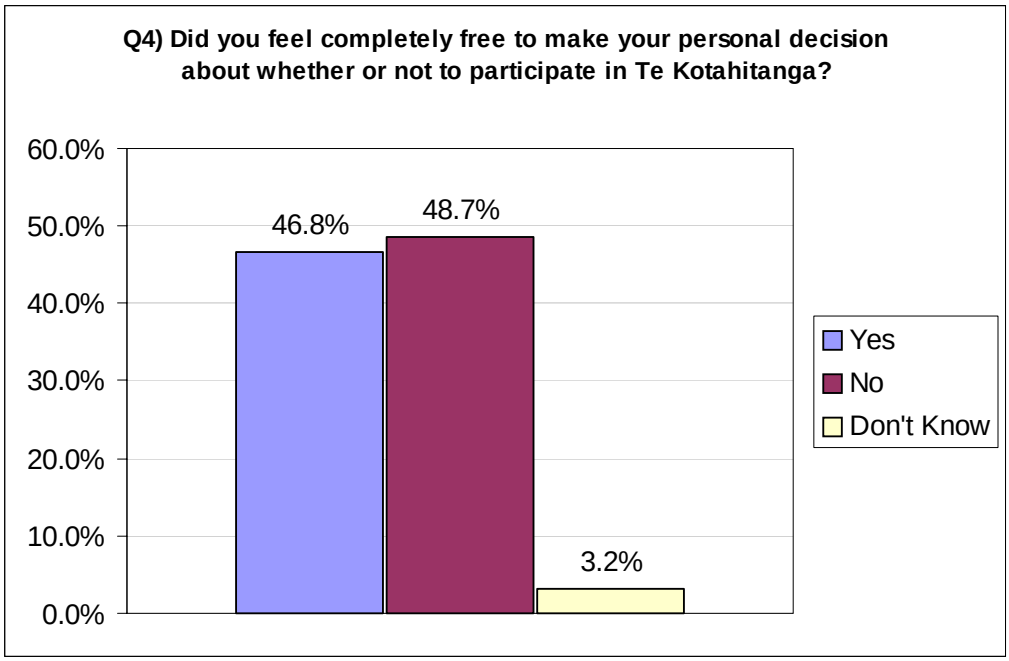
The 308 responses received present a decidedly mixed picture of Te Kōtahitanga's overall impact on schools, teachers and students. Whilst neither the selected statistical information reproduced in this review, nor the choice of quotations from the responses that appear below, can provide a complete picture of views from participating schools, they nevertheless reveal a number of extremely disturbing features that, taken together, raise serious issues for those who must consider the degree of endorsement PPTA should give to this PD programme.

The questionnaire is reproduced in this review as Appendix A. The discussion that follows provides a qualitative analysis of the responses, but in addition makes use of selected quantitative data from the returns. For ease of reading percentages cited in text are rounded percentages. Accompanying graphs provide exact totals.

1. Professional development questions

Given that it is now an almost universal ethical requirement in New Zealand for researchers to ensure that participants are given the choice of informed consent and, even more importantly, the chance to opt out without prejudice if they so desire, the responses to questions 1 through 9 were alarming. These questions invited teachers to comment on whether they felt completely free to make a decision about participation in the programme, and about 'opting out' if they subsequently wished to do so. A considerable number of teachers, nearly 49% of respondents, reported that they had not felt completely free to make a personal decision about whether or not to participate in Te Kōtahitanga. Of these 17% said that they had experienced some degree of bullying, 29% said that it was an expected part of having a job in their

school, and 7% said that it was an employment condition or it was 'contractual'. Only 47% of respondents said that they had felt completely free to make a personal decision about participation.

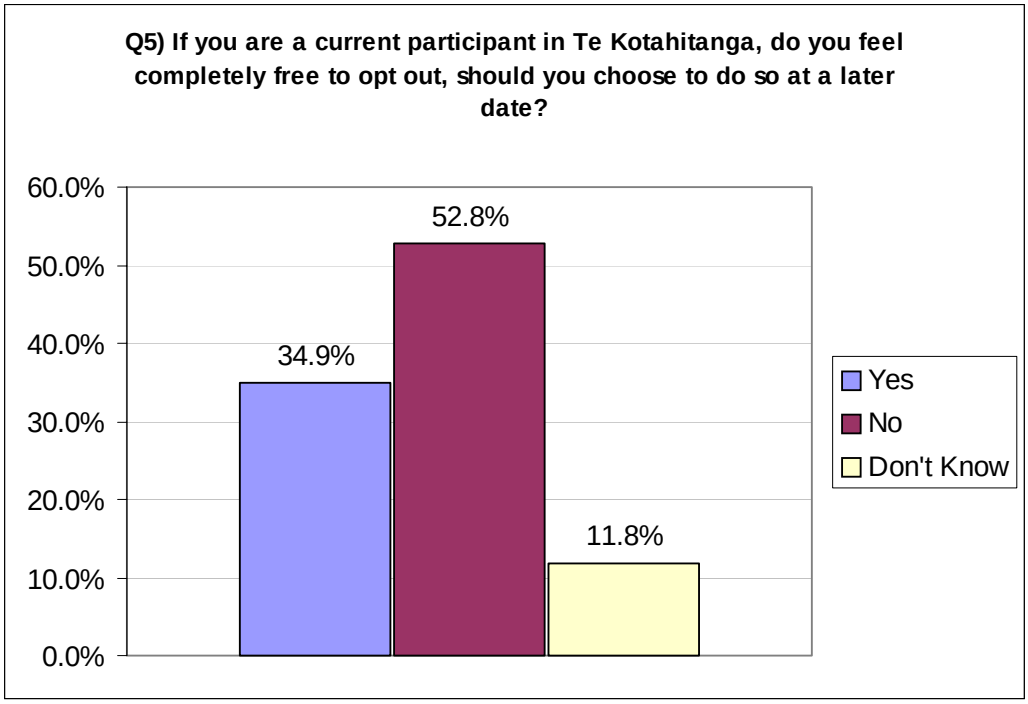


This result tended to confirm the pressure being placed on teachers as a direct result of Te Kōtahitanga's implementation. This is either actively facilitated by the ideological dynamics of the programme itself, or by the internal politics of participating schools. Whilst some respondents such as R0155 claimed that '*there was no pressure – whole staff opted in*,' and R0177 spoke of '*a wave of enthusiasm from staff'*, the pressure to 'opt in' to Te Kōtahitanga at participating schools was starkly revealed in many of the questionnaires returned. The majority of respondents complained of being subjected to both formal and informal pressures to join. Some actively resisted this. R0215 complained of pressure on two occasions '*in which the TK staff member's manner and attitude amounted to bullying*'. R0023 revealed feeling '*harassed and almost bullied into taking part, which only made my decision not to participate stronger'.*

Others, however, felt unable to resist pressures placed upon them either by the principal, or senior management. There were numerous comments similar to that revealed by R0013 who claimed that there was '*continual pressure from principal to participate*'. The penalties for not 'opting in' could be dire. R006 reported '*this year it was forced through coercion and threatening. People lost MMAs* (salary allowances) *when they didn't opt in*'. New teachers were particularly vulnerable to pressure applied before they had signed their contracts. R0052 recalled being '*told at the job interview, so guess I had the option not to take the job*'. Another respondent, R0012, observed that '*when I got the job I was told TK was part of the agreement*'. A new teacher (R0018) related that '*it was part of 1st year teacher requirement. Told I had to do it, and I'm not one to rock the boat*'. R0014 recalled being '*told as a new teacher it was expected, and wasn't given opportunity to give it up since*'. For those already in

teaching positions at participating schools, pressure to 'opt in' was continuously applied. R0185 revealed that '*I declined participating for two years but felt pressured into it by senior management during my appraisal*'. R0159 '*felt it was incumbent on me, as member of middle management, to participate*'. At one school '*staff who did not opt in received written letters from principal expressing principals concern*'. R0216 was '*told personally by my principal that there was no reason not to as once a month the whole staff have to do TK PD*'. This respondent also '*felt psychologically manipulated and compelled to comply if I wanted a good referees report when applying for a school*'.

Opting out proved to be even more problematic for the many teachers who availed themselves of the opportunity to comment on this question, with considerably more respondents (52.8%) claiming that they did not feel completely free to opt out of Te Kōtahitanga than those who did (34.9%). This was even though they had originally joined the programme under the impression that they would be able to exercise their own professional judgement in making a choice.



Only a minority of respondents seemed happy with this situation. R0072 argued that '*this has become our school wide PD - a very important and right decision',* adding that whilst teachers were free to opt out *'as a professional it would be a negative reaction*'. Most respondents, however, seem to have experienced varying degrees of pressure to remain involved, regardless of what their personal feelings may have been. For some this pressure was subtle, because of 'school commitments' (cf: R0067:'*are you a team player or not!!!*)'. R006, who subsequently opted out, was '*asked to sign a form not to share my learning with non-TK members*', surely an odd request given that the Te Kōtahitanga writers would like to see the programme expanded further. R0052 recalled:

… teachers in the early stages of their PD made the comment that if you didn't join TK that you were 'anti-Māori' – which was clearly not the case. Although at the time I put this down to a little over-zealousness on their part, in dept meetings where we share and discuss our practices, some who had TK classes made the statement that they had signed some 'confidentiality' document and were not permitted to discuss their TK classes with 'non-TK teachers', this of course was a little alarming in a department that is inclusive and encourages a democratic dialogue.

Others, however, faced more direct pressure. R005 revealed that '*it is difficult to opt out (because) Principal/management seem to enforce compulsory participation*', leading to the worry that '*if I opt out, I will be punished*'. R0029 observed that the '*principal has made opting out difficult and suggested measures which are unappealing*'. R0032 claimed to '*have heard that many staff who wanted to opt out were pressured not to do so. The effect on staff who wanted to leave the programme was very stressful and I and other colleagues could only morally support them*.'

Of particular concern for the reviewer was the testimony of teachers to the effect that sanctions were routinely applied as part of school disciplinary structures. R0088 claimed that:

Staff members who have opted out of doing TK or have withdrawn are 'unofficially' blacklisted, made to feel ineffective and often have their job descriptions questioned.

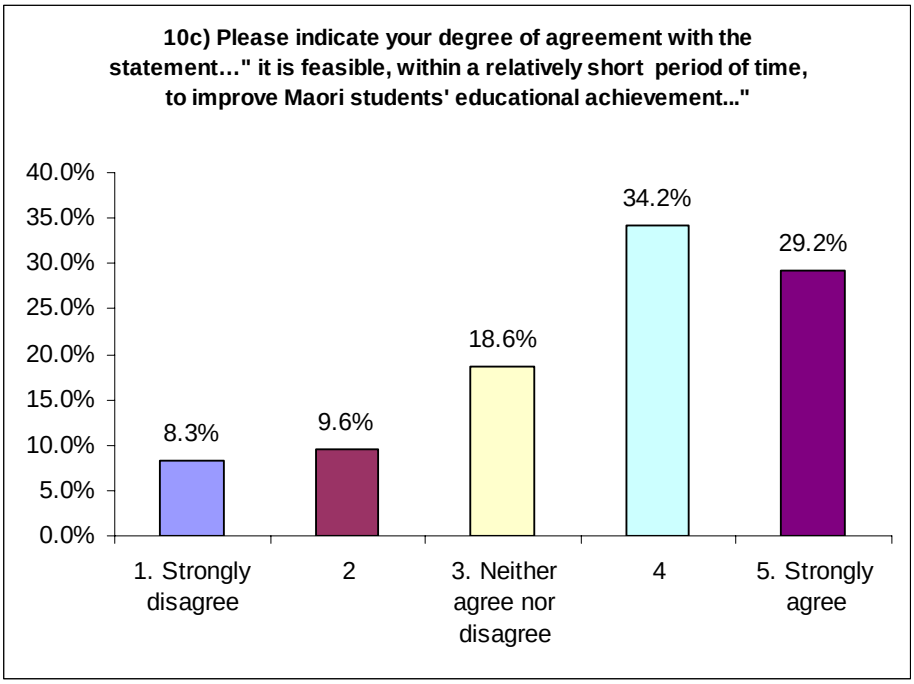
Such stand-over tactics may seem unbelievable in the New Zealand of the early 21st century, yet an individual who is no longer teaching confirmed their impact, providing independent testimony to the effect that they were now '*actively looking elsewhere for employment, yet have suffered such blows to my confidence, reputation and career that already…I struggle to frame an application*'. Perhaps the intense pressure applied so frequently to those who display reluctance or wish to question any aspect of Te Kōtahitanga can only be adequately explained in terms of the quasi-religious zeal a number of commentators have attributed to those wholly committed to culturalist ideology (see review section two). As well as being a significant ethical issue related to the research project – PD translation process, there is a considerable irony in the fact that much is made in the Te Kōtahitanga Phase 3 Report about the need for teachers to share their power with others in order to better understand the world of the others and those 'othered' by power differentials (p.25 passim). Clearly, many of the responses to this part of the questionnaire suggest that it is teachers who are being 'othered'.

To reiterate, the intense pressure many staff felt to join Te Kōtahitanga and to remain participants in the programme whatever their personal and professional feelings were, in the reviewer's mind, the most cogent responses of all those received. It should be emphasised that the degree of compulsion demanded and the penalties that are not only threatened but in many cases actually implemented, are totally unacceptable in a society that numbers 'freedom of choice' and 'informed consent' among its core values, especially where participation in research projects is involved. What is highlighted here is the ethical ambivalence involved when a research project is translated into a 'whole school' PD programme upon which professional reputations are then staked. It also hardly needs emphasising that this situation does

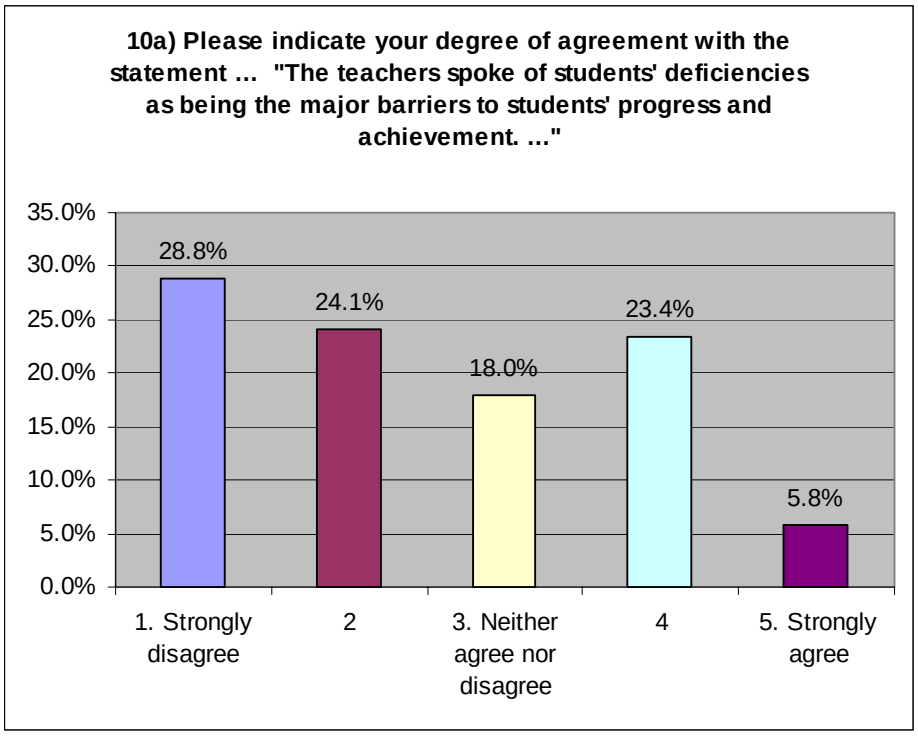
not augur well for an initiative that must ultimately carry teachers along with it willingly if it is to succeed.

2. The main theories and beliefs underpinning Te Kōtahitanga

The responses to these questions, all of which invited respondents to examine the major claims of the Te Kōtahitanga project, furnished a decidedly mixed result. In part this may be due to the fact that respondents were strongly supportive of the overall goal of Te Kōtahitanga to dramatically improve Māori student performance, and also receptive to teaching strategies that might assist the classroom teacher in realising this goal. On one hand, for instance, the degree of agreement with the key Te Kōtahitanga assertion that 'it is feasible, within a relatively short period of time, to improve Māori student's achievement', was relatively high. This is illustrated below:



The same was true to a lesser extent of question 10d, which reproduced the Te Kōtahitanga proposition that a '… major influence lies in the minds and actions of their teachers' – with 53% either agreeing or strongly agreeing. However, the responses to 10a and 10b strongly militate against the conclusion that teachers have accepted uncritically, the major messages of this programme. Question 10a focused on the alleged tendency of teachers to identify student's deficiencies as a major impediment to progress. Some 53% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this assertion. Similarly, the Te Kōtahitanga proposition that structural issues in mainstream schools such as timetabling, expulsions/suspensions and other management issues limited Māori achievement in mainstream schools was rejected by 55% of respondents. (Note: All respondents were asked to answer Q.10, and the data given here includes the full sample. A later analysis of the sub-sample of current and previous participants, but eliminating those who had never participated, made only minor differences to the pattern of responses.)



The mixed responses to this section of the questionnaire were even more noticeable in the comments provided by respondents. On the issue of whether teachers' discourses tended to focus on student deficiencies (question 10a), many felt the assertion to be both untrue and unfair. R0106 claimed that '*this view has never been held in this school. I don't know anyone in teaching who holds this view. This school has always had high expectations/hopes for its students*'. R0104 asserted that '*I have not heard staff put down Māori students for language or for economic reasons. Lack of attendance, lack of work, lack of a pen maybe, but it is always specific to a student never a broad sweeping statement*'. RO159 felt that Te Kōtahitanga was furnishing a highly distorted picture - '*I've worked in five different …schools and feel that this description would only apply to a very small minority of teachers*'. This respondent believed, '*it has gotten better, and 90 per cent of teachers coming out of NZ teaching schools don't notice race as being of importance*'. Other respondents, however, felt the assertion at least served as a useful counter to an otherwise overly pessimistic view of Māori students, their capabilities, and what committed teachers could actually achieve. R0021 agreed that *'many teachers put low expectations on Māori*'. R0023, however, felt that, *'perhaps some Māori students are disadvantaged because of a lack of home support, but that is just one factor*'.

Regarding the Te Kōtahitanga claim that structural issues limited the achievement of Māori students (question 10b), most teachers felt that structural issues could be a problem, but that they impacted upon all students regardless of race and culture, with Māori not necessarily any more disadvantaged. R0087, for instance, believed that '*these issues affect all students. Many Māori are high achievers*'. R0074 claimed that '*I personally do not feel that the structural issues affect Māori students any more than Non-Māori*'. A few, like R0142. felt that '*the teaching 'system' is a white-middle class English system. It has taken much time for changes to occur in the system',* adding

that*, 'Unfortunately it is the teacher's practice that is to change rather than the 'system' or curriculum*'.

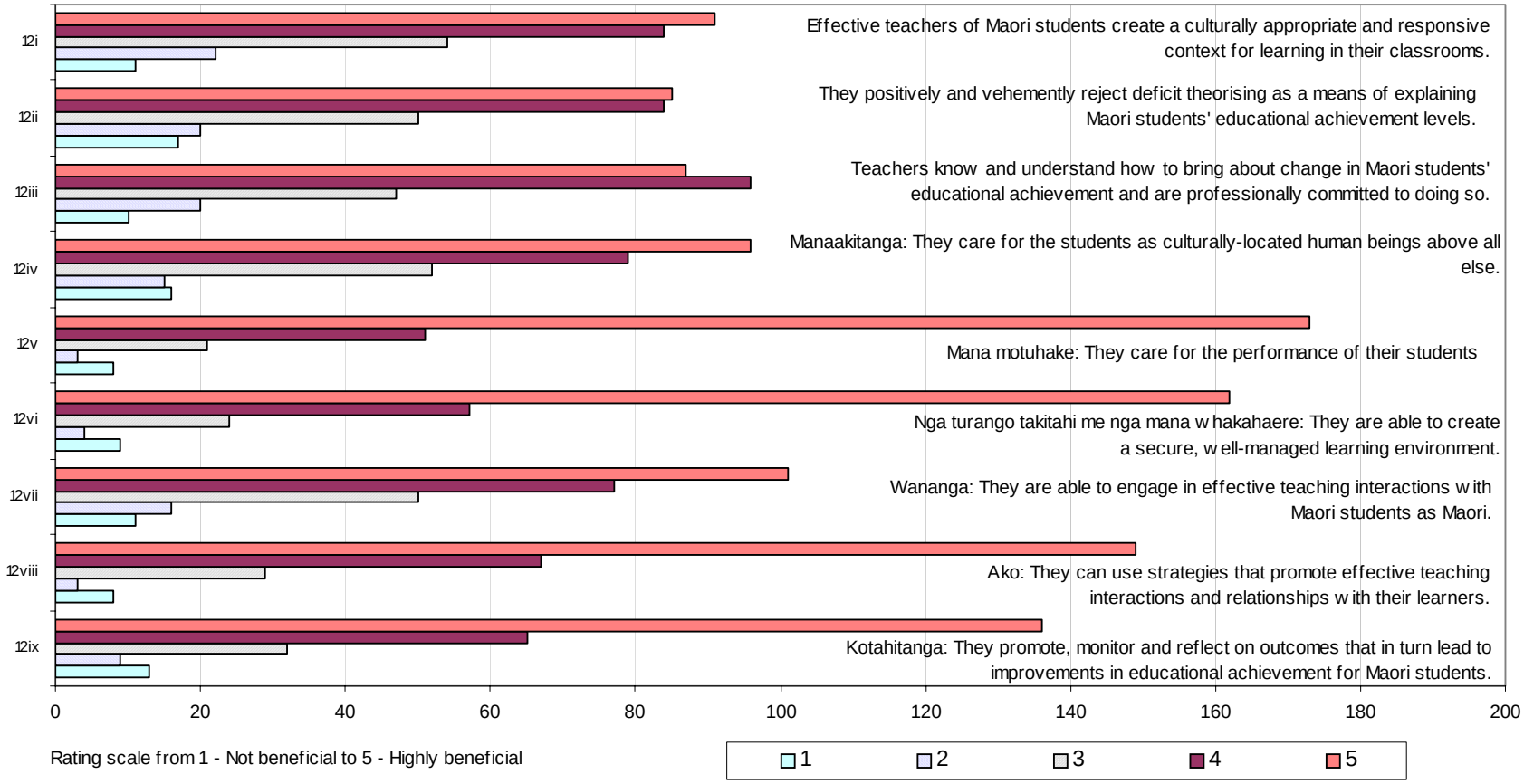
Despite general agreement with the claim that it was feasible, within a relatively short period of time to improve Māori student's educational achievement (Question 10c), the relatively sparse nature of the comments received perhaps reflected either a desire to withhold judgement until Te Kōtahitanga had run for longer, or conceivably some unease regarding the way available data had been represented to staff. Of those who did respond, R0131 was relatively representative in arguing that '*it is important to note that what works for Māori as Māori works for other ethnic groups too. Relationships are key and this includes acknowledgement of, and action on, the fact that individuals are culturally located*'.

On the contention that the major influence on Māori students' achievement lay in the minds and actions of their teachers, many teachers clearly felt themselves to be the hapless victims of finger-pointing and blame. Two responses here were fairly typical of reactions. R0150 retorted '*I don't subscribe to this theory*'. R0128 simply exclaimed '*What an insulting statement to make of any teacher worth their salt*'.

The returns from question 11, which supplied quotations from the Ministry of Education Annual Schools Sector Reports affirming the key contentions of Te Kōtahitanga likewise attracted much critical commentary. On the contention that teachers deficit thinking was a key impediment to improving classroom pedagogy, R0029 believed it to be '… *an offensive, racist and anti-teacher statement*'. R0188 asserted that '*I can never remember thinking 'she can't succeed because she's Māori!!*''. A minority, however, were more conciliatory. R0177 conceded that, '*It is a painful acknowledgement to make as a professional, that there may have been excuse-making (deficit theorising) as I think I didn't. But to move from here and find what can be changed must make a better environment for learning'*. R0167 felt that '… *any PD that focuses on teaching practice will help improve the teaching experience for students and teacher*'.

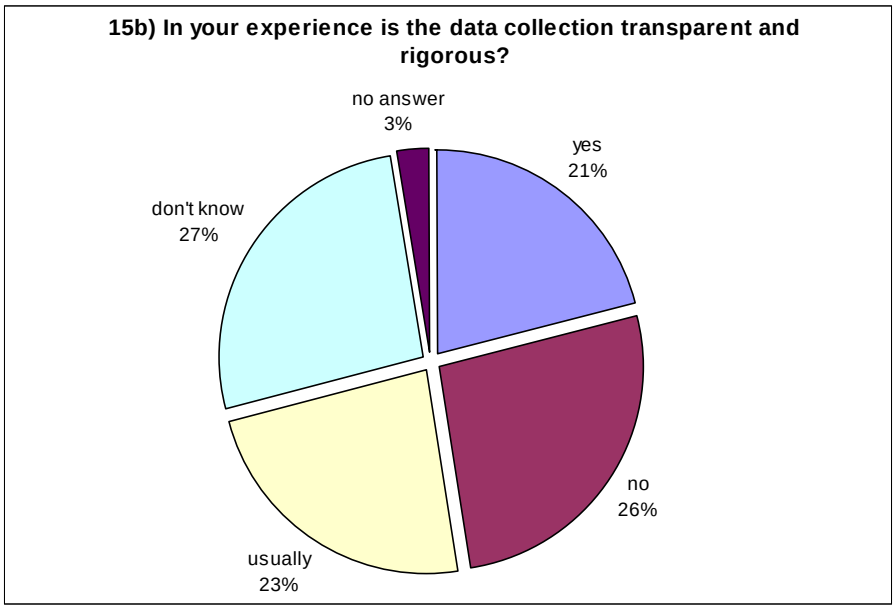
Conversely, the questions dealing with the ETP attracted some of the most favourable responses of all to the overall Te Kōtahitanga professional development programme. All nine parts of question 12, which asked teachers to rate various aspects of the ETP (see Appendix A), saw a large majority of respondents agreeing that the ETP had been either beneficial or highly beneficial (see graph on next page). At first glance these results appear discrepant when compared with the more critical responses received to some other sections of the questionnaire, such as those dealing with participation and the major propositions of Te Kōtahitanga. Arguably perhaps, the responses simply confirm the value of intensive one-on-one professional development for teachers, both in terms of helping to break down professional isolation, encouraging good teamwork, and providing effective teaching strategies. This conclusion is supported by the fact that out of 269 responses to Question 12, about 17% commented that the ETP should apply to <u>all</u> students rather than just Māori students, whilst a further 12% observed that the model was not original to Te Kōtahitanga, and that teachers either had been, or should be, practising in this way. A further 3% of respondents commented on, or objected to, the exclusively Māori focus of the ETP.

12) How beneficial to your teaching have you found each of the elements of the Effective Teaching Profile?



3. Processes of Te Kōtahitanga

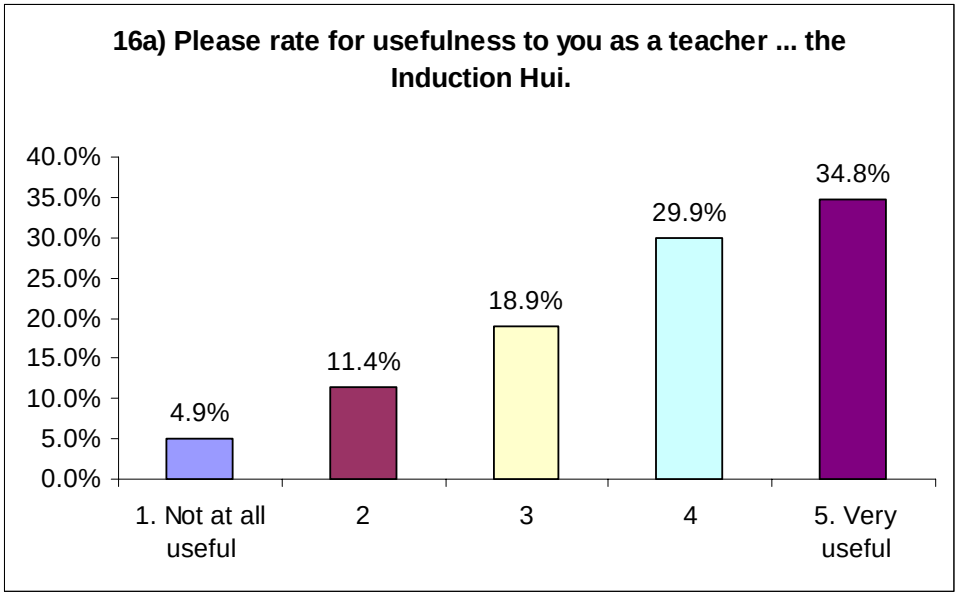
The responses to questions 15a and b in this section, regarding the quality and relevance of the student data collected for Te Kotahitanga, strongly indicate that many teachers remain sceptical of the project's claims to have provided robust evidence of major shifts in student achievement as a result of the programme. Only 21% of respondents believed that the data collection was always transparent and rigorous, and 26% were of the view that it was not.



Many comments echoed this concern. R0216 observed that '… *suitable control groups have not been set up. This could have been done by half the school (both teachers and students) not doing Te Kōtahitanga and then comparing each group's results'*. R0221 felt that the data was not rigorously collected and believed that it may have been '… *filtered' to ensure more funding. Statistically the data shown to our staff did not stand up. Did not feel it was rigorous or transparent*'. R0218, who made an initial decision not to participate in Te Kōtahitanga, went further, claiming that the programme's methodology '*would have been laughed out of court if it was put up to serious scrutiny*'. For instance '*numeracy results* (were) *disguised by the use of unit standards and Asstle measured only the number strand of maths and was hugely targeted at the expense of other areas*'. Perhaps the natural enthusiasm of the Te Kōtahitanga team to represent the project in a favourable light may also have played an unwitting role in this process. R0206 recalled being told indirectly that one of the Te Kōtahitanga team had admitted that '*we will take any data that backs the project*'. R0190 believed that '*much of the information I am asked to provide is so open to interpretation that it is difficult to take any of the statistics seriously*'. R0082 felt that '*the statistics are manipulated to meet the desired outcomes of the programme*'. R0034 alleged that '*there have been specific attempts (bribes) to TK students to improve figures such as attendance when other groups in the school have not received such incentives'*. A number of teacher comments were similar to those of R0019, who warned that '*TK is swift to interpret any success as proof of its own interventionist value when that is not the case: e.g. there have been some very good*

and successful interventions carried out at this school that have been the work of people not in TK'. It should be emphasised that these often sceptical views of teachers are broadly in line with the observations and criticisms that appear in both the previous sections of this review. When all these are taken together, they strongly indicate that the Te Kōtahitanga designers in the future will need to be much more professionally rigorous in collecting data for the project, and far more transparent when presenting results to teachers.

As with the ETP, however, the various components of the PD programme came in for some favourable comments from respondents (participants and ex-participants only). This was particularly true of the induction hui, which was evidently enjoyed by the teachers who attended and highly rated for usefulness by 65% of respondents.



R0028 felt that it was a '*feel good event - supportive of teachers and a bit of fun'*. R0029 likewise expressed considerable satisfaction with the hui, saying that '*this was the best bit ever!! It rocked!! We should do this every year - everyone should*! R0053 thought the hui to be '*excellent value because it was very interesting, was well run and well organised, well resourced and got all the teaching staff involved*'. Some teachers, however, thought that better time management was an issue. R0035 believed that the hui '*was rather longwinded - it could have managed the time better. Some content exercises were unnecessary; some were excellent*'. A minority of teachers were less impressed. R0076 complained that '*there are far more constructive things I can do with my time*'. A few, such as R0077, found the hui, '*threatening and uncomfortable*'.

The co-construction meetings were highly rated for usefulness by a lower percentage some 50% of respondents. R0137 thought them an '*excellent idea - best part of TK*'. Much seems to have depended on the composition of meetings. Thus R0178 explained that '*we were grouped according to who was in our target class and this was hugely beneficial where other teachers were teaching the same students and trying other strategies or know more info about the students that would be very useful for all to know*'. R0204, however, reported that co-construction meetings were

'currently organised into groups by TK facilitators without choice.' The result was that *'often meetings become laboursome if there is a staff member involved who doesn't really want to be present'*. R0145 was even less impressed, arguing that they were, '*just a big gossip session - very few practical outcomes*'. R0089 also remained unconvinced of their value, arguing that there was '*nothing new under the sun. Give it a new and trendy name and promote it as something 'revelationary' - it's not*'.

Facilitators attracted a mixed range of comments from teachers, with most (65%) rating them highly for credibility. R0196 found the facilitator to be '*very committed and easy to talk to*'. Likewise, R0204 reported that the facilitator was '*well trained, passionate, 'walks-the-talk'. Open and honest about realities of programme and my individual work within TK'*. R0210 was pleased because '*I have been encouraged and uplifted and my teaching has benefited*'. A perceived lack of classroom experience, however, was a problem in maintaining facilitator credibility with some teachers. Thus R0188 observed that the facilitator was a '*nice person and fluent Māori speaker but at the beginning of the year had no experience of classroom teaching situations*'. R0033 thought that it '*does depend on the person being used to do the observation. I have had a very negative experience but the rest has been both positive and useful*'.

Others, however, had rather less positive experiences. Much seems to have depended on which subject was involved, with specialist teachers in science and mathematics encountering rather more problems than others. Thus R0206 related that*, 'I got sick and tired of being told how 'brilliant' they were at teaching and told me how I should teach science (content). They were a music teacher'.* R0213 was particularly incensed, complaining that:

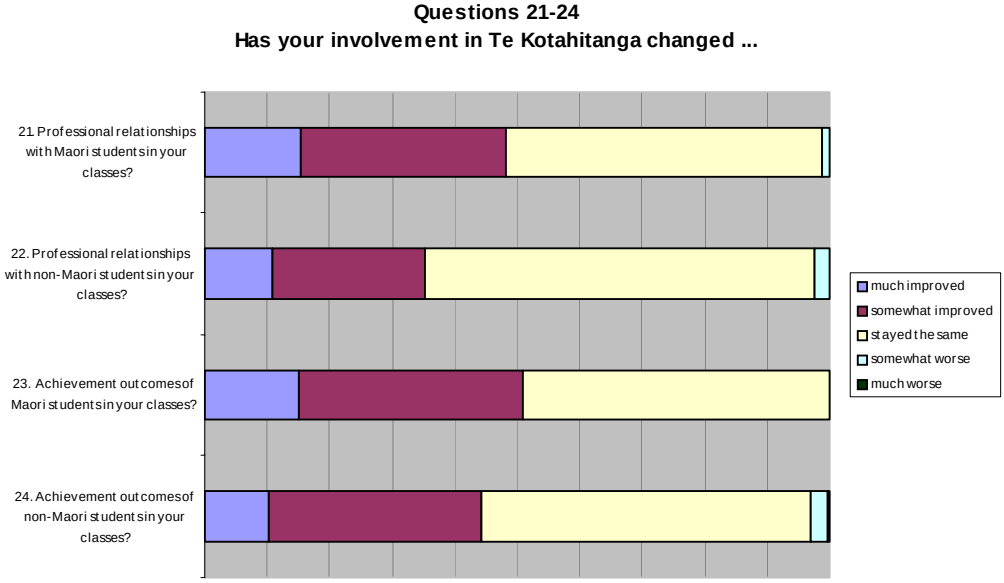
It is useless if an observer with little classroom experience is observing you. It is useless if that observer cannot manage a classroom himself. It is useless if the observer does not know the students in the class. It is useless if the observer has a chip on her shoulder about being Māori and keeps on making fun of Pakeha or becomes aggressive or is intolerant of those not in the same bus.

4. The ways in which Te Kōtahitanga has directly influenced you and your students

The statistical breakdown of the responses to the questions in this section was particularly interesting. Given that professional development is centrally concerned with changing teacher attitudes, however, the results are hardly encouraging. In answer to question 19 as to whether their expectations of student learning had changed as a result of participation in Te Kōtahitanga, a large majority of respondents (64%) believed that their expectations had stayed the same for Māori students with a slightly larger majority (69%) claiming that their expectations had stayed the same for non-Māori students as well. A sizable minority, however, believed their expectations of both groups of students had improved, with a larger group (35%) believing that their expectations of Māori students had increased and a smaller group (29%) believing that their expectations of non-Māori students had increased. The results for question 20 were more favourable, with a majority (59%) asserting that their teaching has improved as a result of participation in Te

Kōtahitanga as compared with those who maintained that their teaching had remained the same (36%).

A rather more disconcerting situation is revealed in the responses to the question of whether the involvement of participating teachers with Te Kōtahitanga had changed their professional relationship with students, their expectation of learning, and their expectation of achievement outcomes. In the professional relationship category, respondents who conceded that their professional relationships with Māori students had stayed the same as a result of involvement with the programme were in a slight majority (51%) compared with those who thought them 'much improved' (15%) or 'somewhat improved' (33%). Regarding achievement outcomes of Māori students, only slightly more respondents claimed that these had 'much improved' (15%) or 'somewhat improved' (36%) than those who claimed that they were much the same (49%). The corresponding figures for question 24 regarding achievement outcomes for non-Māori students were similar, with only 10% believing that their achievement was 'much improved' and 34% believing their achievement was 'somewhat improved', whereas 53% claimed that their achievement had stayed much the same.



Comments generally reflected these decidedly mixed results. A number of teachers wrote favourable comments in response to question 18, which asked whether their expectations of Māori student learning had changed as a result of their participation in Te Kōtahitanga. R001 claimed that '*I always knew they could do well, now I expect them to be even better!*' R0235 believed that '*TK has encouraged me to raise my expectations – this has allowed me to see how much they can achieve*'. R007 wrote that '*I always had high expectations but now it is conscious rather than subconscious'*. Many other teachers, however, pointed out that the programme simply provided confirmation of what they had long practised in their classroom teaching. Thus, R0119 thought that '*TK simply reinforces what I had always attempted to do*', whilst R0182 asserted, '*I have always had high expectations of all my students*'. The assertion of high expectations having always been at the core of successful teaching strategies was also perhaps the most common response to

questions 19 through 26, with R0068 claiming that '*I was always doing the things recommended*'. There was though, some evidence of a more self-critical approach to pedagogy in some responses to these questions. For instance, R006 conceded that now '*I move around a lot more and think of more multicultural resources to use*'. R0067 claimed to put '*more focus on incorporating lesson activities that cater for a wider range of learning styles'*. R0096 admitted to being '… *more self-critical and aware of how relationships affect students in the classroom*'. R0035, however, summed up a fairly common complaint in stating that:

I always was working on lesson learning intentions, clear success criteria, good academic feedback and feedforward and utilising student prior knowledge. It's a little irritating TKP seems to have claimed these as its own inventions.

5. Resourcing

The responses to this section of the questionnaire indicate that there are some significant resourcing issues that impact upon the Te Kōtahitanga programme as it is presently implemented. Out of the 264 responses received for question 27a, which asked whether extra time had been required from respondents, 82% of respondents said that it had. Traditionally, many New Zealand teachers have given extra time willingly to all manner of educational activities both within and outside the school. What is problematical regarding the Te Kōtahitanga programme, however, is that in response to Question 28, which asked how this extra time had been recognised by the school, the vast majority of respondents claimed that the school gave no recognition of this extra time requirement, with only 24 respondents having seen a reduction in other meetings, 15 respondents having been given extra non-contact time, 3 having been given extra units, and 6 a reduction in duty. Moreover, some 147 respondents also provided comments to this question, with 20 citing resource development issues and 20 citing time issues, 12 expressing doubts about the value of resourcing Te Kōtahitanga, 10 pointing to uncertainty about ongoing resources, 9 complaining about insufficient money or staffing, and 8 mentioning inequitable resourcing.

A sample of comments exemplifies these concerns. R0051 complained that there was '*no time given for extra work required to resource classes*'. R0054 thought that '… *if schools funded things like duties and internal staff relief through other means, then teachers overall would feel a lot happier about taking on the extra workload that programmes such as TK engender*'. R001 felt that '*the resourcing from the Ministry is reducing, luckily our school continues to resource it at present. Next year? Who knows?*' Others were concerned that Te Kōtahitanga had been resourced at the expense of other worthwhile activities. R003 claimed that '*huge resources have gone to some classes at the expense of all others*'. R0023 asserted that '*there seems to be huge amounts of money poured into this programme that could well be spent elsewhere. Why not a programme on positive parenting for Māori students? A nutrition programme at school?*' R0035 summed up both worries about future resourcing and concern that Te Kōtahitanga enjoyed resourcing priorities:

In some ways I'm not happy that the money has taken resources away from other important areas. I'm certainly very unhappy that the MOE as usual funds a project quite well and then quickly reduces funding, saying schools have to provide

'sustainability' plans. The funding is reduced but the costs remain the same. This is poor financial planning and makes me think of avoiding projects or not getting involved in them.

6. Further comments

The comments to this final question (question 30) were often quite full, perhaps reflecting the fact that respondents tended to use this section for recording both general and specific observations about Te Kōtahitanga, either to add to comments made in preceding sections, or to reinforce earlier remarks. Thus, regarding professional relationships with colleagues at one participating school, R0207 commented that the actions of facilitators had brought about '*a division in our staff between those who are involved and those who are not involved*'. Opinion was more favourable in seeing Te Kōtahitanga as a useful corrective to overly traditional teaching styles. R0119 held that '*I think TK's best strength is that it introduces strong non-confrontational teaching styles/techniques to teachers who depended on an authoritarian approach too much'.*

A number of respondents tended to be critical of the tendency of Te Kōtahitanga to emphasise teacher effects to the exclusion of other possible explanations. R0212 argued that:

There are a range of factors that help account for poor achievement levels of Māori students, and other low socio-economic groups. The teaching profession does not have to accept responsibility for all these issues because to do so allows others eg. parents to abrogate their responsibilities.

On the credit taken by Te Kōtahitanga for dramatic improvements in Māori student performance, a number of teachers echoed R0128's concern that '*any gains in our school are attributed to TK - no credit given to many other programmes going on in school*'. R0133 believed that:

The TK programme is predicated on the notion that teachers are racist. It is patronising and disempowering for teachers who have excellent relationships with students and do a good job. It saps morale and is counter-productive.

Much of the professional unease many teachers surveyed felt about Te Kōtahitanga and its underlying assumptions was summed up in R0294's finding that:

…many aspects of TK quite disturbing. It has overtones of a religion the basic tenets of which are extremely disparaging of teachers. In my 30+ years of teaching the overwhelming majority of teachers have been keen to do their best for all students including Māori. Even most of those who, at a depressed moment, might espouse the wicked 'deficit theorising' statements will in fact show in their classrooms a determination to try to assist all students to succeed. Having created this problem TK seeks to provide answers. Russell Bishop comes as the Messiah and tells us a range of answers, many of which are not new and are part of basic good teaching.

These and similar comments should not be taken to suggest that that respondents had no sympathy with Te Kōtahitanga's ideals. R0110 felt that the programme was

'*disappointing and deeply flawed at a school level',* but added that *'this is sad as the ideas and ideals are wonderful*'. Hence the views recorded in this section of the questionnaire arguably sum up much of the response from teachers to Te Kōtahitanga as a whole – a project that espouses high ideals, but also contains flaws that seriously compromise its value both as a research project and as a PD programme. In general terms, they are views that not only confirm the commitment that the overwhelming majority of secondary teachers bring to the everyday challenges that they face in the classroom, but also reflect a candid appreciation of both their own shortcomings, and those of the post-1987 education structures within which they must function. Specifically, they are views that strongly suggest that the Te Kōtahitanga team needs, at the very least, to do much more professional bridge-building if it is to realise the potential the designers, funders and others at present claim somewhat prematurely for the project.

Concluding remarks

This review has been critical of many aspects of Te Kōtahitanga. Briefly, the criticisms fall into three major groupings:

a) the claims made for the success of the project are by no means conclusively confirmed by the data presented.

b) the project's location within the recent school effectiveness/school improvement paradigm together with its strong and uncritical adherence to a culturalist ideology render many of its assumptions and remedies highly questionable.

c) the data produced by the questionnaire distributed as part of the review process casts considerable doubt on its viability as a professional development programme, without major modifications.

Whilst in the reviewer's judgement these shortcomings make it necessary to be highly wary of Te Kōtahitanga's claims, ideological location and overall impact on teacher professionalism, it is likely that in the current political climate it will be extended further, given a recent announcement that Phase 4, involving 33 schools, is now under way (*Education Gazette,* 2007). One reason for this ongoing official commitment is perhaps because the project epitomises a uniquely New Zealand approach to state sector reform. Since the mid-1980s this approach has been politically successful because, like Te Kōtahitanga itself, it frequently combines ostensibly liberal and left-wing principles that embrace Treaty concerns, cultural self-determination and equity, with right-wing demands for more accountability, efficiency and consumer choice. Hence, the message of Te Kōtahitanga is attractive to a wider range of interests, including politicians, Māori leaders, educational bureaucrats and the media. There are, however, some parallels here with England, where political parties and various pressure groups have combined to embrace quick-fix solutions to perceived educational problems such as literacy (see for instance Soler & Openshaw, 2006). Similarly, the promises held out for Te Kōtahitanga are likely to become increasingly attractive to both government and opposition parties alike, especially as the political imperative to address longstanding issues of Māori educational underachievement gets stronger in the run-up to the next election.

The flow-on implications of all this for teachers, for schools, and for PPTA, is evident in a recent *Dominion Post* article entitled, 'Māori schooling causes concern' (Nichols, 2007, A2). Here, the rhetoric of crisis, utilised so effectively in successive Te Kōtahitanga Reports, is taken up and amplified by the national press. Thus, the article sensationally claimed that 'figures issued by the Government show a third of schools are failing to fully engage Māori pupils in the classroom and that many have little or no idea how well Māori children were performing.' Not surprisingly, key interests were quick to announce their own particular remedy to deal with this perceived crisis. The National Party for instance is cited as claiming that 'thousands of Māori children are missing out on their right to a quality education because of serious shortcomings with New Zealand schools'. Education Minister Steve Maharey is quoted as conceding that Māori underachievement is a long-standing issue, but arguing that there had been big improvements in retention rates, gaining

qualifications, and tertiary participation, demonstrating that 'we're beginning to work out how to address an issue that has been there for a century' (cited in Nichols, 2007, A2.

Single-cause solutions are also politically attractive because, as in Te Kōtahitanga's case, they shift the onus of doing something about it onto schools and teachers as being the main 'cause' of the problem. In this context, it is worth revisiting a claim made in Shields, Bishop and Mazawi – a book that has had a major impact on the development of Te Kōtahitanga:

> Hence, we are convinced that if we change the environments, discourse, attitudes, positionings, and relationships within our school, we will create the conditions under which all *groups of students* – whether identified by differences in ethnicity, gender, religious preference, socioeconomic status, or lifestyle – will achieve outcomes that are similar in range and scope to those of their peers (2005, p.142).

The tendency for politicians and others to focus increasingly on teacher performance may also increase the attractiveness to both politicians and bureaucrats, of performance-related pay for those teachers who can be shown to demonstrate success with Māori pupils. A paper on current issues in Māori schooling recently released by the Maxim Institute (2006), for instance, argues that some form of performance related pay needs to be introduced as a useful way of attracting and retaining teachers in immersion or bilingual settings, or in mainstream schools where there are a significant number of Māori pupils (p.14). Whilst the merits or otherwise of performance pay for teachers is beyond the scope of this review, Te Kōtahitanga may well encourage a relatively crude version of the performance pay argument, based on the degree to which the teacher has successfully implemented its ideals – no doubt as measured by someone deemed to know what should count as evidence of teacher success or failure. Thus if, for argument's sake, Māori achievement does not rise dramatically, as the designers of Te Kōtahitanga predict it should, then it could then be argued that recalcitrant teachers have simply failed to effectively implement the recommended strategies, with further justification for the application of either carrot or stick.

A further issue beyond the scope of this review but nevertheless a possible concern for PPTA may well be that, by placing the responsibility for reform so unequivocally on schools and teachers, Te Kōtahitanga may well have the potential to revitalise the longstanding debate over educational vouchers by delivering what is sometimes termed 'the race card' into the hands of voucher advocates. This is because the voucher debate has been yet another issue that historically encompasses both left and right-wing positions on education, pitting poor and minority parents and supporters of free parental choice on the one hand, against educators on the other, with the latter frequently castigated for being supposedly more concerned about keeping their jobs and maintaining provider control over education than with the well-being of students. A recent article in the *New Zealand Herald* by journalist Deborah Coddington highlights the growing problem with Māori male student underachievement revealed by several Te Kōtahitanga press releases. Coddington goes on to argue that the introduction of a voucher system would address the problem by enabling the parents of failing students to exercise free choice in the selection of schools, with the implication that parental demand would weed out poor schools and teachers (Coddington, 2007). Claiming that when she was an MP, she

was hissed at by white middle class teachers concerned about losing their jobs if failing schools were obliged to close, Coddington writes:

> I hope Māori charge ahead with their desire to take education away from the boffins and strident unionists who fail many New Zealand children. Let's see if teachers have the guts to hiss at Sharples, Turia or Hone Harawira come next election (Coddington, 2007).

In his concluding chapter of *School Improvement. An Unofficial Approach*, Thrupp lists some ways in which educators can contest rather than simply accept the new performance and accountability regime, with its stress on the blaming and redeeming of the teachers who are supposedly responsible for the latest educational crisis. Citing Sachs (2003), he calls for an activist teacher professionalism which emphasises:

Inclusiveness rather than exclusiveness

Collective and collaborative action

Effective communication of aims and expectations

Recognition of the expertise of all parties involved

Creating an environment of trust and mutual respect

Ethical practice

Being responsive and responsible

Acting with passion

Experiencing pleasure and having fun (Thrupp, 2005, p.115).

This last goal especially, holds some ironies for Te Kōtahitanga. One irony is that many participant teachers seem to have experienced anything <u>but</u> fun. Another is surely that the project, had it been more modest in its claims and less strident in its apportionment of blame, might have gone some way towards achieving many of the goals set by Sachs. Indeed, as a number of participating teachers attest, it may well still have the potential to do so. But unfortunately, as rather too many other participant teachers point out, the project's location within the culture of blame and redemption that characterises the school effectiveness/school improvement paradigm, its rigid adherence to the flawed ideology of culturalism, and its many shortcomings as a professional development intervention, all conspire to render it well short of meriting the unqualified support of New Zealand secondary school teachers. The most significant irony of all, however, and surely a tragic one, - is that the real losers are likely to be the very Māori student underachievers that Te Kōtahitanga was designed to assist.

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APPENDIX A
Questionnaire

PPTA

PPTA REVIEW OF TE KOTAHITANGA

What this questionnaire is about

The Te Kotahitanga professional development project, which aims to raise achievement for Maori learners, is probably the most high profile professional development initiative currently in place for secondary teachers. It is being extended to another 21 secondary schools this year. The project identifies secondary teachers as key agents in raising achievement of Maori learners.

PPTA wishes to explore some of the theories and ideas that underpin Te Kotahitanga, and the effects of its methodology on students and teachers. The purpose of the attached questionnaire is to explore teachers' experience of the Te Kotahitanga project.

This questionnaire has been developed with the assistance of an external researcher, Professor Roger Openshaw of Massey University. The results of this survey will contribute to a wider review of Te Kotahitanga being conducted for PPTA by Professor Openshaw. This will be published by PPTA in mid-2007. The results will be invaluable in guiding the advice PPTA may give to members in future on this project and similar professional development interventions for secondary teachers.

Who should complete this questionnaire

All teachers in the 12 Te Kotahitanga Phase 3 schools, including the principal and members of the senior management team, are asked to complete the questionnaire.

Please complete all relevant questions even if you chose not to participate in Te Kotahitanga, or you have withdrawn from participation. The box at the beginning of the questionnaire tells you which questions you should answer.

Completed questionnaires are confidential to Professor Openshaw and the PPTA staff research team assisting him. Your name is not sought, and every care will be taken to avoid any information that could identify an individual respondent being published. A Freepost envelope is provided with the questionnaire so that you can send it back to PPTA National Office yourself at no cost.

Please complete and return this questionnaire by **Friday 27 April 2007** to:

PPTA REVIEW
FREEPOST 103122
PO Box 2119
WELLINGTON

Or fax to **04 382 8763**

Should you have any questions about this research, your Branch Chair (or their nominee) has been personally briefed by Professor Openshaw and PPTA staff. Please make this Branch representative your first point of contact. If you wish to contact Professor Openshaw directly, his email is R.Openshaw@massey.ac.nz. To contact the PPTA staff team responsible for the project, email research@ppta.org.nz.

Questions to Answer

- Current participants – 1-7, 9-30
- Previous participants – questions 1-4, 6-35
- Non-participants – questions 1-4, 7, 9-11, 13, 15, 25, 29-36

A. Professional Development Questions

1. **Who made your school's decision to apply to participate in Te Kotahitanga Phase 3 made?** *(Please tick one)*

Whole staff, principal and Board of Trustees	
Principal and whole staff	
Principal with middle and senior management	
Principal with senior management	
Principal and Board of Trustees	
Principal alone	
Board of Trustees alone	
Other (please explain):	

2. **Was the PPTA branch in your school consulted as part of the decision-making process?** *(Please tick one)*

Yes	
No	
Don't know	

3. **Thinking about you personally, what has been your level of involvement in Te Kotahitanga in your school?** *(Please tick all that apply)*

Lead facilitator (current)	
Been lead facilitator (but not currently)	
Facilitator (current)	
Been facilitator (but not currently)	
Participant teacher currently	
Been participant teacher (but not currently)	
Never been participant teacher	

4. **Did you feel completely free to make your personal decision about whether or not to participate in Te Kotahitanga?** *(Please tick one)*

Yes	
No	
Don't know	

Please comment:

5. **If you are a current participant in Te Kotahitanga, do you feel completely free to opt out, should you choose to do so at a later date?** *(Please tick one)*

Yes	
No	
Don't know	

Please comment:

6. **If you made an initial decision to participate in Te Kotahitanga why was this?**

Please comment:

7. **If you made an initial decision not to participate in Te Kotahitanga why was this?**

Please comment:

8. **If you made an initial decision to participate in Te Kotahitanga but subsequently decided to opt out, why was this?**

Please comment:

9a. **Has your view of Te Kotahitanga changed over time?** *(Please tick one)*

Yes	
No	
Don't know	

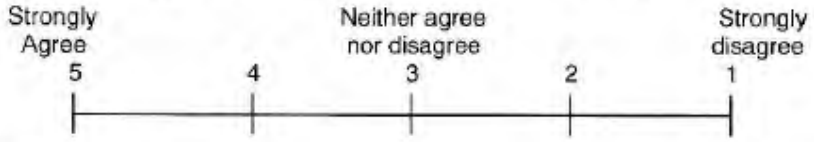
9b. **If you answered Yes in 9(a) in what way(s) has your view of Te Kotahitanga changed over time?**

Please comment:

B. The main theories and beliefs underpinning Te Kotahitanga:

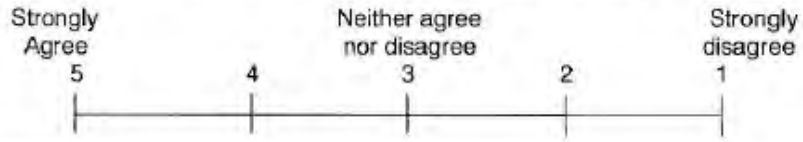
10. **Please respond on the five-point rating scale provided to indicate your degree of agreement with each of the following four statements from the Phase 1 report on Te Kotahitanga (Bishop, R., Berryman, M., Tiakiwai, S. & C. Richardson (2003)), with 5 being the highest support and 1 being the lowest support. Space is also provided for any comments you may wish to make.** (Quotations are labelled a, b, c, d)

10a. The teachers spoke of student's deficiencies as being the major barriers to student's progress and achievement. In fact, there was a strong preponderance of pathologising of Maori students lived experiences by the teachers... Many teachers believe that Maori learners are simply less capable of educational achievement because most come from limited language and economically poor homes (p.28). *(Please circle one number)*



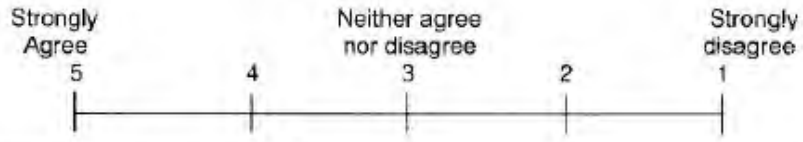
Please comment:

10b. ' ...many structural issues limit the achievement of Maori students in mainstream schools: Problems associated with the transition from primary to secondary school, School management issues ...bells and timetables for example... holding students back, expulsions/suspensions, streaming and banding... disproportionate numbers of Maori students being classified as special needs, timetabling favours the interests, skills and needs of majority non-Maori students' (p.29). *(Please circle one number)*



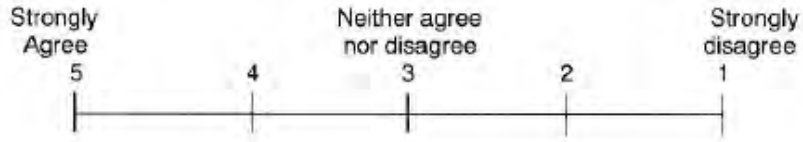
Please comment:

10c. 'The results of this study show that it is feasible, within a relatively short period of time, to improve Maori students' educational achievement. The results add to both local and international literature that shows that changing how teachers theorise their relationships with Maori students and how they interact with them in the classroom can have a major impact upon Maori students' engagement with learning and short-term achievement' (p.200). *(Please circle one number)*



Please comment:

10d. 'The major influence on Maori students' educational achievement lies in the minds and actions of their teachers. The narratives clearly identified that teachers who explain Maori students' educational achievement in terms of the students' deficiencies (or deficiencies of the structure of the school) are unable to offer appropriate solutions to these problems and as a result abrogate their responsibilities for improving the achievement levels of Maori students. Such deficit theorising blames others and results in low teacher expectations of Maori students, creates self-fulfilling prophesises of failure and leaves teachers further bewildered as to how to make a difference for Maori students. Changing this theorising is a necessary condition for improving Maori student educational engagement and achievement '(p.200). *(Please circle one number)*



Please comment:

11. **Below are three quotations on Te Kotahitanga from the Ministry of Education annual Schools Sector Reports. Please rate each quotation as to the extent to which it aligns with your own experience of the project, with 5 being very closely aligned and 1 being not at all aligned.** *(Quotations are labelled a, b, c)*

11a. 'Te Kotahitanga professional development used collaborative narratives gathered from Maori students to highlight how classroom and school practices impact upon them. In-class observation and support then helped enable teachers to adopt more interactive approaches to teaching, including 'feedback and feed forward' strategies to improve learning and behaviour' (Ministry of Education, 2002). *(Please circle one)*

Very closely aligned 5 4 3 2 1 Not at all aligned

Please comment:

11b. 'The quality of teaching is most likely to be improved through professional development, such as Te Kotahitanga, that explicitly focuses on classroom practice. Te Kotahitanga enabled teachers to adapt their classroom practice, and this had positive effects on learning outcomes for their Maori students' (Ministry of Education, 2002). *(Please circle one)*

Very closely aligned 5 4 3 2 1 Not at all aligned

Please comment:

11c. 'Te Kotahitanga identified 'deficit thinking' on the part of teachers as a key impediment to improving classroom pedagogy' (Ministry of Education, 2003). *(Please circle one)*

Very closely Aligned 5 4 3 2 1 Not at all aligned

Please comment:

12. **Below is the Effective Teaching Profile (Bishop et al, 2003). Please rate each of its elements as to how beneficial to your teaching you have found it to be, with 5 being highly beneficial and 1 being not at all beneficial.** *(Please tick one column for each element.*

	Highly beneficial				Not at all beneficial
Element:	5	4	3	2	1
Effective teachers of Maori students create a culturally appropriate and responsive context for learning in their classrooms.					
In doing so they demonstrate the following understandings:					
They positively and vehemently reject deficit theorising as a means of explaining Maori students' educational achievement levels (and professional development projects need to ensure that this happens); and					
Teachers know and understand how to bring about change in Maori students' educational achievement and are professionally committed to doing so (and professional development projects need to ensure that this happens).					
In the following observable ways:					
Manaakitanga: They care for the students as culturally-located human beings above all else.					
Mana motuhake: They care for the performance of their students.					
Nga turango takitahi me nga mana whakahaere: They are able to create a secure, well-managed learning environment.					
Wananga: They are able to engage in effective teaching interactions with Maori students as Maori.					
Ako: They can use strategies that promote effective teaching interactions and relationships with their learners.					
Kotahitanga: They promote, monitor and reflect on outcomes that in turn lead to improvements in educational achievement for Maori students.					

12a. Comments on the Effective Teaching Profile as a whole:

13. Any further comments on the theories and beliefs underpinning Te Kotahitanga:

Please comment:

C. Processes of Te Kotahitanga

14. In Te Kotahitanga, in-class observations are used to assess whether teachers are meeting the Effective Teaching profile. These assess student engagement, student work completion, teacher and student location, and cognitive level of lesson. Please rate the effectiveness of these observations, with 5 being highly effective and 1 being not at all effective, in terms of each of the following:

14a. How influential have in-class observations been in changing your own teaching practices? *(Please circle one)*

Highly influential 5 4 3 2 1 Not at all influential

14b. How effective have in-class observations been in benefiting your students? *(Please circle one)*

Highly effective 5 4 3 2 1 Not at all effective

14c. How effective has the quality of the post-observation feedback interviews been? *(Please circle one)*

Highly effective 5 4 3 2 1 Not at all effective

14d. Comments on in-class observations:

Please comment:

15. We would like to have your opinion on the collection of student data in Te Kotahitanga.

15a. Please rate the relevance of the data collected for each of the following.
(Please tick one column for each data source).

	Highly relevant				Not at all relevant
	5	4	3	2	1
Attendance					
Stand-downs					
Suspensions					
Early leaving exemptions					
AsTTle					
Numeracy results					
Essential skills assessment					
Other: *(please specify)*					

15b. In your experience is the data collection for Te Kotahitanga transparent and rigorous? *(Please tick one)*

Yes	☐
Usually	☐
No	☐
Don't know	☐

Please comment:

16. **Please rate for usefulness to you as a teacher the following Te Kotahitanga events and interactions, and provide comment to explain your rating.**

16a. The Induction Hui *(Please circle one)*

Very useful 5 4 3 2 1 Not at all useful

Please comment:

16b. The Co-construction meetings *(Please circle one)*

Very useful 5 4 3 2 1 Not at all useful

Please comment:

17. **Please rate the professional credibility of the following Te Kotahitanga personnel.** (If you have worked with more than one person in these positions, rate the one you have seen the most of.)

17a. The facilitators (the people who do the in-class observations and run the co-construction meetings)? *(Please circle one)*

Highly credible 5 4 3 2 1 Not at all credible

Please comment:

17b. The Te Kotahitanga research team members? *(Please tick one)*

Highly credible 5 4 3 2 1 Not at all credible

Please comment:

D. The ways in which Te Kotahitanga has directly influenced you and your students

18. Have your expectations of Maori student learning changed as a result of your participation in Te Kotahitanga? *(Please tick one)*

Increased		Stayed the same		Reduced		Other	

Please comment:

19. Have your expectations of non-Maori student learning changed as a result of your participation in Te Kotahitanga? *(Please tick one)*

Increased		Stayed the same		Reduced		Other	

Please comment:

20. Has your teaching changed as a result of participation in Te Kotahitanga? *(Please tick one)*

Yes	
No	
Don't know	

Please comment:

21. Has your involvement in Te Kotahitanga changed your professional relationships with Maori students in your classes? *(Please tick one)*

Much Improved		Somewhat Improved		The same		Somewhat worse		Much Worse	

Please comment:

22. **Has your involvement in Te Kotahitanga changed your professional relationships with non-Maori students in your classes?** *(Please tick one)*

Much Improved		Somewhat Improved		The same		Somewhat worse		Much Worse	

Please comment:

23. **What do you believe has been the effect of your involvement in Te Kotahitanga on the achievement outcomes of Maori students in your classes?** *(Please tick one)*

Much Improved		Somewhat Improved		The same		Somewhat worse		Much Worse	

Please comment:

24. **What do you believe has been the effect of your involvement in Te Kotahitanga on the achievement outcomes of non-Maori students in your classes?** *(Please tick one)*

Much Improved		Somewhat Improved		The same		Somewhat worse		Much Worse	

Please comment:

25. **How have your professional relationships with your colleagues been affected by your involvement/non-involvement in Te Kotahitanga?**

Please comment:

26. **Any further comments on the way your attitudes, beliefs and professional relationships may or may not have changed as a result of participation in Te Kotahitanga?**

Please comment:

E. Resourcing

27a. Has extra time been required of you as a result of your participation in Te Kotahitanga? *(Please tick one)*

Yes	
No	
Don't know	

27b. If Yes, how much extra time has been required? *(Give as an average hours per week)*

_____ average hours per week

28. How has this extra time been recognised by the school? *(Please tick all that apply)*

Extra non-contact time	
Reduction in other meetings	
Units	
Reduction in duty	
Other (please specify):	

29. Any further comment on resourcing?

Please comment:

F. Further Comment

30. Please use this box to raise any issues or concerns you did not have space for in the previous sections, or that might not have been covered in the questionnaire.

G. Demographics

Finally could you please give us some information about yourself?

31. What is your main teaching subject?

32. What is your main role in the school?

Senior management	
Principal or co-principal	
Associate principal	
DP/AP	
Other:	
Middle management:	
Head of department/faculty	
Assistant Head of department/faculty	
Guidance counsellor	
Dean	
Teacher in charge of subject	
Other:	
Non-management position:	
Classroom teacher	
RTLB	
Special needs teacher	
Specialist classroom teacher	
Other:	

33. To the nearest whole year, how many years have you been teaching in this school (either part-time or full-time)?

Years	

34. Which age group do you belong to?

20-24		25-29		30-34		35-39		40-44		45-49		50-54		55-59		60-60+	

35. Are you:

Male		Female	

36. What is the main ethnic group with which you identify?

New Zealand European/Pakeha	
Maori	
Asian	
Pacific Islander	
Other: (Please indicate)	

Thank you for completing this survey, we appreciate your time and your feedback.