

**Tumuaki – “Waiho ko ōku whengu, mauria mai ko ōku painā – heed not my weaknesses, but heed to my strengths”.**



## Background

The Enhancing Effective Practice in Special Education (EPESE) project is part of a broader Ministry policy initiative to support and develop teachers' ability to provide learning opportunities for all learners. Specifically, the project aims to develop teacher knowledge and share ideas on how to support learners who require significant adaptation to the curriculum content.

### What has happened so far

In 2004, a literature review was carried out by the Donald Beasley Institute and the findings are currently being collated into an accessible format for teachers and other educators. A pilot study during Terms 2 and 3 of 2004 involved a sample of New Zealand schools across all four settings - regular schools, school based classes for students with special education needs, special schools and kura rumaki.

The literature review and pilot study strongly suggest that teachers need up to date knowledge and ongoing support to improve students' learning outcomes. The importance of the role of leadership has also been identified as being vital in developing a culture of acceptance and increased participation of these learners.

In terms of professional development, teachers have emphasised the need for professional learning to be situated within the context of their school for it to be effective and sustainable. Recent initiatives in New Zealand and overseas have shown that the most effective professional learning occurs when it is connected to teachers' work in the classroom and derived from collaborative knowledge-sharing among educators.



## Akoronga Whakareī

This research aimed to develop a clear picture of the ways in which four kura rumaki (schools teaching the curriculum through Māori language and culture) understood that their teaching and learning practices were enhanced.

Researchers sought the experiences of tamariki (students) and their whānau (family members), as well as the kaiako (teachers), kaiāwhina (teacher aides), tumuaki (principal) and kaumātua (elders) from within these four kura settings. From the experiences of these people we were able to determine information about effective cultural, social and learning outcomes for these students and their whānau and their teachers.



# Akoronga Whakareī



TE TĀHUHU O TE MĀTAURANGA  
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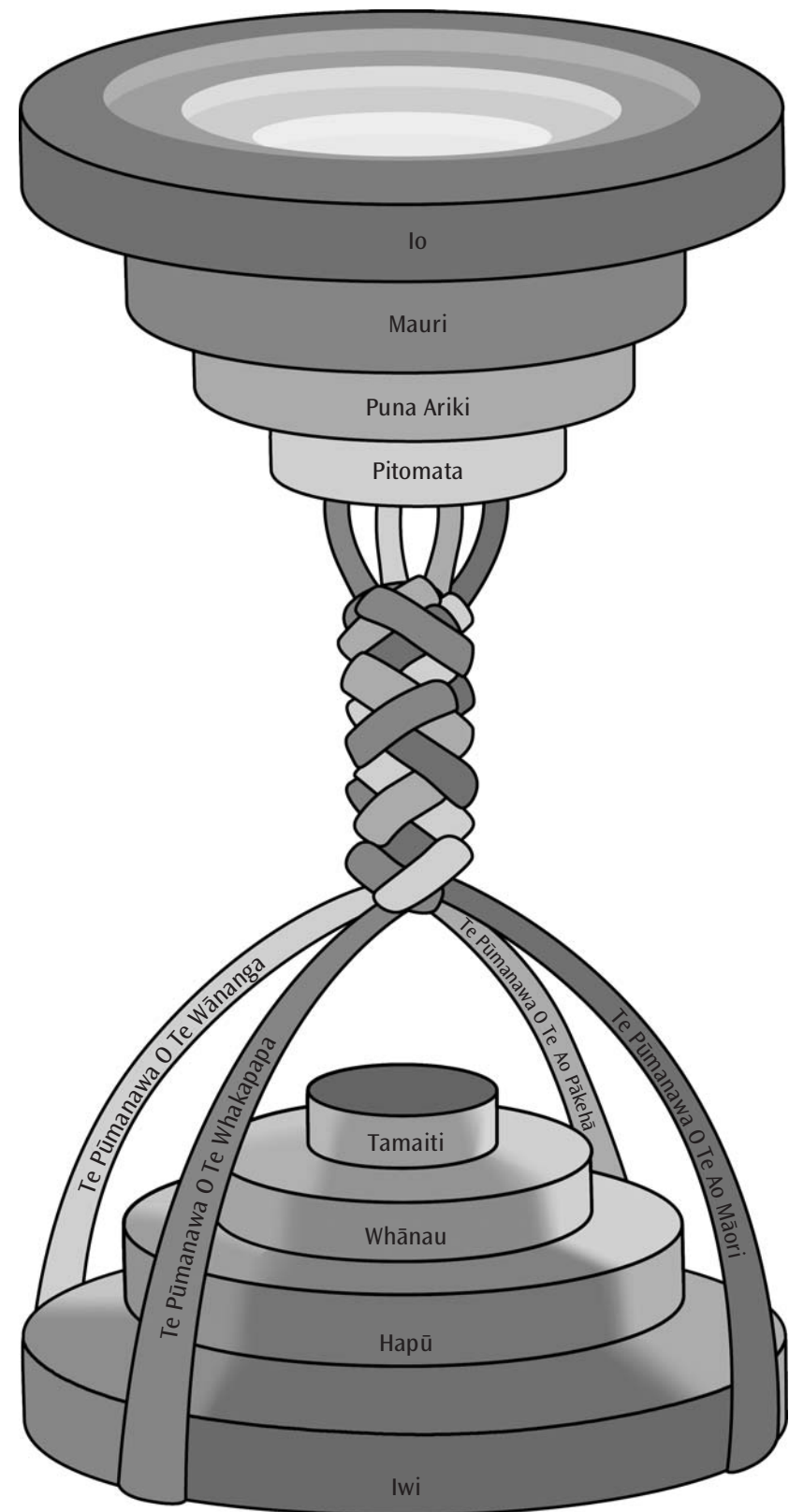
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## Te Mataora

Te Mataora is an interactive model for instilling the tamaiti with cultural identity and integrity through experiences unique to a Māori worldview that will equip them to participate more effectively in education and then subsequently in the global community.

**Tamaiti – “Because of the teachers they listen, the other school they just used to ring my mum and just send me home”**

**Māmā – “The love and spiritual healing that they’ve given to him. You can’t put that down on a piece of paper”.**



### Io

Io is the Supreme Being who is both the origin and originator of all things. All human endeavours on this earth including education are sourced from within his eternal presence and power.

### Mauri

Mauri is the life force sourced from and placed by Io within all living and non-living things. Mauri is the energy that binds one’s spirit, to their mind and body thus allowing them to flourish.

### Puna Ariki

Puna Ariki are the springs used by the Gods for cleansing and purification purposes. Spiritually and metaphorically Puna Ariki are available still when tested or faced by challenge.

### Pitomata

Milroy (2004) explains pitomata as relating to the face of the unborn child, for it is at this stage of life, before birth, that our potential is hidden and untapped.

Emphasis and priorities in education in these four kura are empowered by four pūmanawa (hearts) that provide essential life-links from the spiritual world to the world of people. These pūmanawa provide the ongoing inextricable links for each tamaiti, from their spirituality, through different whānau and educators, to the development of their learning pathway and thus to their potential. These pūmanawa are:

- Te pūmanawa o te ao Māori (the Māori world);
- Te pūmanawa o te whakapapa (genealogy and other connections);
- Te pūmanawa o te wānanga (teaching and learning);
- Te pūmanawa o te ao Pākehā (the Pākehā world).

### Tamaiti

Tamaiti is the word for child. Composed from two words, (tama and iti), Tama stands for Tama-Nui-Te-Ra, the Sun while the word iti means small. From this perspective, the child is seen as a small sun. Pere, (1983) asserts that as the sun is the centre of the universe, the child can also be seen as the centre of the universe, thus demonstrating the central importance of the child, as seen from within a Māori worldview, and from within these kura.

### Whānau

All aspects of the development of the tamaiti, spiritual, cultural, social, emotional and intellectual are strongly influenced by their whānau, their caregivers, extended families, teachers and other kura members. The whānau is similarly influenced by interaction with their hapū (sub tribe) and the hapū in turn, is influenced by interaction with their iwi (tribe).

The interconnection of the spiritual world with the world of people, by these four pūmanawa, and their integration in theory and in practice by the whānau in each kura, resulted in more effective educational practices and outcomes for all concerned, but especially for each tamaiti.

### Ngā Puāwaitanga (The Outcomes)

#### Te Reo Māori me ōna Tikanga

From within the context of a Māori world-view, common understandings about the overarching importance of te reo Māori (language) and tikanga (cultural values), were strongly evident within each of the kura.

#### Whānau (Families)

Essential understandings, experiences and practices from within a Māori world view were evident within the close relationships and interactions amongst community, whānau and school staff. This context resulted in all members taking collective, whānau responsibilities and initiating collaborative actions to support all students.

Educational practices were viewed holistically and grounded upon Māori beliefs and principles. When necessary, these practices also incorporated a Pākehā perspective. These practices were inclusive of all students in the kura.

Kura whānau believed they could make a difference for all students and culturally they were obliged to do so. A collective vision and belief, that all students could and would achieve their cultural, social and academic potential was supported by strong collaborative and effective working relationships. Effective and balanced working relationships within these whānau acknowledged and supported the expertise of all participants so that all were viewed as active members of the whānau. This created interactive and responsive contexts that ensured everyone’s ideas were considered from the outset, that participants’ ideas were represented and legitimated in actions, and that benefits ensued for all involved.

Educators in these kura faced dual lines of accountability. Their cultural obligations and accountabilities to their Māori communities were as important and as strong as their accountabilities to education communities.

#### Mahi Tahī (Collaborating)

The students themselves, their families and their educators all brought their own expertise to defining not only the problem but also to developing solutions. While people from these kura faced many different challenges, it was knowledge from te ao Māori (and sometimes, also te ao Pākehā) and their collaborative approach to problem solving that led to successful outcomes.

For example the availability and training in appropriate approaches to student assessment were recognised as essential but also a challenge. In response three kura had generated different yet innovative and effective assessment programmes for a range of curriculum areas.

#### Te Kotahitanga (Unity)

National and international literature and the results from this study all provide evidence that effective inclusion results from a more collective and collaborative approach to participation and problem solving that responds to what people can do together rather than on what they are unable to do alone.

Within a Māori worldview, individual benefits are not prioritised rather these kura prioritised collective benefits, where interdependence was regarded to be just as valid as independence. These collective benefits provided a platform for generating effective practices that enhanced and sustained the cultural and social well-being of all who participated.