Maori Participation & Performance in Education
A Literature Review and Research Programme

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A. INTRODUCTION

In 1997, a report on Maori Participation and Performance in Education was prepared for the Ministry of Education. Te Puni Kokiri and the Treasury were also involved.

The report was written by three people:
Simon Chapple, New Zealand Institute of Economic Research
Richard Jefferies, Kokomuka Consultancy
Rita Walker, Waikato University.

The full report is available from the Ministry of Education.

This is a very short summary of the main points. It uses "we" to mean the three writers.

The education gap between Maori and non-Maori

It is well known that Maori students as a group spend less time in the education system, and do less well in it, than non-Maori students as a group.

It is important to remember that many more non-Maori students than Maori students do badly in education. A growing number of Maori students do very well indeed.

But looking at the two groups overall, Maori do worse than non-Maori.

In this report, these differences between Maori and non-Maori students are called "the education gap".

This education gap shows up on many different measures - for example, years at secondary school and exam passes.

The reason for the report

We were asked to look at the education gap between Maori and non-Maori with only one aim:

- to help find ways to close the gap in "labour market performance" between Maori and non-Maori.

Overall, Maori are more likely to be unemployed than non-Maori, and earn less than non-Maori.

Finding out why there is an education gap, and how to close it, could help to close the employment and earnings gap.

There are other important reasons for doing something about the education gap. For example, there is the need to support Te Reo Maori through Treaty obligations. Meeting these other needs may or may not help Maori in the labour market. But we were not asked to look at the education gap in terms of these needs.

Writing the report

We were asked to write a report to show:

- What research has to say about the education gap
- What we still do not know about the education gap
- What research needs to be done to fill the gaps in what we know, whether this research can be done, and how much it would cost
- What kinds of education lead to better results for Maori.
First, we worked with an advisory group from the Ministry of Education, Te Puni Kokiri and the Treasury to collect as much New Zealand information and research as we could.

We also collected information and research from overseas. The most helpful overseas research was about groups of people who are like Maori, because they:

- are the indigenous people of their country
- are a minority group
- look different from the majority group in some ways, and have a different culture
- have a Polynesian culture which is like Maori culture in some ways
- live in a country which was colonised in the nineteenth century, mainly by people from Britain
- have lost many of their traditional rights to land and food from the sea
- have often inter-married with the majority group
- live in a modern economy and in a fairly wealthy country
- mostly live in cities and towns and often have working class jobs
- often speak English as their first language today.

The group which fits this list best is the native Hawaiian people.

Secondly, we went through all this information and research to see what it could tell us about the education gap between Maori and non-Maori, and the reasons for it.

It seems likely that the two gaps between Maori and non-Maori - in labour market performance and in education performance - feed back into each other. So we also looked at information and research on Maori labour market performance.

We asked five basic questions about the research we looked at.

1. There are many different ideas explaining education performance. How did the researchers decide which ones were worth studying?
2. Do the ideas explaining education performance in the research match the information available?
3. Do the ideas about education performance in the research predict what will happen in the future, in a way that can be tested?
4. What information would show us that we should rule out some of the research ideas explaining education performance?
5. How much information is there to back up the ideas in the research about education performance? How much information is there against these ideas?

**What is happening to the education gap?**

Is the education gap getting wider, or is it getting narrower? It depends how you measure the gap, and which measure you look at.

The evidence in this report shows that the gap is getting narrower over time. But this is happening slowly and unevenly. It is not certain that the gap will continue to narrow.
Why is there a gap?
We looked at a number of possible reasons for the education gap. Some of these reasons were about Maori and their situation - the "demand" for education. Some were about the education system - the "supply" of education.

There is no one reason for the education gap. This is not surprising, given the many different factors involved. The reasons are also likely to change for Maori students as they move through the education system.

But the research shows that the gap in family resources between Maori and non-Maori is a very important reason. We believe it is the key reason.

On average, Maori parents have lower incomes than non-Maori parents. They are much more likely to be unemployed or to be outside the labour market. They are less likely to own their own homes. The education gap was much bigger in the past than it is now. So Maori parents are likely to have less education than non-Maori parents.

Research from overseas backs up the finding that family resources are very important. For example, native Hawaiian students from higher income families tend to do very well at school. Native Hawaiian students from lower income families do not do well.

To put it bluntly, the research shows that Maori students do worse at school than non-Maori students mainly because Maori parents have less money and less education than non-Maori parents. So the gap begins at birth.

We think that about two-thirds of the education gap is because so many Maori families have fewer resources. What about the other third?

Maori children tend to go to schools which have many children from families with fewer resources. There is evidence that children do less well at these schools.

The research suggests that the other main reason for the education gap, apart from family resources, may be a combination of:
- barriers at school
- the negative way in which older Maori students, especially boys, react to school. This is partly because of their past experiences of not doing well in the education system.

The research done so far shows that Maori students probably do face some barriers at school. For example:
- some students make racist comments
- some non-Maori teachers may have difficulty understanding Maori children
- there are only a small number of Maori teachers.

But the research does not show exactly what these school barriers are, how they work to disadvantage Maori students, or what to do about them.

If Maori children do not do as well as Pakeha children at preschool and primary school, this is much more likely to be because of what has happened in the children’s lives outside school, such as their family income.
The longer children are in the school system, the more they are affected by how well or how badly they did in the past. So the effects of not doing well at school in the early years grow over time.

**What would help to close the gap?**

We believe that some of the main problems are outside the education system. But this does not mean that solutions cannot be found within the education system. It is possible that problems caused outside the school can be dealt with inside the school.

But we could not find enough clear research to show what is working well now, or what would work best in the future. More research is needed.
B. MEASURING THE EDUCATION GAP

There are many different ways to measure how well Maori and non-Maori are doing in education. In this report, we looked at:

1. Participation: what share of each group is enrolled, and for how long, at each level of education - early childhood, primary, secondary, tertiary.
2. Achievement: what share of each group passes each exam or gets each qualification - from School Certificate to a university degree.

We measured participation and achievement in two ways.

First, we collected figures showing the gaps between the two groups in each year.

We looked at the differences between the figures for the two groups, and also at the Maori figures as a percentage of the non-Maori figures.

Secondly, we used the figures to work out the changes over a number of years.

We could then see whether the gap was getting wider, or getting narrower.

Because we could not get good figures for every kind of measure, we could not work out exactly what was happening.

For example this report did not look at:
- subjects
- exam marks
- how many Maori and non-Maori sit exams, but do not pass them.

B.1 Participation

Early childhood education

The figures for early childhood education are not clear. But they do give us some idea of what is happening. In 1981:

About 2 out of every 5 non-Maori preschool children and about 1 out of every 5 Maori preschool children went to some kind of early childhood education (for example, kindergarten, playcentre or child care).

So in 1981, the Maori rate for children going to some kind of preschool education was 50 percent of the non-Maori rate.

The numbers of Maori and non-Maori preschool children going to some kind of early childhood education went up fast between 1981 and 1991.

Te Kohanga Reo - Maori “language nests” for preschool children - began in 1982. Kohanga reo now take about half of all the Maori children who go to early childhood education.
By 1991, 9 years after kohanga reo began, the Maori rate for children going to some kind of preschool education was 75-80 percent of the non-Maori rate. This was up from the 50 percent rate before kohanga reo began. By 1994, it was 81 percent of the non-Maori rate.

So the gap between the two groups is much narrower now than it was in 1981. But there is still a gap, and it has not changed much since 1991.

**Primary and intermediate schools**

All children are supposed to attend school until they are 16. But we are only now getting a clearer idea of how many children are not at school when they should be there.

There are no clear figures to show what happens to Maori and non-Maori children in primary and intermediate schools. There are no exams to measure their achievement at present.

Children can take two kinds of tests at primary school: TOSCA (Tests of Scholastic Achievement) and PAT (Progressive Achievement Tests). Some research shows that in the past, Maori children did not do as well as non-Maori children on these tests. We do not know exactly what is happening today.

There are now 59 kura kaupapa Maori and the number is increasing. Kura do all their teaching in Maori. But there is very little research on them or on how they help Maori children to do better.

**Secondary schools**

The school leaving age is now 16. Today, both Maori and non-Maori students stay at secondary school longer.

The gap between the percentages of Maori and non-Maori staying at school got much narrower between 1976 and 1993.

In 1976, for every 100 non-Maori students, about 22 Maori students stayed to the seventh form.

In 1993, for every 100 non-Maori students, about 61 Maori students stayed to the seventh form.

But after 1993, the gap started to get wider again. One reason for this may be that jobs were easier to get after 1993.

In 1995, for every 100 non-Maori students, only 53 Maori students reached the seventh form.

Students who stay to the seventh form are much more likely to go to university.

Researchers looked at Maori and non-Maori students in the seventh form, to see what percentage went from the seventh form to university. They found very little difference between Maori and non-Maori students.
From the seventh form:
46.6 percent of Maori girls went to university in 1991.
51.7 percent of non-Maori girls went to university in 1991.
50.1 percent of Maori boys went to university in 1991.
51.4 percent of non-Maori boys went to university in 1991.

Tertiary education
The figures for Maori and non-Maori in tertiary education (university, polytech, etc.) have not been collected in a consistent way. So it is not possible to work out exactly what has happened over the last 20 years.

In 1991, 6.8 percent of undergraduates at university were Maori. But very few Maori take courses such as medicine, science, business, or computing. Only 4.4 percent of Masters students and 2.7 percent of Doctorate students were Maori.
B.2 Achievement

Leaving school with exam passes

Many more students, both Maori and non-Maori, now pass at least one national exam before they leave school.

In 1978:

Most non-Maori left school with School Certificate or Sixth Form Certificate exams. Most Maori left school without any national exams (see figure 1).

Figure 1: Qualifications of Maori and non-Maori School Leavers 1978 (%)

By 1991, there were big changes for both groups. Most non-Maori left school with Sixth Form Certificate or a higher exam. Most Maori left school with School Certificate or a higher exam (see figure 2).

Figure 2: Qualifications of Maori and non-Maori School Leavers 1991 (%)

Overall, the exam pass gap between Maori and non-Maori has got narrower over time. Figure 3 shows what happened between 1978 and 1995. The graph shows how the education gap has
changed between 1975 and 1995. It shows how the gap grew between 1987 and 1991. By 1995, it was only a little narrower than it had been in 1987.

The gap got narrower until 1986, and began to get wider again between 1987 and 1991. From 1992 on, it was getting narrower again.

**Figure 3: Secondary school outcomes become more similar for Maori and non-Maori school leavers**

Why did this happen?

The main reason that the gap grew between 1987 and 1991 seems to be that Maori families had fewer resources during that period.

In 1971, the average Maori income per person was 54 percent of average Pakeha income. In 1986, the average Maori income per person was 67 percent of average Pakeha income.

As Maori incomes moved closer to Pakeha incomes, Maori exam passes moved closer to Pakeha exam passes.

But between 1987 and 1991, New Zealand had restructuring and policy changes. These changes hit Maori much harder than Pakeha. The average Maori income per person went back down to 59 percent of the average Pakeha income.

During this time, the exam pass gap between Maori and non-Maori began to widen again.

As the economy recovered after 1991, both Maori incomes and Maori education performance began improving again. But by 1995, Maori students had not quite made up the ground they had lost between 1987 and 1991.
Leaving school with no qualifications

Today, anyone leaving school with no exam passes and no other qualifications is going to find it very difficult to get a secure, well-paid job.

In 1978, about 2 out of 3 Maori leaving school had no qualifications. One out of 4 Pakeha had no qualifications either.

In 1991, about 1 out of 3 Maori leaving school had no qualifications. This was a big improvement. While this is improving there is still a gap - only about 1 out of 8 Pakeha school leavers had no qualifications. The Maori rate of no qualifications, compared to the Pakeha rate, suddenly got much wider between 1985 and 1991. As we said before, restructuring and unemployment hit Maori much harder than Pakeha in those years.

Qualifications for everyone aged over 15

We also looked at all Maori and all non-Maori aged over 15. The qualifications gap between these two groups got narrower over the last ten years (1987-1996). But Maori women are catching up with Pakeha women much faster than Maori men are catching up with Pakeha men (see figure 4).
C. WHAT IS HAPPENING TO THE EDUCATION GAP?

When we put all these measurements together, they show that the education gap between Maori and non-Maori has got narrower over the last 20 years. But this change has been slow and uneven.

While Maori incomes were going up, the education gap was getting narrower. Between 1986 and 1991, it got wider again - especially for school leavers. At the same time, Maori incomes were going down.

So what happens to Maori families in the economy seems to have a big effect on what happens to young Maori at school.

Comparing three ethnic groups of people

We collected information from the 1991 Census for three ethnic groups of people who described themselves as:

New Zealand European (Pakeha) only
New Zealand Maori only
Both New Zealand Maori and New Zealand European (Pakeha) i.e. those of mixed ethnicity

We used the Census information for these three groups to work out:
- the percentage of young people - under 19 years
- the qualifications of everyone aged over 15 years
- the unemployment rates of everyone aged over 15 years.

The New Zealand Maori/New Zealand European (Pakeha) group had the largest percentage of young people. In this group, 6 out of every 10 people were under 19 years of age.

The New Zealand Maori/New Zealand European (Pakeha) group had better figures for tertiary education qualification than those who identified solely as Maori.

Between the New Zealand Maori/New Zealand European (Pakeha) group and the New Zealand European (Pakeha) group, the education gap was narrow.
But there was a big difference in unemployment. The unemployment rates for the New Zealand Maori/New Zealand European (Pakeha) group were similar to those for the New Zealand Maori group. The unemployment rates for the New Zealand European (Pakeha) group were much lower.

**New Zealand European (Pakeha) only:**
- 28.9% under 19 years old  
- 8.4% unemployed

**New Zealand Maori only:**
- 43.3% under 19 years old  
- 25.3% unemployed

**New Zealand Maori/New Zealand European (Pakeha):**
- 60.3% under 19 years old  
- 19.6% unemployed
D. WHY IS THERE AN EDUCATION GAP?

There are a number of possible reasons for the education gap between Maori and non-Maori. We looked at education research from New Zealand and overseas, to see what it says about five possible reasons for the gap.

Maori and their situation - the “demand” for education (see D.1)

• Do Maori want education, and how much do they want it?
• Do Maori believe that education will not be much use to them - because they are discriminated against when it comes to getting jobs, or because they do not know how much education will help in getting a job?
• Do Maori students put pressure on each other not to do well at school?
• Do Maori families have fewer resources than non-Maori - for example, income, housing, parents’ time, parents’ own education - to help their children do well at school?

The education system - the “supply” of education (see D.2)

• Does the education system itself disadvantage Maori?
  For example:
  - Does school education fit badly with Maori culture?
  - Do teachers expect too little of Maori students?
  - Are some teachers and pupils racist?
  - Do schools assess Maori students in limited ways?
  - Do Maori parents have too little control over how schools educate Maori children?

D.1 What the research shows

• Do Maori want education, and how much do they want it?
  There is very little research evidence to show that Maori put a lower value on education. Surveys of young Maori at secondary school show that they want the same amount of education as non-Maori.
  But Maori parents may want a different kind of education for their children. For example, there is a strong demand for education in Maori.
  Surveys of Maori adults show that 92 percent want their children to be able to speak Maori. When Maori are asked what language they want for their child’s primary education:
  - 57 percent say they want both Maori and English
  - 13 percent say they want mostly Maori
  - 7 percent say they want only Maori.
  (Unfortunately, the surveys don’t tell us about the strength of this preference.)
  Some schools, and some classes in schools, now use the Maori language for all primary education. This kind of education is called “Maori immersion”. The numbers of schools and classes offering this kind of education are growing.
Does this use of the Maori language help Maori children to do as well as non-Maori in education? We do not yet know, because there is very little research on this.

- Do Maori believe that education will not be much use to them, because
  - they are discriminated against in getting jobs
  - they do not know that education will help in getting jobs?

Some research has matched education and income for Maori and non-Maori.

It shows that when two people from the two groups have the same education, and match each other in other ways (such as age), they seem to get the same pay for the same kind of job.

But other research shows that Maori are more likely to be unemployed than Pakeha, even when they are the same age, they have the same occupation, and there is no difference in their education.

The reasons for this difference have not been clearly explained. One reason could be that employers are more unwilling to hire Maori.

Other reasons could be that:
- Maori are less likely to know about the jobs available
- Maori are more likely to do the kinds of jobs and live in the places which have been the most affected by economic changes.

The research does not show what the reasons are. Also, it does not show how much this problem affects Maori education.

- Do Maori students put pressure on each other not to do well at school?

There is very little strong evidence that Maori students put pressure on each other not to succeed at school.

For example, one survey asked Maori students aged over 16 years about this kind of pressure. It found that 18 percent of the boys and 14 percent of the girls had been pressured by other students to leave school. But 29 percent of the boys and 34 percent of the girls had been pressured by other students to stay at school.

The survey did not show what happened to non-Maori students. So it did not compare the two groups. Overall, it seems that pressure from other Maori students is not a key reason for the education gap. But some research shows that working class boys, both Maori and non-Maori, back each other up in doing badly at school.

As far as we can tell, there does not seem to be this kind of pressure in kura kaupapa Maori. But we do not yet know whether this leads to better results at school.

- Do Maori families have fewer resources than non-Maori families - for example, income, housing, parents' time, parents' own education - to help their children do well at school?

Research in New Zealand and overseas shows that family resources are very important for education. It is clear that Maori families are likely to have fewer resources than non-Maori families.
Income
The figures show that up to 1986, Maori incomes were growing, compared to non-Maori incomes. So the income gap was getting narrower.

In 1971, average Maori income per person was 54 percent of average non-Maori income. In 1986, average Maori income per person was 67 percent of average non-Maori income.

During this time, the education gap was also getting narrower.

Between 1987 and 1991, average Maori income per person fell back to 59 percent of average non-Maori income - the same as in the early 1980s.

As the first part of this report shows, at the same time as this fall in income was happening, the education gap between Maori and non-Maori was getting wider again, in the percentages of exam passes and school leavers with no qualifications.

Unemployment
When parents are unemployed, they usually have fewer resources to help their children with education. For many years, Maori have had much higher unemployment rates than non-Maori. Unemployment went up steeply between 1986 and 1991 for both Maori and non-Maori. But for Maori the rate reached almost 1 in 4 people (see figure 6).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Maori men</th>
<th>non-Maori men</th>
<th>Maori women</th>
<th>non-Maori women</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>12.4 percent</td>
<td>3.2 percent</td>
<td>17.4 percent</td>
<td>4.7 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>12.8 percent</td>
<td>6.3 percent</td>
<td>19.1 percent</td>
<td>7.9 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>23.8 percent</td>
<td>8.8 percent</td>
<td>24.7 percent</td>
<td>9.3 percent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The labour market and the unemployment figures

The labour market includes everyone who has a job, or is looking for a job.

Up to 1986, Maori were more likely than non-Maori to be in the labour market.

But over the next 10 years, this changed. By 1995, Maori were less likely than non-Maori to be in the labour market.

Say that the figure for non-Maori being in the labour market is 100. In 1986 the figure for Maori, compared to non-Maori, was 103 for women and 105 for men. In 1995 the figure for Maori, compared to non-Maori, was 89 for women and almost 97 for men.

So since 1991, there has been a big drop in the percentage of Maori taking part in the labour market.

Of course, some young Maori are not going into the labour market because they are staying at school instead. But this does not explain all of the big drop after 1986.

The figures for both Maori and non-Maori unemployment are lower now than they were in 1991. But it is possible that many Maori are no longer actively seeking employment through official channels.

Owning your home

Owning your home means that you eventually have more money for other needs. It also means that you are more likely to stay in one place. Both these things help with children's education.

Maori families are less likely to own their home than non-Maori families, and are therefore more likely to move house more often.

In 1991:
55 percent of Maori families owned their home
75 percent of non-Maori families owned their home.
15 percent of Maori families owned their home without a mortgage
36 percent of non-Maori families owned their home without a mortgage.

Family size

The more children in a family, the less time and money parents have for each child. In the past, Maori women had more children, overall, than non-Maori women. This could explain part of the education gap.

In the last 20 years, this has changed. Having more children is no longer a strong reason for the education gap.

Overall, Maori women now have about the same number of children as non-Maori women - just over 2 children each. But Maori women usually have their children younger than non-Maori women.

Compared with non-Maori:
In the 1950s, Maori had twice as many children, but only 50 percent of the income.
In 1991, Maori had the same number of children, but only 59 percent of the income.
One-parent families
In 1991:
37 percent of Maori families were one-parent families
26 percent of non-Maori families were one-parent families.

Most one-parent families have a lower income than most two-parent families. One parent can also have less time to help with education.

Reading
Some research shows that Maori children at secondary school are less keen on reading than non-Maori children. At home, they tend to watch more television and read less. Maori boys are less keen on reading than Maori girls. Because reading is so important for education, this could explain some of the education gap. But we need research to find out why Maori children read less, and what can be done to change this.

Family resources and the education gap
After looking at both New Zealand and overseas research, we believe it shows that the main reason for the education gap is having fewer family resources.

In families with fewer resources, the parents have less money, less time, less education, and are less likely to own their home.

Overall, children from families with fewer resources do not do as well at school as children from families with more resources. This is true for both Maori and non-Maori children. There is a big difference in education achievements between non-Maori children from families with more resources, and non-Maori children from families with fewer resources.

Preschool
Family resources start to make a difference before children start school.

Going to good quality early childhood education is a big help to children when they go to school. The longer they go, the more it helps.

Research shows that young children are more likely to go to early childhood education if their families have enough money to get them there and pay the costs.

Secondary school
In 1992, Maori secondary school students aged over 16 were asked whether anything would stop them getting more education. Thirty seven percent of the boys and 44 percent of the girls said yes. The main thing was lack of money. Of those that said “yes”, 60 percent of the boys and 77 percent of the girls said this lack of money would stop them.

This survey was of Maori older than 16. Other surveys should see what younger Maori have to say, because they are the ones who leave school early and miss out on more education.
D.2 Other reasons for the education gap

Having fewer family resources seems to explain about two thirds of the education gap between Maori and non-Maori. But it does not explain all of the gap.

What about the education system itself - the “supply” of education?

- Does the education system itself disadvantage Maori?
- Does the school curriculum fit badly with Maori culture? Does this have a bad effect on Maori achievement?

There is no research which clearly shows that the curriculum has a bad effect on Maori achievement.

A survey of secondary school students showed that Maori and non-Maori had much the same feelings about their teachers and about school. Most students agreed that their culture was treated with respect, they could learn what they needed for their future, and teachers gave them the help they needed.

Only one thing showed a big difference: 43 percent of non-Maori boys and 40 percent of non-Maori girls strongly agreed that “I could do better if I tried”. But, 60 percent of Maori boys and girls strongly agreed that “I could do better if I tried”.

Do teachers expect too little of Maori students, so that they do not do well?

Some research shows that some teachers expect less of Polynesian students. But it is not up-to-date, and it does not show that lower expectations lead to lower achievement. Overseas research shows that teachers can misunderstand children from a different culture. Some researchers say that more Maori teachers would help. They would also be good role models for Maori students.

One survey talked to Maori teachers who were leaving teaching. They did not feel that they were treated the same as other teachers in their schools. They talked about:
- little recognition of their effort and extra workload
- lack of recognition and support from the principal
- lack of cultural and emotional support from the other teachers
- low levels of support for Maori language and culture programmes
- not getting promotion
- not being able to shape policy
- lack of recognition for their culture in the way the school ran.

If teachers who are Maori feel this way, it would not be surprising if Maori students feel like this too.

But we need to know if Maori teachers are more likely to leave than non-Maori teachers. We also need to look at the differences in their reasons for leaving. This could help to find ways to get, and keep, more Maori teachers.

Are some teachers and pupils racist, so that Maori students are affected by this?

Research shows there is racism in some schools. Teachers and parents may not even know that children are experiencing racism from other children.

Schools now have more power to choose their students. Some schools seem to be making choices based on ethnic groups. We need to look at what is happening to the mix of students in schools.
But it is very difficult to work out exactly how racism affects Maori education, or how it could be changed.

**Do schools assess Maori students in ways that turn out to be unfair?**

In the past, some ways of assessing students were not fair to Maori. For example, School Certificate and Bursary exams were marked in ways which gave lower marks for Maori language than for French. This is now changing. We need research on what is happening today, after big changes in the education system.

Kura kaupapa Maori are using new ways of assessing students. We need research to show what difference this makes.

The new National Qualifications Framework is bringing in unit standards in all subjects. Some Maori teachers believe these unit standards suit Maori students. The students can see how well they are doing, and they can repeat a unit until they pass it. Again, we need research on this.

**Do Maori have too little control over how schools educate Maori children?**

There have been many changes in the last 15 years. Today there are approximately 700 licensed kohanga reo, and 59 kura kaupapa Maori. Many Maori strongly support these changes.

International research shows that this kind of education can help to close the education gap. But there has not been much research on the New Zealand programmes.

One researcher looked at two groups of Maori children. They were from the same community and had the same backgrounds. One group went to a kura kaupapa Maori, and the other group went to a mainstream school. When the two groups did maths tests in English and in Maori, the kura kaupapa children did better in both tests.

But this was just one small piece of research. We urgently need careful research to show what is happening, what works best, and why.

**Does the percentage of Maori children at the school make a difference?**

The total percentage of Maori children at the school makes almost no difference to school results. What does seem to make a difference is the number of children from families with fewer resources.

When Maori children from families with fewer resources go to schools where there are few children from the same kind of families, they get better results in School Certificate. When Maori children from families with fewer resources go to schools where there are many children from the same kind of families, they get worse results.

In one study, South Auckland students from professional and skilled family backgrounds scored worse for reading than East Auckland students from working class backgrounds. Being Maori or being New Zealand European (Pakeha) made almost no difference.

Other research shows that having more Pacific Islands children at the school seems to make a difference. A Maori child at a school with more Pacific Islands children will get better School Certificate results than a similar Maori child at a school with fewer Pacific Islands children. The reasons for this difference are not known.
E. WHAT WOULD HELP TO CLOSE THE EDUCATION GAP?

There is still a great deal about Maori and education which we do not know. There are big gaps in the research on Maori participation and achievement in education.

We could not find enough clear research, based on figures and large groups, to say what kinds of education are now helping Maori to do better, compared to non-Maori, or what would work best in the future.

Maori education and Maori labour market performance

As we said at the beginning, we were asked to look at the education gap between Maori and non-Maori for one reason: to help find ways to close the labour market gap between Maori and non-Maori.

The research shows that over time, the education gap has got narrower. But there has not been a matching change in the labour market gap.

This must be a cause for concern.

The need for more research

We found three main gaps in what we know about Maori and education:

1. Why children do or do not take part in early childhood education
2. What happens to Maori in primary and intermediate schooling
3. How the education changes started by Maori are affecting Maori employment and earnings.

We do not have the information to do this research. New information needs to be collected.

We also need better research on what happens in different areas. There are big differences between, for example, the far North and Invercargill. The same policies will not work for every area.

Researchers must clearly explain to communities:
- what they want to do
- how and why they want to do it
- how the community will benefit.

Then the community can decide whether to agree to take part in the research.

Using official statistics

Some of the information which is collected now could be used in different ways to answer many questions about Maori and education.

Because many official surveys cover only a small number of Maori, they are often not able to be applied to Maori in general. We would like Statistics New Zealand to run a long-term survey which includes a significant percentage of Maori. This survey should cover Maori education, employment and earnings.

Official education statistics show each student’s ethnicity. They do not show socio-economic status - what kind of resources each student’s family has. It would be very helpful to have this information.
Research on reasons for the education gap

1. There needs to be a careful, thorough study to show exactly what is happening to the education gap over a number of years.

   It should show the numbers of students at each level, what subjects they take, what exams they pass, and what marks they get.

   The Census information should also be used to show what is happening to the different age groups and the different iwi.

   The aim would be to build the best possible picture of the education gap, using the official statistics.

2. There needs to be a study of how well Maori students do at different kinds of secondary schools - mainstream schools, bilingual schools, and independent Maori schools.

   This would show how much difference the type of school makes.

3. There needs to be research on:
   - how Maori performance at school has changed over the years
   - how pressure from other students affects Maori compared to non-Maori
   - how family background and other things "outside school" affect Maori education
   - what is happening in education beyond school - university, polytech, etc.

   For example, why are Maori taking some courses and not others?

Research on how to close the education gap

There needs to be research on the new kinds of education which may be helping Maori - kohanga reo, bilingual schools, kura kaupapa Maori, Maori language immersion programmes. This would show how they are affecting the education gap.

There also needs to be research on the new kinds of curriculum and assessment which are now coming into schools. This would show whether they are helping Maori students to get better results.

Around New Zealand, many new programmes have been set up to help Maori students. There needs to be research on how effective these programmes are.