"All we got to see were factories."

Scoping Mäori Transitions

from Secondary School

Moana Erika Mitchell

"Hope for a generation
Just beyond my reach
Not beyond my sight"
Fat Freddy's Drop (2005)

Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or material written by another person, nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning, except when due acknowledgement is made.

Nga Mihi

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Abstract

The primary purpose of this research is to scope the reflexive journey of a selected group of Mäori as they recall their experiences of secondary school transitions. The already complex nature of this transition from school is further exacerbated by the identification of these people as Mäori. The treatment of Mäori students, particularly in relation to their secondary school experiences and its impact on transition, is a major concern for this research.

The research methodology privileged by my thesis is kaupapa Mäori theory. Secondary school transitions for rangatahi Mäori is tenuous. By framing this thesis within kaupapa Mäori methodology, the intention is to recognise the impact of dominant ideology on the schooling experiences of Mäori and how it ultimately determines school transitions.

This scoping study is based on the interviews of research participants as they reflect on their experiences as rangatahi Mäori transitioning from school. In particular, these interviews highlight how rangatahi Mäori work through the complexities they are confronted with whilst in the transitory phase between completion of secondary schooling and post-school opportunities. Information gathered from the interviews constitutes the findings of this thesis.

The findings reveal that schooling experiences and more specifically, treatment of Mäori students by teachers, play a significant role in transitioning for young Mäori. Negotiating the already complex pathway out of school is doubly problematic for rangatahi Mäori who also have to come to terms with a culture of failure, perpetuated at secondary school and reinforced by out of school experiences.

This research contends that marginalisation of rangatahi Mäori in New Zealand secondary schools creates an alternate experience, whereby actions of resistance and agency are employed as they look to position themselves into post-school opportunities. Of significance, is the human quality of determination that allows rangatahi Mäori to stand firm, despite the entrenchment of low self-confidence and motivation through indifferent school and transition systems. Such pathways create choice for rangatahi Mäori due to a lack of support from these systems, not because of it.

1: Introduction

> All we got to see were factories. All we get to see are factories and our parents doing all that harsh stuff, shit jobs. So if that's all you're going to see, isn't that all you're going to accept? You know, you're not going to see any more than that.
> (Josh, 2008)

My thesis is the culmination of a scoping study looking at the experiences of rangatahi Māori transitions from secondary school. Fraught with disengagement and resistance this transition from secondary schooling is problematic for Māori. This is in spite of an immense amount of work that has gone into ensuring better linkages between school and post-school opportunities in recent years (Ministry of Social Development, 2005b; Vaughan & Boyd, 2004; Maharey, 2005; Dalziel, Higgins, Vaughan & Phillips, 2007). My research question for this thesis is – How do rangatahi Māori think about and negotiate transition out of secondary school? This question sought to elicit research participants' experiences of transition and the influence of teachers and schools on their exit out of secondary school. Other issues broached by the research question touched on issues of families and peers (Kegler, Oman, Vesely, McLeroy, Aspy, Rodine & Marshall, 2005), marginalisation, poverty and cultural exclusion (Spoonley, 1996), and resistance and change.

The narrated experiences of six urban Māori between the ages of 19 and 37 were the focus of this study, while Porirua City provided the setting and the addition of 'urban' to what it meant to be Māori. Although this thesis is primarily interested in how young Māori negotiate school transitions, the urban context plays a significant role in the construction of those negotiations.

The whakatauki/proverb: 'He tini ngā whetū e ngaro i te kapua iti' (many stars cannot be concealed by a small cloud), has helped me work towards documenting and making sense of these students' identities and experiences which were played out within a complex system of colonial relations, education policy and practices and Māori political and educational responses and aspirations.

Transition discourse – what's in a name?

> The idea of pathways is important because it signals a shift – not only in *how* we think about young people moving beyond school but in *who* we're talking about, *which* young people. In general, "pathways" gives an implicit recognition of the complexity in the school to work transition period.
> (Vaughan, 2003, para. 8)

At the outset the term 'school to work transition' was used to represent the research field as I attempted to work through the issues facing rangatahi Māori. On the one hand there are a significant number of rangatahi

Māori not going onto further education or training or into employment after completing school (Statistics New Zealand, 2008), and it is these experiences that need to be captured and analysed. On the other, I was mindful that the term transition conjured up a rather linear and uncomplicated move from school to work. I then came across the term "pathways" (Vaughan, 2003, para. 5) and found this to be useful when acknowledging transition as a very complex, multifaceted journey for young people and especially Māori. This is an important point to make in relation to my research as it was the complexity and multiple experiences of rangatahi Māori transitions that first attracted me to this issue. By reframing the transition phase, this study pays attention to how rangatahi Māori make sense of and experience transition, privileging the complexity of the journey and not the 'outcome'. One of my primary concerns is not to produce another piece of deficit-based research retelling the standard story of Māori educational failure (Phillips, 2009).

In relation to my thesis, I have settled on 'secondary school transitions' to acknowledge that transitions do not always end up with employment. Vaughan (2003) suggests that school to work transition is a politically derived term, and it is my intention through this research to be conscious of choice, experience and meaning and not fall into a 'one size fits all' ideology. I am also mindful of the impact of dominant ideology on the school transitions discourse in New Zealand as I work through the reflections and narratives of the research participants. It is against this untidy backdrop that I present this scoping study.

For this research, I interviewed six people who identified themselves as Māori. The diversity of the participants' experiences as they spoke about their transitions added further nuance to what is already considered to be a complex and multifaceted field. The competing discourses that create the setting for these experiences need to be identified and explained. In the context of this project, discourse is understood in relation to language and the meanings associated with a particular subject. Discourse allows for comparisons to be made for those who speak 'the same language' which determines not only how people communicate with each other in social settings but also in how they act. Over time, thought and action becomes, and is embedded in systems and practices. Foucault, one of the foremost theorists on discourse contends that the structure of particular systems such as prisons contributes to the discourse around conceptualising criminality (1979, p. 233-239). Within an educational context, this is supported by Leonardo who proposed that educational discourse "...frames the way students experience learning" (2009, p. 16). However Leonardo also argued that "...quality education begins with a language of critique, at the heart of which is a process that exposes the contradictions of social life" (2009, p. 16).

In relation to discourse, the research interviews provided data that explicates what it is to be Māori exiting into post-secondary school experiences, and whether the current school structure adequately supports this

process. Discourse provided a common tool of measurement for my research in that it allowed me to pose questions around the discourse of school to work transition and the discourse of failure which the participants spoke about. This research will provide critical and discursive commentary on rangatahi Māori experiences by attending to the multiple discourses that they were faced with as they transitioned.

Despite choosing not to privilege the formulaic approach of 'school to work transition', it still exists as current terminology in school, community and government rhetoric and therefore requires some scrutiny. In general I find the concept of transition to be a loaded term, however for the purposes of my research its meaning in regards to change and transformation needs to be understood in two different ways.

Firstly, the transition of a significant proportion of young New Zealanders who exit secondary school into a multitude of different contexts is a transition of considerable change. Many 'firsts' are experienced in this transitory phase. Although not sufficiently addressed by this thesis, issues such as drug and alcohol consumption, sex/teenage pregnancy, welfare dependency and youth crime can be considered as variables that may also impact on transition for rangatahi Māori. These issues are a precursor to the deficit branding of rangatahi Māori experiences which can silence stories of resistance and agency integral to Māori students' narratives of school transitions. This will be further expanded through the conclusion chapter of this thesis with the recommendations for future research on this subject.

Second and notably, although 'transition' is not typically seen as a component of transformative action, what needs to be highlighted is the potential of theories such as Paulo Freire's (1972) transformative praxis in relation to Māori school transitions. Take for example the experiences of mums who helped establish and then sent their children to Kōhanga Reo in its formative years (Smith, 2003), despite their own strained experiences of education. They engaged in resistance strategies which helped to solidify the fledgling Kōhanga Reo movement and the first wave of transformative praxis – by Māori, for Māori and in Māori. Not only did they learn the Māori language alongside their tamariki, they were also able to markedly increase their self-esteem (Ka'ai, 1990, p. 8). Transformative and collective action continued through the persistence of parents who pushed to see that Māori language education carry on after Kōhanga Reo in the establishment of Te Kura Kaupapa Māori and other Māori educational systems.

Reading the thesis

The organisation of this thesis takes into account my own understanding of rangatahi Māori secondary school transitions alongside an exploration of the main themes, a concise explanation of the methodology used and methods undertaken, research participant interviews and data analysis, and a conclusion detailing

the insights which became known through this research. I have applied kaupapa Māori theory to this thesis as an appropriate tool in helping to make sense of the research topic. My privileging of kaupapa Māori theory extends itself to the use of Māori terms within this thesis and the use of macrons to denote the long vowel sound applicable to some of these terms. A glossary of Māori and related terms will be available where those terms are not translated.

The chapters have been organised into the following:

Chapter Two: The Context

This chapter locates the research and provides a context to rangatahi Māori experiences of transitions. Firstly, I take a reflexive look at my background and personal rationale for researching this topic. I then introduce the discussion about Māori school transitions and end with mapping out the journey I have taken and the changes that occurred through the process of writing this thesis.

Chapter Three: Exploring the Issues

Through this chapter I look to provide insight into the relevant issues; looking mainly at the current themes of school transitions such as identity and whānau. This section also investigates the kaupapa Māori research on school transitions for rangatahi Māori. The themes involved with resistance, marginality and silencing are also considered through this chapter's exploration of the international and New Zealand-based literature.

Chapter Four: Methodology & Method

This chapter validates kaupapa Māori theory as the methodology and method used for this thesis. Discussion is provided around why a qualitative design was used by this research and how the data was analysed. The chapter introduces the qualitative approach of narrative inquiry and focused life story interviewing as the means of engaging with research participants and the robust ethics procedures involved with this process.

Chapter Five: The Findings

Chapter Five contains the findings from the research participant interviews. These interview findings introduce the six research participants and their experiences of school and post-school transitions. There are two overarching themes which are taken into consideration by this research; experiences of the fringes and transformative action.

Chapter Six: Discussion

This chapter builds on the findings and themes developed in Chapter Five and draws out ideas and theories that relate to the school transition experiences of the research participants. Some of these ideas include the

urban identity of rangatahi Māori, the power of rhetoric, marginalisation and agency. The clarity of the narratives provided by the participants suggests that school systems be more accountable to their students'.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

This chapter brings the thesis to its conclusion by summarising the research and discussing its implications to what school transitions could look like in New Zealand. Recommendations are proposed for future research into rangatahi Māori secondary school transitions.

Conclusion

To summarise, I believe transition is time limited and revolves around life events and life changes. Whether planned or unplanned, an extended or brief period of time, transition herald's change and the impact of change depends largely on the response.

> There is not any present moment which is not unconnected with some future one. The life of every man is a continued chain of incidents, each link of which hangs on the former. The transition from cause to effect, from event to event, is often carried on by secret steps, which our foresight cannot divine, and our sagacity is unable to trace. Evil may at some future period bring forth good; and good may bring forth evil, both equally unexpected.
> (Blair, 1815, p. 196)

This research has tasked its research participants with bringing Māori secondary school transitions from the unknown into the known. Transition through the words and lived experiences of the research participants is a challenge to all concerned. In effect, my challenge will be to pay attention to what is being said and to provide a suitable context for those words.

> In 96 I was 16/brat fiend/homie from AP/my parents did their best but the streets they had me crazy/lord knows I wasn't the one who liked to follow the rules/probably why at the end of 95 I gave up on school/the truth is school had given up on me a long time before/I spent one term in Kapiti to get me out of Porirua/my Mum was convinced that a new school would bring a new outlook/I left Aotea and hooked up with new crooks/new themes/old scheme/same thing/just a different scene/I seen my family were getting sick of carrying me/I was a wily kid who saw his parents struggle to pay the rent/so to lighten the load I made home the pavement/I craved it/even though the street was filled with fools/boys doing men's work but no one gave us the tools/the tools at hand were screwdrivers and spray cans/so we walked the train tracks to Welly and back again/you saw my crew in the street/you saw my name on the wall/yeah I had my many beefs but I always handled my brawls/I survived to ride in spite of all of the pitfalls/but there's one thing that must be said/I miss it all.
> (Transitions CD, 2008)

2: The Context

My positionality

<div align="center">

Ko wai au? (Who am I?)

I te taha o töku Päpä (On my Father's side)

Ko au te uri o Ngäti Kahungunu (I am a descendant of Ngäti Kahungunu)

Ko Moumoukai te maunga (Moumoukai is the mountain)

Ko Nühaka te awa (Nühaka is the river)

Ko Takitimu te waka (Takitimu is the canoe)

Ko Manutai te marae (Manutai is the meeting house)

Ko Rakaipaaka te hapü (Rakaipaaka is the sub-tribe)

I te taha o töku Mämä (On my Mother's side)

Ko Taranaki te maunga (Taranaki is the mountain)

Ko Waingongoro te awa (Waingongoro is the river)

Ko Aotea te waka (Aotea is the canoe)

Ko Umutahi me Ngati Tü öku hapü (Umutahi and Ngati Tü are the sub-tribes)

Ko Kanihi me Aotearoa öku marae (Kanihi and Aotearoa are the meeting houses)

Ko Ngä Ruahinerangi te iwi (Ngä Ruahinerangi is the tribe)

I te taha o töku Whaea Tipuna (On my Grandmother's side)

Ko Titirangi te maunga (Titirangi is the mountain)

Ko Uawa te awa (Uawa is the river)

Ko Horouta te waka (Horouta is the canoe)

Ko Puketawai te marae (Puketawai is the meeting house)

Ko Te Aitanga a Hauiti te hapü (Te Aitanga a Hauiti is the sub-tribe)

Ko Ngäti Porou te iwi (Ngäti Porou is the tribe)

Ko Moana Mitchell ahau (I am Moana Mitchell)

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When I think about who I am, it becomes a very longwinded, protracted description. I am a proud urban Mäori mother of one. I am Ngäti Kahungunu on my father's side and Ngä Ruahinerangi, Ngäti Porou on my mother's side. I spent most of my tumultuous teenage years in Taranaki but eventually finished my secondary schooling in Lower Hutt, Wellington. The experience made me feel like I was a solitary, crumpled leaf in the midst of an intense Wellington storm, being tossed to and fro by elements that were out of my

control. Reflecting back on my experiences of school transition reaffirmed for me why I feel so passionate about this research. There are many different ways that rangatahi Māori can experience this transition. To stake out a middle-of-the-road generalised and objective truth (Smith, 1999) simply does not do justice to the large number of Māori students' who exit secondary school. I have been interested in knowing and understanding what it means to be Māori for many years and this has extended itself into my work in social services with kaupapa Māori community organisation, Te Korowai Aroha Whānau Services. That this thesis creates a context to critically reflect on Māori experiences of school transition compels me to share some milestones from my own transition experiences.

I was 22 years old when I first asked for my pepeha; my expression of tribal landmarks and identity which make up my whakapapa/genealogy that begins this chapter. This inquiry came from my enrolling in a Māori language adult education class at Wellington High School and as part of the requirement of the course I needed to do a mihimihi, a speech that would identify to all who I was and where I came from. This pepeha instilled in me my hunger to know more about my Māori identity and helped me to recognise that the practice of being Māori was both a challenging and rewarding endeavour. It is something that continues to help locate who I am as I try to come to terms with what it means to be an urban and liberated person of Māori descent.

My pepeha also helped to remind me of who I was and where I came from. While 'finding my pepeha' at the age of 22 gave me the words to voice my location, the practice of living 'culturally' Māori was something that was nurtured throughout my childhood years when we lived in the small town of Normanby, on the outskirts of Hawera, Taranaki. This village is not far from where Titokowaru killed Von Tempsky and where Māori and colonial soldiers of yesteryear skirmished in the dug outs that were to end up being my outdoor adventure playground. It would not be until many years later that the landscape that I grew up in would speak to me about the hardship felt and tenacity shown by my ancestor Titokowaru and his extended whānau, of which six generations of my family affiliate to. This transformed the physical backdrop of my upbringing into a historical account of how Māori in South Taranaki managed to survive in colonial New Zealand and its subsequent eras. This act of taking away these blindfolds and making meaning out of Māori symbols, which in childhood held no cultural meaning, started with kōrero and waiata about Tino Rangatiratanga at the age of 17. As Walker (1991) put it, this act of defiance became the means to challenge the status quo. O'Sullivan (2004) perceived self determination as a process whereby colonised people have the opportunity to realise their own autonomy. Bishop & Glynn (1999) see Tino Rangatiratanga as a way of learning that contributes to being conscious and deliberate about those actions taken. By attributing meaning to where I was in Taranaki, in relation to who I was as rangatahi Māori growing up in that area, I was able to make decisions that

determined who I was and where I wanted to be in my life. This engineered another transition for me, when I followed my parents to Wellington to complete the final three months of my seventh form career at a multicultural secondary school in the Hutt Valley.

In Wellington, I learnt that being Mäori in the city was different to being Mäori in the country and that people from the Pacific were more similar to Mäori than the Päkehä students I was used to at the predominantly monocultural school that I had come from. I learnt from my new history teacher that Potatau Te Wherowhero was a renown Mäori king, and to help me remember his name it would be easier for me to memorise the word 'potato'. I learnt through observation and then continual experience (without punishment) that sitting on school desks was allowed at Hutt Valley Memorial College. Sitting on desks didn't activate any sanctions for Mäori students which in turn disrupted my own (traditional) understanding of what constituted being Mäori. I wonder whether this is what is meant when Nash (1999) speaks about being in a low decile school with low expectations of its students. This aside, when I imagine who I was at secondary school and then reflect on what I was frequently experiencing throughout this time, the concept of acculturation comes to mind.

I intentionally associate acculturation with my time at Hutt Valley Memorial College and being freed up from what I perceived to be set Mäori restrictions even when I was so obviously Mäori. I was being comandeered by a different homogenising regime, an education system which treated me as just another student. I think this adds another twist to the concept of acculturation. Acculturation as a concept defines the functional changes that happen when two cultures meet (Atkinson, Thompson & Grant, 1993). I have my doubts on whether acculturation in its purest form, without taking into account power relations, has as much bearing on the Mäori experience as is often commented on. This is because in my mind, the process of colonisation implies there was motive and purpose (Johnston & Pihama, 1993) in assimilating the Mäori population. In effect, colonisation has dictated the level of acculturation that has taken place, which has played such a major role in defining contemporary Mäori society and my time at Hutt Valley Memorial College. The idea of the dominant colonial power and the marginalised indigenous peoples speaks clearly about unequal power (Johnston & Pihama, 1993). My understanding of this is that the taking on of cultural practices pertaining to marginalised peoples by the dominant group could almost be seen as tokenistic, and which was often limited to rugby matches with the performance of the school haka at the secondary school that I attended.

Mäori academics such as Durie (1998) have used the word ethnocide to suggest that the forced assimilation of Western culture and practices by Mäori meant a loss of ethnic identity. What is not often commented on, as was my experience at Hutt Valley Memorial College is that the absence of strict, or any Mäori protocol,

was an almost shamefully liberating experience. This is from someone who had come from a rural and predominantly Māori community and had actively been kept within the bounds of tikanga, who had been given permission to shed this persona and be someone completely different. What might have helped me to reflect more critically on what was happening to my cultural self at this school may have been the inclusion of identified outlets for students of culture. This is emphasised by Indigenous educationalist, Verna Kirkness (cited in Penetito, 2002) who stresses the important role schools can play in reinforcing the identity of the student, by allowing their culture to be mirrored and incorporated into their school experience.

Though this was not to be included into my more 'ill' than illustrious secondary schooling career and having achieved an A+ in social standing at Hutt Valley Memorial College meant that my academic life suffered the same fate as my cultural persona. They became non-existent. This was to the point that I only attended some of my end of year bursary exams and although I did not fail the ones that I attended, it was not going to be enough to see me continuing onto greater academic glory. So shaped the dilemma faced by my mother. Here was her gifted, talented daughter who had been achieving academically at her previous secondary school and who had intentionally bypassed her opportunity for a tertiary education due to her experiences of a new school and way of life, who was now out of school and unsurprisingly stagnant. I didn't care much for anything but because of the promise that I had consistently shown, my mother with support from my extended whānau, was passionate in her pursuit of another avenue for me to find expression for my creativity.

Durie (1997) determines whānau to be the primary support system providing physical, cultural, emotional and spiritual care. Traditionally, the whānau was based on kinship ties, shared a common ancestor and provided an environment within which certain responsibilities and obligations were maintained (Durie, 1994). On a micro-level, my parents and whānau spurred me on, even when I was in the midst of teenage angst wanting nothing more than to lounge in my darkened room whilst playing gloomy music and talking incessantly on the phone to friends. However I eventually conceded and allowed my whānau to steamroll me into continuing to learn through a Māori Training Opportunities Programme course, where I was to meet my tutor, the late and renowned Māori filmmaker, Tama Poata.

To me, Tama Poata walked, talked and breathed Māori. The script writing course was run out of his papa kāinga, his farm in Makara and every morning for the three months that I stayed on the course, Tama would pick me up from Karori and take me on the short but perilous trip to the coast. As it turned out, I was the only student on the course but there were always other newbie editors, film makers and whānau on site. Every weekday morning before the course officially began, Tama would fry up tomatoes and sausages for

breakfast and then I would get down to the business of making words come to life in script form. Except at the time, the only words that I knew to explain my situation in life centred on dancing, playing basketball and being a teenager. I was having trouble locating the Mäori frame of reference that in my earlier years had played such a decisive part in the formation of my identity. Even with Tama allowing me to participate in the process of writing and being part of the whänau he had established at his Makara farm, I was never able to find even an iota of the inspiration and strength that he drew on in his writing of the penultimate Mäori film, Ngäti.

However, I knew that I was coming to a crossroads in my life because I came to feel bad about myself not knowing more about what it meant to be an actively Mäori, Mäori person. I eventually left the course run by Tama Poata out of fear that I would be seen for the fraud that I felt that I was. I made up excuses not to make the trek to Karori. I became unrealiable, which in itself didn't feel comfortable to me but grasping at nothingness through a lack of what I then perceived as a Mäori worldview, made me feel inept. I may have looked Mäori but most of my experiences within the city that had now become my home would have spoken otherwise. Durie, Fitzgerald, Kingi, McKinley & Stevenson (2002) might describe my experiences as being in a notional state of identity, where a person is able to describe themselves as Mäori but other than that they do not have any contact with the Mäori world. I did have contact with the Mäori world, through whänau and links to tribal lands but at the time, they didn't seem real to me. I was caught up in my own teenage bubble.

Again my mother came to the rescue and enrolled me on an oral and written communications course at Wellington Polytechnic and whilst on student placement at Te Upoko o te Ika Wellington Mäori radio station, I was offered a position as junior journalist. This gave me the chance to fully immerse myself in a Mäori worldview and helped me to acknowledge my own Mäori identity and I gladly took the opportunity, and it all came to a head with me accepting my very first full-time employment. I was two months off my 19th birthday.

Introducing the field

> We need to tell little kids to reach for the impossible. But then they get to school and learn only about what they can't do. What's not possible. They get rules, structures, and things have to be the same. I didn't want to be doing exactly like other kids. I had energy, passions, physical life to lead and that was set back. I couldn't wait and postpone my dreams.
> (cited in Fine, 1991, p. 10)

Too many young Mäori leave secondary school early and without qualifications. In 2006, 20% of Mäori students left school before the age of 16, three times higher than non-Mäori. In 2005, 25% of Mäori left school with little or no formal attainment. Even for those young Mäori who forge on through secondary school into tertiary education or vocational training, their limited status in these areas puts them at the margins (Statistics New Zealand, 2001). The statistics support the generalisation that the mainstream education system created for all New Zealand young people fails a disproportionate number of rangatahi Mäori. Yet it is rangatahi Mäori who repeatedly learn to live with this failure. It is rangatahi Mäori who are made to feel accountable for this oversight.

There is a gap between the rhetoric that is secondary school transition and the reality that are the experiences of school transitions for rangatahi Mäori. There is a lack of critically engaged documentation of this oversight. There is no literature to either substantiate or even oppose this claim. There are no means of verifying where in the process of transitioning, rangatahi Mäori are falling through the gaps and who should be accountable for that breakdown. There is a real need for targeted support strategies specifically addressing the needs and aspirations of rangatahi Mäori on completion of secondary school. The concern is whether the current school curriculum has what it takes to support these young people in realising those aspirations. The total lack of responsibility, resources and focus is of genuine concern.

School to work transition has become a mantra that is easy to say but difficult to pin down. This becomes clearly evident as government agencies spend large proportions of school transition funding on tracking the movement of young people as they leave secondary school for post-school opportunities (Ministry of Social Development, 2005b). The responsibility for this transition rests squarely on the student. If they successfully transition, then it is because they are considered to be industrious, hardworking and forward thinking. If they do not, then it is because they are lazy and good-for-nothing. The subject of this study attempts to shed light on potential failings in the school transition process. It looks at themes of resistance and agency and their contribution to successful school transitions for Mäori. The intention of this thesis is to showcase the voices of research participants as they reflect on being rangatahi Mäori on this journey. The voices provide a strong narrative as they share their personal stories which resonate such timeless themes as hope, fairness, determination, discernment and wisdom.

Through exploring the subject of this research, it is not my intent to regurgitate the standard story of Mäori education but to learn from those experiences and ultimately to provide some insight for future reference. What happens to rangatahi Mäori as they transition from secondary school does not happen in a vacuum. The history of schooling and the common themes across successive generations of Mäori students verifies

this. The historical context of schooling plays an important part in framing this research within a timeline "...of Päkehä-Mäori relations as dominance and subordination..." (Simon, 1990, p. ii). As put forward by Simon & Smith (2001, p. 198), schooling for Mäori students had a 'civilising' goal with Native Schools of the 1930s, employing strategies that acculturated Mäori into "...European ways of thinking and behaving – including, especially, the use of the English language". According to Walker (2005, p. 1), "Loss of language, culture and identity in the face of the invading culture was socially debilitating for Mäori". In a small way, these sentiments highlight the importance of the historical context to rangatahi Mäori school transitions.

Mapping the Journey to becoming a Thesis student

Although I have worked in the Mäori community and been committed to supporting rangatahi Mäori for the past 14 years, my research topic arose out of my involvement in the Education, Employment Linkages (EEL) research project (Dalziel *et al.*, 2007) of which I have been employed as a research assistant since 2007. The aim of the project is to answer the question: How can formal support systems best help young New Zealanders make good education employment linkages to benefit themselves, their communities, and the national economy? The specific purpose of my employment in the project is "…to research and deliver new knowledge about effective systems in Mäori and Pacific communities for helping young New Zealanders make good education employment linkages" (Dalziel *et al.*, 2007, p. v).

The five year EEL project funded through the Foundation of Research, Science and Technology (FRST) has become a valuable tool and resource in support of my own research into rangatahi Mäori school transitions, particularly in understanding the continually evolving terms and concepts associated with this subject. However, in order to inform and broaden my understanding I have taken an eclectic approach looking beyond the work of this project to the fields of history, political science, sociology and feminist studies. My own thesis looks purposefully at the experiences of rangatahi Mäori while at school and how this impacts on post-school opportunities and will contribute to the overall project through providing new understandings of Mäori student's experiences and aspirations.

In 2008, a CD featuring a selection of music about youth transition by Porirua-based artists was launched in Porirua. My initial understanding of the Transitions CD was that it was written by young people for young people in order to capture youth experiences of school to work transitions. My intention was to utilise the innovation of this project by focusing my research on the six rangatahi Mäori who contributed to the writing and performing of these songs. By documenting their experiences of lyric writing, I wanted to better understand their experiences of transition and their perception of formal school to work transition programmes. I saw the research as providing an opportunity for rangatahi Mäori to critically reflect on

writing about transition, in order to develop a deeper understanding of the process. However, I learnt that the Transitions CD was a marketing and promotions tool created by the Porirua Youth Transition Service to engage young people into their services. My focus then turned to interviewing six Porirua Māori about their experiences of transition. Although the research about the Transitions CD did not pan out, I was still able to interview two people who had directly contributed to this CD about their personal experience of school transition.

Despite the changes to my research, the purpose of the research has remained steadfast and concerned with:
- better understanding rangatahi Māori experiences of school transitions; and
- privileging rangatahi Māori voice by providing an opportunity for Māori to critically reflect on their actual school transition experiences.

Conclusion

As a scoping study my research is focused on how rangatahi Māori transition out of secondary school. I am concerned with drawing out the real experiences of Māori students and how these young people deal with their transition experiences. I am interested in exploring the aspirations of rangatahi Māori students and the contexts in which they made their transition decisions. Through locating my own school transition experiences, I feel better equipped to understand other Māori experiences of the same pathway. My personal insights were put into perspective through a reflection of the current state of rangatahi Māori secondary school transitions. This signalled that a disproportionate number of Māori were failing in mainstream education and that Māori students are held responsible for their own transitions.

Finding Māori participants for this research was a labour intensive process; however it enabled me to fully appreciate the work that goes into being a researcher and a thesis student. Although focussing on the Transitions CD did not pan out as I originally envisaged, it did start me on my journey towards depicting a picture of school transitions for young Māori. Even though I did not exclusively interview rangatahi Māori, I was able to engage with Māori research participants who were fully able to retell and 'talk back' (hooks, 1992b) their stories of being rangatahi Māori experiencing school transition.

3: Exploring the Issues

The purpose of this chapter is to critically explore the literature relevant to rangatahi Mäori school transition, especially as it relates to the experiences of the participants in this study. Thus the themes and content of the literature that I engage with have emerged out of the narratives of the participants' themselves, rather than what is currently known. There is a large volume of international and national literature that deals with the transitions of young people into further education and employment. However very little of that literature relates to indigenous communities and when examining the New Zealand context and Mäori school transitions, there is even less (Steedman, 2004). This gap is made more significant due to the deficit focus of the literature on indigenous and Mäori students (Loader & Dalgety, 2008; Quintini, 2008).

In order to understand the complexity of issues facing rangatahi Mäori, I have undertaken a review of relevant writing in the fields of sociology, postcolonial studies, youth studies, women's studies, education studies and Mäori education. Concepts such as resistance and marginalisation provide insight into the underlying issues of power, control, domination and oppression which feature in the narratives of the people interviewed for this research.

In this chapter, I tackle 'context' in two distinct sections: the first section highlights concerns about the current state of school transitions and ends with a critique of the only piece of research (to date) on rangatahi Mäori transitions from school; and the second section discusses the relevant theories that I consider helpful in understanding Mäori experiences.

The current state of school transitions concerns

The purpose of New Zealand's education system is to prepare young people to fulfil their potential and to be contributing members of a knowledge society (Institution of Professional Engineers New Zealand, 2001, cited in Hipkins, 2004, p. 2). The expectation is that young people will be educated for work – that is they will learn the knowledge and skills required for New Zealand's labour market. But this process of preparing young people for work is fraught and especially so for rangatahi Mäori. Notwithstanding the various options available for educating young people post-secondary school, New Zealand's colonial history and educational practices have worked to keep rangatahi Mäori on the margins (Sultana, 1989). While this has resulted in exiting school early and fewer school qualifications (Penetito, 2001, p. 17), it is rangatahi Mäori experiences while at school and the impact of their lived realities that is the focus of this research.

Many researchers have noted secondary school transition for young people is a time of complexity and change. What becomes problematic is the sheer number of options available to young people on leaving school. Do they go into training, further education or straight into employment? Aside from whether they have the prerequisite qualifications to have all options open to them, young people are expected to assume particular roles and responsibilities around employment and adulthood (Balter & Tamis-LeMonda, 2006, p. 473). In other words it is assumed that young people are agentic and are able to make effective decisions that are 'right' for them.

Young people and relational decision-making

The literature shows that in regards to choice, young people invest in a notion of 'careership'; a model proposed by Hodkinson, Sparkes & Hodkinson (1996, p. 3). This model puts forward three elements in the choices that young people make; pragmatic rationality, social interactions and progression over time. Pragmatic rationality (Hodkinson *et al.*, 1996 cited in Higgins, Vaughn, Phillips & Dalziel, 2008) maintains that "...rational elements can be identified but their presence or their absolute rationality is strongly tempered by pragmatism by the young people concerned" (Foskett & Hemsley-Brown, 2001, p. 115). This relates to how young people make actual choices based on their experiences. Social interactions constitute the key players involved in a young person's life and how young people engage with these people. Progression over time, the final element, highlights the importance that time plays in choice-making for young people. Hodkinson *et al.* (1996, p. 122) suggest that decisions about career that are based on pragmatic rationality are part of the development of 'habitus' as proposed by Bourdieu. Of particular interest is the way the model (Hodkinson *et al.*, 1996) highlights the influence that social interactions have on young people's decision-making and how decisions are culturally bound to their lives and identities. The relational aspect of this model speaks to the importance of relationships to Mäori through the notion of whakapapa. In the Mäori world; whänau, hapü and iwi are considered principle sites of identity formation, cultural reproduction and social interaction.

Current New Zealand research highlighted the impact that family have in the kind of decisions young people make (Higgins *et al*, 2008, p. 29). What is evident is the way in which "... family support can be contingent and differently enabling or constraining" (Vaughan, Roberts & Gardiner, 2006 cited in Higgins *et al.*, 2008, p. 30). Take for example poverty. Poverty as it relates to family is repeatedly shown to be a contributing factor that disadvantages young people and their career choices (Furlong, Biggart & Cartmel, 1996; Parsons & Welsh, 2002). Young people who live in poverty are more likely to go straight from school into work and less likely to come from homes that can afford to pay for studies post-secondary school (Bauder, 2001; Fernandez-Kelly, 1994; Villenas & Deyhle, 1999).

Identity and decision-making

Older studies such as Willis' *Learning to Labour (*1977) have highlighted the prominence of identity construction in learning to become workers. While Willis' work points to the formation of class-based identities, recent research in New Zealand posits that identities are more complex. Higgins *et al.* (2008, p. vi) argue that identity is "...relational, multiple, contested and dynamic", which in turn contributes further complexity to the already complicated process of career development for young people. The nuance involved with the changing and multiple ways of being Mäori adds a further layer. Mäori researcher, Belinda Borell (2005) suggests that urban Mäori youth should not be seen as less Mäori because they do not relate strongly with traditional Mäori forms of identification. Her research into urban-based rangatahi Mäori indicates that these young people utilise tikanga in a new way to make sense of their place in the world, thus establishing Mäori connections to urban settings such as streets, suburbs and cities as opposed to mountains, rivers and marae (2005, p. 203-204). In terms of a dynamic identity, Borell extends a challenge to a traditional understanding of Mäori identity, "Just as our tupuna in coming to Aotearoa would have constructed their identity in different ways in relation to their changing environments, so too today identity for young people was shaped by both the wider and local settings" (2005, p. 204).

Whänau

The literature verified family as an important component of career decision-making for rangatahi Mäori (Higgins *et al.*, 2008). This becomes a complicated proposition for rangatahi Mäori given the diverse experiences of what whänau means (Metge, 1995; Durie, 1998; Broughton, 1993; Walker, 1989). Important to this piece of research is a developing understanding of urban Mäori and the place of rangatahi Mäori within these whänau contexts. Professor Mason Durie (1994) provides much insight into whänau and the accountability of its members to ensuring its maintenance and wellbeing. A metaphoric understanding of whänau was provided by Metge (1995) who placed family within an ecological framework and system, which required regular maintenance. This has been shaped by Metge (1995) into the metaphor of 'te pä harakeke' or the flax bush, which has a structure that has been depicted as the family unit of tamaiti/child and mätua/parents who protect the child. The idea of the flax bush within an ecosystem takes into consideration the holistic application of whänau and that all life experiences converge. As with all ecosystems; symbiosis is achieved when everything is in balance (Durie, 2005).

Despite traditional understandings and metaphors of whänau, the actual lived experiences of urban whänau belie the romanticist view of what it means to be Mäori. Arohia Durie contends that "In a period of shifting cultural landscapes, precise definitions of identity become increasingly difficult to construct" (1997, p. 142). Present day whänau have become bifurcated and fragmented for a significant number of Mäori. However

Borell (2005) refutes the negative connotations associated with urban whänau and suggests that rangatahi Mäori still utilise Mäori forms of identification but in a contemporary way.

Rangatahi Mäori School Transitions

The one study that attempted to track the transition of rangatahi Mäori from secondary schooling was conducted by Mäori researcher Sally Steedman. This research, "Aspirations of rurally disadvantaged Maori youth for their transition from secondary school to further education or training and work" (Steedman, 2004) followed the assumption that rurally isolated rangatahi Mäori had limited access to education or training opportunities within their communities, and therefore had a disjointed transition into sustainable work or careers. Steedman (2004) investigated the educational and career aspirations of rurally isolated rangatahi Mäori, finding that attending urban-based tertiary institutions was seen to be a productive step towards sustainable employment. One of the factors that determined whether this transition was successful or not, was the availability through the tertiary institution, of pastoral care for young Mäori.

Although not directly involved with school transition for rangatahi Mäori, the research conducted for "Kids First – Taking Kids' Talk Seriously" (Smith, Smith, Boler, Kempton, Ormond, Cheuh & Waetford, 2002) saw a fundamental shift in how researchers approached young Mäori so that their voice and experience could be heard. This project showcased a process of focus groups and youth tribunals (Smith *et al.*, 2002) to elicit how rangatahi Mäori felt about economic and cultural change over a fifteen year timeframe by attending to such things as silence and exclusion that is often associated with being rangatahi Mäori, but rarely analysed. The metaphor of change often associated with transition played a significant role in "Kids First – Taking Kids' Talk Seriously" as it sought to provide critical reflection on how to research rangatahi Mäori without impeding their voice and experiences.

The effects of being educated through neo-liberal education policies and the impact of that on New Zealand young people's transition from secondary school is the subject of research project "Post-school Horizons: New Zealand's Neo-liberal Generation in Transition" (Nairn, Higgins & Ormond, 2007). Despite being a project about New Zealand young people in general, there is a rangatahi Mäori component to this research which addresses the experiences of young people and their self-worth as senior secondary school students contemplating post-school choices. This project contributes to what is known about senior secondary school students and how their experiences contribute to the New Zealand labour market crisis.

An exploration of relevant theory

In the following discussion, I critically reflect on theoretical concepts and themes that support rangatahi Māori experiences of secondary school transition. In the first part of this section I focus on theories that contextualise the experiences of rangatahi Māori. These theories look at the politics of knowledge and cultural capital. In the second part of this section, my intention is to look at resistance as a theory in its own right while combining that with enduring themes of resistance or 'resistance literature' (Harlow, 1987, p. 4) as privileged by this research. The resistance literature that I have chosen to sit alongside resistance theory is marginality, silencing, agency and transformative action.

The Politics of Knowledge

I have come to the understanding that the politics of knowledge within New Zealand secondary schools has limited rangatahi Māori choice. I use sociologist Basil Bernstein's understanding of the politics of knowledge, who suggests that "...symbolic control translates power relations into discourse and discourse into power relations" (1990, p. 134). Bernstein believed that teacher-student interaction was built on power relations and mirrored the relationship between schools and government control. According to Bernstein (1999), schooling is about regulation sustained by pedagogy. He argued that pedagogy "...is a sustained process whereby somebody(s) acquires new forms or develops existing forms of conduct, knowledge, practice and criteria, from somebody(s) or something deemed to be an appropriate provider and evaluator" (Bernstein, 1999, p. 259).

In supporting the power of knowledge to define, Bourdieu (1994, p. 134) introduces the schemata of classification; that words and names have the capacity to construct and express social reality. Bourdieu believed that the education system played an important part in class reproduction (Nash, 2003). This reiterated Bernstein's (1986) premise that classrooms reproduce power relations between teacher and student as expressed through language and knowledge.

Cultural Capital

Pierre Bourdieu (1996) provides further insight into how power relations are reproduced through the concept of cultural capital. Cultural capital is best understood in terms of differentiating between upper and lower 'class cultures'. Bourdieu believed that the upper or ruling class maintained the dominant cultural values of a society. This is supported by Fitzsimons (2000, p. 10) who highlights the inequalities present in neoliberal systems, "...just as our hegemonic state apparatuses are structured to favour those who already possess economic capital, so our educational institutions are structured to favour those who already possess cultural capital". Fitzsimons goes on to suggest that "...the school system transfers social class into academic

classification" (p. 11). Cultural capital came out of Bourdieu's classroom observations of power and control between teachers and school children. As part of cultural capital, Bourdieu provided the notion of 'symbolic violence' as "...a power which presupposes recognition, that is, misrecognition of the violence that is exercised through it" (1991, p. 209). This is supported by the concept of habitus which contends that "...culture exists within the individual and is constructed anew as each individual grows up in that culture" (Harker & McConnochie, 1985, p. 31).

The stark contrast between home life for rangatahi Māori and secondary school is an example of how the concept of symbolic violence proposed by Bourdieu contributes to underachievement for Māori students. That the cultural capital of Māori homes does not carry mana within the context of mainstream state schooling is a reality that marginalises Māori students and challenges Māori education. Even when schools try, Māori educator Huia Tomlins-Janke (2007) voiced dismay at the tokenistic strategies employed.

> Most Māori children in Aotearoa New Zealand are located in state mainstream schools where for many there is a disjuncture between the culture of the home and that of the school, between the lived realities of family and the school habitus. The term mainstream is a euphemism or code word for schools that privilege a western/Euro-centric education tradition. Mainstream schools in Aotearoa/New Zealand are controlled by those who have political, economic and cultural power and where western values, knowledge, culture and the English language are the central focus of the school habitus. Schools incorporate aspects of Māori language and culture as additions rather than core components of the curriculum or school knowledge.
> (Tomlins-Jahnke, 2007, p. 4)

Marginality

Marginalisation is an experience that many Māori students contend with throughout their time within the New Zealand education system. One of the explicit ways in which marginalisation is perpetrated and experienced is through deficit thinking. In relation to the marginalisation of rangatahi Māori, Māori academic Adreanne Ormond (2006, p. 121) touched on the Māori reality of being marginalised by the dominant "narrative of the outsiders". Ormond highlighted "...the relationship between the Pākehā-dominant and Māori minority social groups" (p. 120) and relates this to the experiences of young Māori from the Māhia Peninsula on the East Coast. She argued that the 'outsider' narrative is dualistic in function, helping the dominant Pākehā social group to reinterpret their connectedness to New Zealand while also framing Māori into the margins of belonging to Aotearoa.

Valencia (1997, cited in Reid, 2006) proposed six contributing characteristics that contribute to deficit thinking. These characteristics are: blaming the victim, oppression, pseudoscience, temporal changes,

heterodoxy and educability. According to Valencia, blaming the victim is a way to pinpoint the victim's problems. It goes on to compare the differences between the victim (disadvantaged) with advantaged people, blames those differences for causing the problem and concludes with the creation of an intervention to alleviate the issue/deficit. The characteristics of oppression, pseudoscience and temporal changes are closely interwoven and determine how Mäori are treated and how this treatment is supported by scientific and theoretical evidence that entail "...grossly inadequate verification processes..." (Reid, 2006, p. 23). Heterodoxy explains the resistant mentality of rangatahi Mäori who do not conform to the system and are therefore seen as deficit. This thinking assumes that intervention is the best method to educate the 'victim/resistor' (educability).

In the current schooling context for Mäori, one of the foremost programmes aimed at rejecting deficit thinking is Te Kotahitanga. Creator of Te Kotahitanga, Russell Bishop, challenged teachers through the programmes terms of reference to "...remain focused on the goal of raising Mäori students' achievement within a community that rejects deficit theorising of Mäori students and actively seeks to maintain agency" (cited in Black, 2008, para. 15). Bishop & Berryman (2006) posit that deficit thinking of teachers contributes to a negative schooling experience for Mäori students. They contend that relationships developed between Mäori students' and their teachers' are compromised if teachers believe that their students have 'deficiencies' (2006). In interviews with students, teachers, principals and whänau; Bishop & Berryman concluded that there were "...numerous examples of the negative aspects of deficit thinking, the resultant behaviours and the consequences for students and teachers" (2006, p. 267-268).

Silencing

In her 1990s analysis of an American school and their perception of high school drop outs, Michelle Fine (1991, p. 34) introduces the idea of silencing. Silencing signifies "…a terror of words, a fear of talk" (1991, p. 32) and its ability to "...deny students' lived experience and render them passive or resistant" (Piazza, 2003, para. 2). Silencing infiltrates itself into an educational setting through teachers either consciously or unconsciously overlooking students that seem to be failing. This is in preference of those who look like they want to learn (Abu El-Haj, 2005). In relation to rangatahi Mäori experiences, this highlights teacher treatment that forces Mäori students to the margins, the back of classrooms and to eventually leave school early. To be able to 'out' the privilege and power of educational settings and how it is able to establish and maintain silencing within schools has been the subject of much debate, particularly in regards to feminist and liberation writings (Weis, 2007).

In an ironic way silencing also works to highlight or emphasise the negative. This is revealed in the stereotype of 'at risk' which casually describes young people who do not conform or do not fit the 'norm'. This pathologising of young people as 'at risk' is problematic and buys into the rhetoric that young people require intervention (Valencia, 1997, cited in Reid, 2006). In a school setting, the label of 'at risk' is almost always associated with being a poor learner (Zyngier, 2004). Australian researcher Richard Zyngier (2004, p. 12) suggests that it "...is at the *messy point* of teachers and students responding to each other in relation to classroom discourse and assessment practices where we are truly going to see whether school is really for them". This is supported by Fiona Beals (2008) who studied New Zealand young people and their negative representation in youth crime, who points to the language that constructs youth deviance.

> In psychological constructions the young criminal who comes from a marginalized background is labelled a 'youth-at-risk'. Their pathology is within them and is a consequence of risk factors. In contrast, in sociological constructions, the same young criminal is seen as a 'juvenile delinquent'. Their pathology is now read as reaction and resistance towards society. It explicitly recognizes a struggle between the young person and society.
> (Beals, 2008, p. 12)

The idea that stereotypes can potentially represent divisions of power and control is proposed by Ungar (2004, p. 107) who contends that adult labels for young people such as 'deviant' contribute to the "...discursive power and definitional certainty one group imposes on another". Social constructionist theory argues that 'knowledge communities' define what knowledge is and maintain this knowledge through discourse. This aligns to the pervasive use of deficit-based language that permeates school transition for rangatahi Māori.

Spaces for resistance

Silencing is also perceived to be a strategy of resistance and emancipation; challenging the thinking that it is negative space for students (Weis, 2007). Weis & Fine (1993, p. 1) propose that "...within the very centers of structured silence can be heard the most critical and powerful". Silence provides the space for discursive students to reflect and talk back to those who legitimise the dominant discourse within secondary schools and promote the deficit perceptions of indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities.

In rethinking marginality, African American feminist writer bell hooks (1992a) considers marginality as a means of resistance and a conscious move away from a common deficit-based definition. Her placing of marginality into a holistic framework proposes a two-way relationship between the margin and the centre that implies both need each other to exist. She represents the centre as the authority and the status quo,

and alludes to this being a place where African Americans exist in subordinate roles. Being confined to the fringes essentially allowed hooks (1992a) to redefine these people as critically conscious, bicultural by nature and competent to live in both the margin and centre. hooks (1992a) notes the expertise that is required to understand the relationship, boundaries and reliance between the two. Her experiences provide a socio-historical snapshot of life on the fringes and how sustaining that marginality helps feed the 'fire' of resistance.

<u>Resistance</u>

There is a body of literature that supports the premise that indigenous students drop out of secondary schooling as a form of resistance. Frederick Erickson (1987), one of the main proponents of this school of thought, proposed in his seminal study on Native American students that messages promoted by the educational setting were actively resisted if they conflicted with the students' own cultural values and beliefs. Erickson contended that senior minority students lacked trust that schools could adequately prepare them for the labour market due to "...conflictual teacher-student interaction that derives in part from culturally differing communicative styles..." (1987, p. 345). He strongly aligned the 'cultural shock' associated with ethnic minority students entering classrooms (cited in Au, 2005, p. 82) to resistance.

Drawing upon Erickson, educational anthropologist John Ogbu suggested that resistance occurs for ethnic minority students due to the belief that the education system is fundamentally unfair. Ogbu (1990) proposed the cultural-ecological theory where minorities either voluntarily or involuntarily integrate into dominant society. Of concern to this thesis, Ogbu (1978) believed that involuntary minorities took on an oppositional identity to dominant society and its presumption that minorities should only expect jobs similar to their parents and communities. He insisted this was the reason why minority students "...failed to observe the link between educational achievement and access to jobs" (cited in Carter, 2005, p. 29).

In relation to a Mäori worldview, resistance has become synonymous with Tino Rangatiratanga. As a concept, Tino Rangatiratanga has made a fluid leap from a specific Treaty of Waitangi discourse to becoming the modern mantra for Mäori sovereignty (Walker, 1996, p. 131). Foremost Mäori academic Ranginui Walker (1990) systematically documented Mäori resistance measures through works such as *Ka whawhai tonu matou*, which helped shape the experiences of emerging Mäori academics.

> I navigated the turbulence of my undergraduate years at university eagerly clutching my copy of *Ka whawhai tonu matou* as if it were a kind of literary antidote to the pervasive Eurocentrism that characterised campus life and wider society! The overwhelming strength of Walker's account lay in its emphasis on the

rediscovery of the role of Mäori in history, not just as victims but as active agents who consciously contributed to the making of New Zealand history – even if they did so in circumstances not of their own choosing.
(Poata-Smith, 2005, p. 213)

The proposition that Päkehä-Mäori relationships relate to dominance and subordination (Simon, 1990) is not a new one. Postcolonial theorist Edward Said (1978) was one of the first people to argue that Western discourse framed the Orient as 'other' and therefore inferior. Said has been hugely influential on how Mäori understand their own 'other-ness' in relation to Päkehä and New Zealand. Walker (1996) explains how this uncomfortable association with 'other' has helped shape Mäori resistance.

The notion of kaupapa Mäori as a resistance to the construction of Mäori as the Other is problematic if Mäori are seen as having internalised the notion of the Other; if Mäori have become the Other. It is imperative to realise that Mäori do not see themselves as the Other. Many Mäori have never entertained the notion that we are somebody's Other, let alone being the Other to Päkehä.
(Walker, 1996, p. 120)

Agency

The capacity of rangatahi Mäori to be agents of change within their own lives is significant to the framing of this research. Agency relates to the ability of an individual to be an agent, make choices and to act on those choices. bell hooks (1992b) understands agency as the ability to talk back, particularly towards mainstream American culture and what she considers to be its intent on curbing marginalised peoples' need to speak out. 'Talking back' provides a platform for this thesis that allows the participants of the research to speak to their own experiences as rangatahi Mäori transitioning from secondary school. In her analysis, hooks uses the example of authoritarian tactics endured during her childhood years and expands on this sense of oppressiveness as an experience shared by dominated peoples (1992b). The need to break free of the chains of oppression helps hooks sustain a sense of agency through talking back. hooks views her personal resistance as a way to restore the spirit of those people who have endured oppressive situations.

In trawling the literature relating to rangatahi Mäori agency, it has been interesting to note the inclination to discuss this alongside Päkehä young people within urban-rural contexts. Smith *et al*. (2002, p. 177) contest that, "The view that youth are passive individuals waiting for adulthood has served to deny the possibility of young people exercising agency over their lives, making their own experiences and being engaged in purposeful and strategic analysis of social structures". Although much is made of the differences between New Zealand young people who are Mäori or Päkehä and who are either from urban or rural communities, the general position of these researchers (Smith *et al.*, 2002) is that the agency of young people comes from conscientisation (Freire, 1972) and is not exclusive to any one context or culture.

Transformative Action

Mäori educationalist Graham Hingangaroa Smith (2003) proposed the use of kaupapa Mäori theory as transformative action for Mäori. He contests that reconfiguring the long-established relationship between Freire's concepts of conscientisation, resistance and transformative action into a holistic framework helped to explain the real life stories that emerged out of Mäori participation in liberation education. This includes anecdotal stories of Mäori parents taking their children to Köhanga Reo not realising that this was transformative action, or of Mäori who resist mainstream education, not because of historical justification but because it continues to fail Mäori children. Instead of decolonisation, Smith proposes the idea of 'consciousness-raising' (2003) that allows Mäori to own their own history through understanding the dynamics at play. In relation to rangatahi Mäori school transitions, transformative action is part of resisting the status quo and relishing one's own cultural qualities. One of the transformative action strategies provided is training Mäori teachers to take on the role of 'change agent' (Smith, 2003) within Mäori schooling systems.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to provide insight around the body of knowledge that relates to rangatahi Mäori school transitions and the contexts that facilitate those processes. The current state of school transitions exposes the landscape that young Mäori contend with as they consider and make decisions post-secondary school. Through exploring these specific theories and their relevance to rangatahi Mäori school transitions I am proposing that the behaviours and experiences of young Mäori are heavily influenced by themes of resistance, marginality and silencing. My thesis suggests that these experiences contribute to the use of cultural capital and transformative action in transitioning.

I have chosen four key components of this chapter that have helped in the positioning of this thesis. These include: deficit-based literature, whänau, contextual themes and themes of resistance and action. In relation to the deficit focus of the literature, the generic New Zealand-based literature that frames Mäori transitions as problematic is a potential issue for rangatahi Mäori. I contend that there is an assumption about the linear equation of 'school to work transition' being accessible to all young New Zealanders. The literature does not adequately address issues of rangatahi Mäori school transitions and the one piece of literature that makes an attempt is questionable due to its highlighting of tertiary education.

The influence of family on school transitions is seen to play an important function, particularly for young New Zealanders. The Mäori literature asserts the role of whänau by exploring its many diverse manifestations. Of note is the multiple examples of urban whänau and how it has changed the way rangatahi

Māori identify as Māori. I am interested in knowing more about the impact of an urban identity on rangatahi Māori school transitions and the influence that whānau play in that identity. I put forward that whānau are the primary link for rangatahi Māori as they consider their options post-secondary school.

Through this chapter I proposed that the themes of politics of knowledge and cultural capital lucidly show the influence that context plays to rangatahi Māori school transitions. That the application of knowledge can be utilised as a tool of power and control in school systems further complicates the transition phase for rangatahi Māori. Add to this my argument that cultural capital plays its part in corroborating Māori experiences as deficit and the context that shapes rangatahi Māori school transitions becomes a veritable minefield.

The natural course of rangatahi Māori secondary school transitions which will be evidenced through the ensuing narratives of the research participants has allowed me to explore a number of themes and concepts around resistance and action. Out of these themes I believe that silencing as a form of resistance and agency as a form of action succinctly describe the experiences of rangatahi Māori as they contend with their various school transitions. Silencing has been linked to students withdrawing themselves from confrontational situations, also allowing for an expanse of stereotypical attitudes and labels placed on rangatahi Māori in relation to their transition experiences. The ability of rangatahi Māori to speak out and 'talk back' to their experiences should be a key part of an agentic journey. Agency has emerged out of an awareness of the contexts and concepts which have helped shape these experiences.

4. Methodology & Method

> We have a history of people putting Mäori under a microscope in the same way a scientist looks at an insect. The ones doing the looking are giving themselves the power to define.
> (Mita, 1989)

Kaupapa Mäori Theory

In considering the kind of methodology and method that I wanted to use, a kaupapa Mäori conceptual framework allowed me to think about the issues raised by this research and to analyse new knowledge from a Mäori worldview. Thus it is my intention to privilege kaupapa Mäori theory as the conceptual framework for this study. This is alongside what Professor Linda Smith has touted "setting a new agenda" (Smith, 1999, p. 107), in that being Mäori and understanding things from a *te ao Mäori* worldview is to be championed and validated. Due to the eclectic and multidisciplinary nature of kaupapa Mäori theory and all through a *matauranga Mäori* lens, this research draws on the most relevant research tools to answer my research question.

I employ *matauranga Mäori* as a device that helps me conceptualise what I have be shown through this research. If kaupapa Mäori theory helped shape the context for my research, then *matauranga Mäori* provided clarity and perspective when needing to address issues with this theory. In addition, my research approach was also informed by phenomenology, critical theory and narrative inquiry. Specifically I used narrative inquiry (Olson & Shopes, 1991) as a research method to understand rangatahi Mäori experiences of school transitions. The following matrix helps to understand the terminology used in this chapter and how they contribute to the overall research design.

Table. 1
Research Matrix

Design	Method	Methodology	Tools
Kaupapa Mäori Theory	Narrative Inquiry	Kaupapa Mäori Theory	Matauranga Mäori
			Phenomenology
			Critical Theory

A Kaupapa Mäori Paradigm

Kaupapa Mäori research is a collection of different perspectives explored by different Mäori researchers (Smith, 1999; Smith, 1997; Bishop, 1996; Cunningham, 2000; Durie, 1984). What seems to be common across the different perspectives is that kaupapa Mäori theory is a philosophical undertaking, a practical application as well as a political orientation. The philosophical bearings relate to a traditional Mäori cultural worldview with the practical use focusing more on a 'how to' approach to working with Mäori participants.

The political orientation refers to the standpoint I make as a Mäori researcher to privilege Mäori ways of understanding and doing things. It is important that I ground this research within a Mäori paradigm, as the context is intrinsically Mäori and the outcome will be significant within the Mäori community.

Kaupapa Mäori provides the research community with a holistic approach that aims to keep 'whole' that which was 'whole' before the arrival of the researcher (Durie, 1984). This method is conducive with the ethical understanding to 'do no harm', relying on good solid information and knowledge of the setting and its peoples. Researching the literature around applications for kaupapa Mäori research has been an ongoing process, as well as employing the art of subtlety so I could work more effectively with the Mäori research participants that I had the privilege to work with.

Sympathy should not replace subtlety and researchers should not perceive Mäori communities and participants as 'victims'. This is supported by Smith (1999) who believes that in these current times, Mäori no longer see themselves as victims of western influence. In relation to the researcher, the challenge is to provide a context for supporting research participants to critically reflect on the past grievances that have impacted on their experiences, so that learning and understanding can take place. Kaupapa Mäori research due to its proactive nature, is a response to the historically negative experiences that Mäori have had with research. Kaupapa Mäori is seen to be a research paradigm that recognises and accommodates the uniqueness of Mäori research, by Mäori, for Mäori. This is the most empowering statement of all.

The Type of Design Used

For this thesis, I have used a qualitative design. Specifically I have used a narrative inquiry approach which relies on the process of gathering information through storytelling (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). This is in line with Eisner's (1991) belief that the purpose of the research is to sufficiently understand the complexity of issues that emerge out of qualitative research and particularly through narrative accounts of the participants' experiences. Eisner (1991) suggests a number of distinctive factors make up a good qualitative design. These include the following three factors which help to underpin the research orientation for my thesis:

> *Coherence*: Does the story make sense? How have the conclusions been supported? To what extent have multiple data sources been used to give credence to the interpretation that has been made?
> *Consensus*: The condition in which the readers of a work concur that the findings and/or interpretations reported by the investigator are consistent with their own experience or with the evidence presented.

Instrumental Utility: The most important test of any qualitative study is its usefulness. A good qualitative study can help us understand a situation that would otherwise be enigmatic or confusing.
(Eisner, 1991, p. 53-58)

In posing my research question from within a qualitative framework, I am participating in a process which is shifting away from the positivist paradigm. What really excites me about this research design is the importance that is placed on meaning and interpretation of people's lives within their cultural contexts. Thomas (1993, p. 232) understands that through this form of inquiry there is potential to develop "...shared or negotiated meanings and shared and negotiated interpretations of both behaviours and thoughts". This rich collection of meanings allows for a focus on multiple expressions of ideas, thoughts and perspectives opposed to a singular focus on one specific measurement.

Assumptions and Rationale for a Qualitative Design

According to Mataira (2003), qualitative design in relation to Mäori research exists both within a phenomenological and subjectivist worldview. How people experience those things observed and understood is of great importance to Mäori who are interested in engaging in dialogue that draws out 'meaning' (Mataira, 2003). Along the same lines, Bishop (1996) suggests a reliable research design is one that does not isolate Mäori from their own lives. He goes on to argue that story-telling is a good way to engage and empower Mäori participants in research (Bishop, 1996). The expectation from this line of thinking is that Mäori research participants respond better to qualitative techniques that will embrace their need to talk through and make meaning from their lived experiences.

The rationale for a qualitative design is underpinned by a declaration from Strauss & Corbin (1990) that qualitative methods can be used when attempting to know more about a phenomenon than what was previously known. This presumption gives credence to the appropriateness of using a qualitative design as a way to give back to the Mäori research participants, particularly when aligned with the following quote from Lincoln & Guba (1985, p. 120), "If you want people to understand better than they otherwise might, provide them information in the form in which they usually experience it".

The Rationale for a Narrative Inquiry Approach

I have used the narrative inquiry approach in line with what Bishop (1996) understands to be Mäori research. This is not just a matter of listening, recording or re-telling stories of subjects but of adequately and accurately responding to what the stories mean for participants (Bishop, 1996). I am a firm believer in the research participants being given the opportunity to tell their story (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). As a

researcher within a Mäori context, this corresponds with Smith (1999, p. 120) and her list of ethical considerations for working with Mäori, particularly understanding 'Titiro, whakarongo…korero', which literally translates into 'Look listen…talk'. Within my own research, I have needed to be firmly aware of the shifting parameters of context, to humble myself by responding appropriately to what is going on around me and to listen to the narratives in a culturally and contextually sensitive way. In doing so, the intention is to neutralise the traditional power and control which is typically held by the researcher.

Narrative inquiry relies on the telling of stories by research participants and each story told allows for content to build and common meanings to emerge (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). It is through this process of telling and re-telling stories and deriving meaning from the sharing of these stories, which reminds me of the strong similarities between this exchange and Mäori cultural processes such as whakawhänaungatanga or connecting to others through family or life experiences. The opportunity to utilise this approach through a matauranga Mäori lens, highlights the richness of Mäori cultural processes such as whakawhänaungatanga which locates both researcher and research participant in a holistic and relational framework.

Focused Life Story Interviewing

The sensitivity enmeshed in the focused life story interview process was the initial factor that attracted me to this method. This led to questioning how this method could ensure that the research participant sets the pace for the interview, which led me to investigate further. I wanted to understand whether this process would fit within my research. How the researcher utilised counselling micro-skills such as listening, clarifying and reflecting; all the while looking out for gaps in the story in the hope of drawing these out from the research participant. These factors compelled me to look further into this method.

The notion that focused life story interviewing is empowering to the research participant (Bishop, 1996; Olson & Shopes, 1991) is one of the benefits of this method. This fitted in with my role as a researcher who wanted to 'let go' of the process and allow the spontaneity of the moment to create its own magic. Focused life story interviewing places emphasis on the life of the research participant, so much so, that the interview process is biographic. Humour plays an important function in bringing out the life experiences of the research participants', and even when this sounds stereotypical of Mäori, the use of humour in a Mäori context is an accepted practice (Holmes, 2007).

Analysing the Data

> So transition research in New Zealand has to get beyond linear models of
> transition-to-work. It needs to take more of a "life-course" approach. It needs to
> come to terms with all the dimensions and meanings of work and other life
> experiences. It needs to examine the different ways that those dimensions are
> structured and limited, and maintained and challenged. And finally, it needs to put
> young people's perspectives at the centre, to acknowledge the different meanings
> of life events, and the different forms that can be given to adulthood.
> (Vaughan, 2003, para. 50)

I have used inductive reasoning as a means to analyse the data collected through this research, as discussed by Strauss and Corbin (1990). This looks at how the researcher develops themes out of the data, and to what Eisner (1991, p. 190) ascertains to be the role of the researcher to "...distil the material they have put together". The data collected includes notes, interview transcripts, ideas, comments and reflections which are used to "...inductively generate thematic categories" (Eisner, 1991, p. 189).

In relation to my research, I was able to interview the research participants, categorise the interviews, and identify a variety of themes all of which were developed inductively by me as the researcher. I then went through the process of going through high order and low order themes to organise my thoughts about the data. This provided me with a thorough system of analysis and a solid means of justification for the use of such analysis within my research. What emerged out of the analysis was the possibility that my interpretation of the data could taint its reliability. I have covered this through my research by employing triangulation and not relying on one source of data and confirmability. This use of the data to help ground my analysis meant that I did not have any preconceived ideas about what should be said out of the research. How I went about finding the literature, my analysis and the reading of the literature arose out of the data itself and that was a determining factor in the writing of this chapter and the research. This was supported by an extensive range of collected data that allowed for a transparent audit process to offset any possible analytical anomalies.

Method

As part of this research I interviewed six people about their experiences as rangatahi Māori. I used a narrative approach to elicit answers to the research question through individual interviews. The research participants' spoke candidly about their experiences of secondary school transitions. Russell Bishop talks about story-telling and its capacity to capture the "...diversities of truth" (cited in Smith, 1999, p. 145). Aligned to this research, this shared understanding gave control over to the research participants', to give

voice to their experiences. It allowed participants to share in their own speak, of their own accord and in a location in which they felt comfortable.

Participants

The six research participants were sampled from the community of Porirua. Two of the participants were directly involved in the Porirua Youth Transition Service and the Transitions CD, and two other participants had indirect involvement into this project. The remaining two participants were part of sports clubs based in Porirua. Due to my existing networks with the Porirua Youth Transition Services and Porirua sports clubs, I had to ensure that there was no compulsion on behalf of the participants in this research, and this was clearly outlined in the consent form. Participants were formally invited to participate in my research of which they all accepted.

To allow the research participants to explore the depth of their experiences relating to secondary school transitions, I used pseudonyms instead of their real names. The anonymity allowed research participants to speak freely and be reflexive about their experiences. Ensuring that research participants remained anonymous is in line with ethics approval from the human ethics committee with Victoria University of Wellington.

Ethics

I followed Victoria University of Wellington human ethics guidelines and my ethics proposal was approved for this particular research. As part of that approval I was expected to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of research participants as explained above. This included the assurance that any personal information that might identify particular research participants was not accessible through this research.

Alongside this, I utilised a 'checking in' process for interview transcripts that were made available for amendment by the research participants. Despite participants choosing not to check their specific transcripts, commenting that they had placed trust in me as the researcher and into the process, I felt compelled to encourage them to take up the opportunity. However and ultimately, I respected their decisions not to check. I align this expression of trust to 'aroha ki te tangata', one of seven kaupapa Māori practices developed by Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999, p. 120). This practice demonstrates the capacity for respect between people and specifically addresses research participants' abilities to "...define their own space and to meet on their own terms" (Pipi, Cram, Hawke, Hawke, Huriwai, Mataki, Milne, Morgan, Tuhaka & Tuuta, 2004, p. 145). As anticipated, data collection and data management were integral components of the ethics approval and are explained further in the next two sections.

Data collection comprised of individual narratives. These individual narratives allowed participants to share about their secondary school transitions. This approach derived from the life story model extensively discussed by Olson & Shopes (1991) with its focus more on the 'lived life' rather than the 'told story' (Bornat, 2001). This has been likened to a Mäori way of working (Dyall, Bridgman, Bidois, Gurney, Hawira, Tangitu, Huata, 1999).

In relation to working with Mäori, this approach to interviewing was conducive to the discussion of *tapu* subjects, encouraging a reflexive, narrative style where the research participant set the pace and I listened, clarified, probed and brought up other subjects when required (Ministry of Social Development, 2005a). This relaxed, almost conversational approach to data collection enabled research participants to be at ease with the process, which is not only culturally appropriate but also empowering in nature (Bishop, 1996).

Other data collected included public domain literature about rangatahi Mäori and secondary school transitions. This amounted to journal articles, theses and research papers related to the subject of rangatahi Mäori school transitions.

Managing and Recording Data Strategies

As described in Miles & Huberman (1994), data management takes into consideration a plan for both storage and retrieval strategies. In relation to this research the requirement for managing data included how the data would be collected, how it would be stored, how it would be retrieved from storage and for how long it would be required. For my research, raw data was collected solely through tape recordings, which were transcribed into written material which were securely stored in a lockable filing cabinet. This data was retrieved when required, and will be stored for five years from when the research has been completed, to ensure evidence is available to check the authenticity of the research.

Conclusion

The method and methodology for my research is encapsulated by Kaupapa Mäori theory. As a philosophy, Kaupapa Mäori theory provides a set of tikanga and kawa that ground the research. As a practical framework, this theory speaks directly to the Mäori community and research participants; its application ensuring the integrity of my work. In being able to communicate in an effective way with the participants of this research, a qualitative approach was proposed and narrative inquiry and story-telling were the key tools to be able to analyse and make sense of the participant's experiences. The ability to locate these experiences

and to talk through what they mean in relation to rangatahi Mäori secondary schooling transitions is a key task of the method and methodology for this research.

5. Findings

In this chapter I discuss the findings from my research. As part of this thesis I interviewed six urban-based Mäori about their experiences of school transitions; Ben, Sarah, Josh, Hunia, Tony and Terina[1]. At the time of these interviews, 19 year old Ben worked in the building industry, 24 year old Sarah worked as a youth tutor, 27 year old Josh attended polytechnic, 28 year old Hunia worked in community mental health, 37 year old Tony worked with young people and 36 year old Terina was a community worker. As the data unfolded, there were two main themes that emerged from the interviews; one of those themes provided a context for participant experiences of the fringes and the other theme dealt with how rangatahi Mäori make use of transformative action. Both themes relate specifically to the research question – How do rangatahi Mäori think about and negotiate pathways out of school?

This research is concerned with Mäori school transitions, so education is accorded a place of significance through the research interviews. Experiences of school and the interface between completion of school and the actual transition interweave itself through the themes the research participants engage in, particularly as they reflect on their experiences. It is important to note that the research participants' themselves positioned secondary school as the integral start point to school transitions, hence the interconnection between the significance of school and their experiences of that transition.

On the Fringes

<u>School Transitions</u>

Out of the six research participants, Josh provided the strongest narrative about the limitations of school transitions for rangatahi Mäori. Anecdotally, his eventual exit out of secondary school was not typical of either Mäori or non-Mäori students. In his final year of secondary school, Josh was a chronic truant whose mother was a factory shift worker. Correspondence from the school to his mother was intercepted by Josh and for several months he remained lost in the school system. However due to a rugby scholarship which meant that end of year exams for Josh had already been paid for, he came back and passed three of the five exams that he sat. From there, he left school only to be contacted by a former Mäori teacher who had helped him considerably. This teacher informed Josh that a scholarship had become available for a university bridging course and after being interviewed, he was selected for the scholarship that began his university career.

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[1] The names of those interviewed have been withheld. The names used in this research are pseudonyms.

When first asked about the role of schools in transition, Josh felt strongly that teachers expected that he should do what most students from his secondary school were doing by following the 'norm'. According to school, this entailed completing secondary school education, leaving school and continuing on the linear pathway to either employment or further education. However, the contested status of Māori students as they work through transitioning out of secondary school requires a heavy reliance on school supports. The reality of post-school experiences is that they do not always correspond with the school to work transition rhetoric; 'work hard at school and you will get a good job.' The reality, as reiterated by Josh, was that the volatility of labour markets meant that jobs were not always there for transitioning secondary school students:

> Josh: I just don't think college teaches you anything about leaving college and finding a job. They don't tell you anything about finding a job or how to get a job or what kind of jobs there are. Pretty much it's just the high profile jobs that are talked about. It's just like an All Black, not everyone can be an All Black, yeah but they don't tell you that. They just keep pushing and saying oh if you keep training every day, you'll be an All Black. There are five hundred thousand people being told the same story! There aren't five hundred thousand jerseys. It's so small, so if you widen it and just say, you could be a Super 14 player. Why not Super 14? They make money, and there's way more jerseys to grab.

A significant limitation for rangatahi Māori as they participated in secondary schooling was whether the school implemented a streaming system, grouping particular students by their academic abilities. It became clear to Josh that equal opportunity for all students at his secondary school was a myth:

> Josh: It was a white school, and then it was streamed which made it worse because they put all the dumb people in the dumb area, they kept them all together. If you couldn't write a story you weren't normal at college, well at the college that I went. So you knew who were all the brainy people and you knew who were all the dumb people.

Feeling sidelined and labelled while at school seemed like the normal thing for Josh, especially if you were Māori or Pacific Islander. Josh spoke candidly about the sense of invisibility that pre-empted the failure that he and a lot of his friends felt during their school transitions:

> Josh: Nobody's going to hit you up. If you don't do it, you fail and you know you just look like a dickhead. And that's what we probably looked like thinking about it now, probably looked like dickheads because we just didn't do it.

The eventual pathways of friends and family really began to impact on Josh. It is hard to fathom the discourse of failure which many of his friends and family members were situated in whilst at secondary school. His reflections highlight the importance of whānau and friends to this transition. Josh is highly critical

of the school system and the transitions structure which inevitably left many of his friends feeling marginalised:

> Josh: By the time they get to 18 they leave as failures, and they don't want to go back into a class, into learning again because they've already failed. So when you're 18 and everyone's going off to university, you're 18 and got nowhere to go, you don't want to go to polytech because you look like a dumb dude and you're 18, and you have to start learning again and you've just failed college.

There is an assumption at secondary school, that polytechnics and vocational training are the 'poor cousins' to universities and academia. The challenge came as Josh realises that secondary schools should be giving everyone the same opportunities, whether they be academic or vocational. That the majority of students that Josh knew were not able to follow their natural inclinations identified to him the impact of being on the fringes while at school:

> Josh: If the kids want to be lawyers and doctors and think they have what it takes to do that, let them go. That's what schools have been doing anyway, but then let the others have an option as well, don't just close them off, don't let them sit in schools till they're 18 and have nothing. That ruins their spirit and everything.

Perpetuated in a secondary school system, transition for Māori students can be as fickle as believing that it can be a successful process. Good luck seems to be the only reason Josh could pinpoint as to why he was given a university scholarship; however that same luck was not present for other family members and friends. Being told to have faith when reality is tough does not necessarily materialise into successful transitions:

> Josh: They always say have hope but when everything's gone and you have nothing left, hope doesn't give you much, doesn't give you any security, doesn't give you a job.

Tony was the elder of the group interviewed for my thesis, at the age of 37. His own experiences were complimented by the current experiences of his teenage daughter, as he spoke from the perspective of being rangatahi Māori in the 1980s and also being an active and concerned father to a teenage daughter currently experiencing school. This ability of dual reflection both as student and father allowed Tony to engage in comparative analysis between secondary schooling of the 1980s and today. Reflecting back on his own secondary schooling, Tony spoke about his first experiences of school transition:

> Tony: I went to boarding school, so being at school meant that you were already separated from mainstream, so we didn't have the same sort of ideas. We had an English teacher who did normal teacher things and had fifty billion other things she had to do as well. She started doing a bit of transition in my last year. We didn't

know what the hell that was but we did understand. She was talking about cooking and doing some of the life skills part and that was good, but with regards to a career, nothing.

A challenge to wisdom is that once you have experienced an event and have reflected on it, then your future experiences are duly changed. In the case of Tony, the reflection is on a school subject that he believed had no relevance in his teenage life and which in his adult life still isn't relevant:

> Tony: All through school there'd be no talk about the relevance between vectors and things in mathematics, algebra and how that was going to help us when we left school and as kids we were already thinking about that, thinking I am never going to use this in my lifetime and I can safely say that I've never used a vector in my life with any of the jobs I've had.

From the oldest research participant to Ben the youngest of the six interviewed at the age of 19. At the time of the interview, Ben had just become a first-time father. When it came to the subject of mathematics, I saw the same gleam in Ben's eyes as he spoke about his precious little boy. This gleam of excitement slowly faded away as he began to speak of teachers and their conviction that they knew a better pathway for him. The assumption that rangatahi Māori are only good for manual labour is an assumption that instantly changed secondary schooling for Ben:

> Ben: Yeah, they said I'd be good out there in the workforce and on building sites and that I could use my mathematics but that's not what I really wanted to be. I mean I'd give anything up for maths back in the day. I would have given everything up.

Teachers and Power

19 year old Ben offered the most compelling insight into the power of secondary school teachers and how that can impact on transition for rangatahi Māori. The youngest of four children, Ben considered himself a somewhat 'cheeky' and naturally inquisitive person who gravitated towards likeminded Māori and Pacific Island friends while at secondary school. This did not bode well with the school hierarchy and subsequently, Ben found himself regularly in trouble. It was proposed to him that he should take up a pre-trades course. Ultimately, Ben felt that he was being forced to accept a transition from secondary school which seemed logical, his father and older brother were both in the building industry, but which he did not feel passionate about. Ben enjoyed mathematics and had excelled in this for most of his schooling career. He imagined that he could have taken mathematics to a university level, had he been given the chance. Instead at 15, Ben was asked to leave school. It took him about six months to find his own job, which he did and was proud of.

There is a realisation by the research participants that power and control are established characteristics demonstrated by teachers in New Zealand secondary schools. This has seen the emergence of hopelessness from Māori at the perceived actions and suggestions of those people charged with the responsibility of teaching. Through his continued experience of school, Ben became resigned to the fact that whatever he did, his pathway had already been set:

> Ben: I felt the teachers kind of pushed me away from secondary school and wanted me to do a pre-trades course to get me out into the workforce as soon as possible.

When parents believe it to be their duty to save their children from school teachers, then warning bells must signal that school can damage the confidence of rangatahi Māori. Ben reflected on his mother's involvement in his secondary schooling and her concern for his wellbeing:

> Ben: My mum wanted me to get out of school because she didn't think what they were teaching me was the right thing, so she didn't want them to torment me in any way and that, and for me to do the wrong thing so I thought it'd just be easier if I moved on.

That schooling and teacher experiences for rangatahi Māori have changed very little over the generations is a realisation that Tony as a parent is facing today. How Māori are treated in school is something that Tony experienced as a young person and something that he is still experiencing as a parent:

> Tony: My daughter was getting a detention all the time for not wearing her blazer between classes, and I was gutted, because the girl was there. And then she got detention for wagging class. They found her in the library finishing her homework. Why didn't she go to Māori? She hadn't finished her homework and was trying to finish it. They gave her detention. I think that's just wrong. Where was the praise saying it was amazing that she was still there on school grounds, trying to get it finished? Not the greatest way of going about it but it would have resolved the whole thing, instead of her coming home after school and breaking down at the kitchen table; so dumb.

A conflict between school and parents showcases a battle that Tony champions on behalf of his teenage daughter. The blame placed on Māori parents and home life is the motivation that Tony needed to challenge the school and their lack of responsibility:

> Tony: She did, she did wag after that, and they ring up and I'm like this is your fault. This is your fault, and there they were trying to tell me that perhaps it's the parenting and I was like, hang on a minute, how about we talk about this on Campbell Live? And they usually calm down pretty quickly after that because they don't want their school in a bad light. And that's the other thing really; families, they don't air their concerns and neither do schools.

The experience of learning at secondary school combined with an impending sense that failure is inevitable is something that Tony spoke passionately about during the interview. The double bind created whether germinated by a state of mind or from the actual experience, sits uncomfortably for Mäori students as they participate at school. Tony found it hard to believe that there was such a thing as a level playing field when things felt like they were stacked against you:

> Tony: You're already expecting to get in trouble. You know it's going to happen, you're trying to avoid it but it's going to come.

At 36, Terina probably had the most regret when it came to her reflections on the amount of power she felt she gave over to teachers. Not knowing what to expect from teachers became a reason for failure for Terina. As she looked back on her time as a senior secondary school student, Terina engaged with the hopelessness she felt at not knowing what do to:

> Terina: Sometimes punishment had no rhyme or reason, so you didn't know why things happened. Shame took math's away from me because I reckon the math's teacher had a problem, not sure what that was but I copped it. Teachers from time to time would have a go at me, by the time I got to sixth and seventh form there weren't many Mäori students left, that was kind of sad as well. Made you feel like leaving as well, although I'm not sure why I stayed so long. I was a good student, but I knew nothing was going to come of that and I didn't have any clue what I wanted to be.

In relation to a 5th form mathematics teacher who popped up in her narratives time and again, Terina really began to see patterns when it came to Päkehä men and her adult fear of addressing conflict. Terina noted an anticipated habit of running away from such conflicts:

> Terina: I really didn't mind math's until he became my math's teacher, then I kind of started failing it and I was failing because it felt like he was constantly on me about doing better. The more he pushed, the more I hated maths. To the point where I decided not going to class was easier than having to deal with him. That thinking has followed me through my life, when I know I've run away from something because I'm not comfortable with pushy people, pushy situations.

Youth tutor Sarah really impressed to me that her time at secondary school marked a low point in her life, where she rebelled against teachers she felt did not give her any opportunity to express herself. Her experiences of school and teachers were that teachers were not compelled to explain their actions even when Sarah's actions were under constant scrutiny:

> Sarah: I didn't understand it because they never explained it. It was like, don't do this, don't do that, don't swear but no explanation behind it and when you asked why? It would be detention, detention! Get out of my class! Withdrawal room!

Being Mäori

Out of the six research participants, Hunia consistently acknowledged the struggles involved with being Mäori and living in the city. His school to work transitions were orchestrated by his mum, who supported Hunia to change secondary schools to get him away from the negative influences of underachievement and peer pressure. The secondary school which he ended up at was located in another town. Hunia did not complete his senior year at this college and secured interviews at a couple of local businesses. After the job interviews, Hunia was guaranteed a job only for it to fall through, for reasons he could not comprehend. Hunia confessed to loafing around and getting into some minor trouble while waiting on a start date for a course he wanted to do. While in this transition, his Uncle provided temporary work with a painting job.

In relation to being Mäori, Hunia acknowledged the magnitude of grief and loss associated with identifying as Mäori; that Mäori people have inherited hardships and disadvantages that have entrenched silence and oppression. Interjected through the interview were moments where Hunia reasserted for himself what it meant to be Mäori and how that has been emotionally, physically and spiritually damaged by racism and colonialism:

> Hunia: Harder for me being Mäori is our mamae, our hurt that we carry from colonisation I suppose and I don't think a lot of our urban Mäori carry it consciously but it's there. I think the old term post-traumatic colonisation syndrome got laughed at when it came out but there's some truth in that. I think that from a land where we were kings, queens, we ruled the lands. Now we pay taxes, we pay the government money so that we can live in a unit.

Hunia, like others interviewed through the research, felt the responsibility of not asking too much of whänau when it came to money. The circumstances at home provided a strong rationale for Hunia as he reflected on the unnecessary burdening of his parents:

> Hunia: They were pretty big on letting us know there wasn't a lot of money, so please stop asking. So yeah, I didn't bug my parents for $45 for a calculator. Most years I didn't tell my parents when we were having school photos because asking my parents for $25 for a set of photos seemed too much. Mum would always get upset, why didn't you tell us? We could have put some money aside but at the time, I just thought it wasn't worth it but yeah that's the way I saw my parents.

On the other side of the financial spectrum, boredom and the idea of instant hope that link up with Poker machines, the TAB and Lotto tickets indicate the 'quick fix' mentality that Josh associated with his father. In a community where pathways to the 'quick fix' are easily found, Josh reflected on the conflict of two realities, one reality which is about a history and reliance on low paying manual labour and the other, of dreaming big:

Josh: People have to accept that not all of us are going to live high lives, but live comfortable lives. You're not going to be broke, you aren't going to be super rich but you're not going to struggle. That's why I think Māori and Pacific Island parents buy into it because it's like the lotto. When my son finishes college and goes to university and straight away they think everything's going to happen, our houses, our cars but it's a struggle.

The dichotomies presented by being 'dumb' or 'smart' grated at Tony through the interview. At the Māori boarding school that he attended, his fellow Māori students participated in hegemonic practices that dictated what was 'dumb' and what was 'smart' according to traits that belonged to the dominant culture. The influence of the 'Māori' accent equated being Māori to being 'dumb', the irony of which was not lost on Tony:

Tony: Then you had the accent aye bro, and in my time there was a lot of trying to get rid of that. There was a lot of almost trying to play another existence because you didn't want to play dumb, because to have a Māori accent was considered dumb.

Access to ideal career pathways for some young people was solely due to family role models, which is the reason why Josh believes successful jobs can be difficult to access for rangatahi Māori. Josh believed that history played a crucial role in whether young Māori should aspire to a particular career or not:

Josh: I think parents have to accept that not every student is going to be a lawyer, not especially Pacific Islanders and Māori because they don't have lawyers in their history. They don't have grandmothers and grandfathers that were lawyers and judges that were scientists related to Ken Rutherford and stuff. That's not their history.

Josh believed that Māori students were missing out because of a lack of understanding of how one gets a 'top' job and how one enters into such professions. He thought privileged people easily understood how to gain access to privileged jobs:

Josh: They can see that their dad's a lawyer. Well it's pretty hard to see what a lawyer does, what kind of business they have to do if you're dad's a factory worker, your grandfather was a farmhand or something like that. It's pretty hard to see what lawyers do. Those kids whose parents are lawyers, or even teachers, they get to see all that. They get to see what their parents do.

While talking about differences between her own school experiences and that of her younger sisters, Sarah mentioned the importance and influence of friends to school transitions. The reflection allowed Sarah to recognise the positive people that her sister had around her:

> Sarah: Definitely, people you hang out with, have a lot to do with the track you go down and what you do.

Hindsight and the ability to be discerning go hand in hand for Terina who talked through what it meant to be Māori and being realistic about what is out there after leaving secondary school:

> Terina: I think experience probably tempers those dreams, brings them down into reality. Once you know what's out there, you certainly do learn to curb your aspirations and dreams into something achievable. Well that's what I learnt; otherwise it's just wishful thinking.

Being Māori in Ben's experience was having limited choices when it came to school transitions. Although he felt that he was forced out of school by teacher opinion of what employment pathway was best for him, Ben also recounted a friend's transition and the similarities between both:

> Ben: He just gave the teacher a hiding and got expelled. He went a different way about it. But either way we both lost except he didn't put up with the loss.

Schooling Māori Students

Sarah regularly acknowledged throughout her interview that she was constantly in trouble at college, and that trouble stemmed from her being at a 'white' school when she was so obviously 'Māori'. It was when Sarah left secondary school and considered her post-school options that she began to feel increasingly vulnerable. Organisations that she expected help from were not helpful and she soon realised that if she was going to get anywhere, she'd have to do it herself.

On leaving secondary school things did not get better for Sarah as she talked about being a young person and what it meant to be talked down to by adults charged with the responsibility of supporting her transition:

> Sarah: Honestly a lot of it has got to do with not understanding exactly what it is people are wanting from you, because I know through my own experiences when I left school, I think it was, I can't remember the service, but I think it was through WINZ anyway, but they tried to put me through some work thing and I didn't know what they meant because it was an adult talking big words and stuff, and that was a lot of the time I wouldn't return calls.

Sarah spoke about her experiences in talking with adults who were meant to be supporting her transition out of school. What actually eventuated was that these adults made her feel inferior through their total lack of ignorance about the reality of her situation and what she was capable of, having just left school:

Sarah: I mean I had no job at the time. I wasn't on the benefit or anything like that, still I was expected to get down to such and such place at such and such time with no money and I didn't want to embarrass myself by going, oh sorry I can't make it 'cause I got no money, so I'd say yeah I'd be there and just not show up.

Ben recalled an experience relating to the expectation of a prospective employer and the rugby mad culture of New Zealand. In this particular scenario Ben is expected to be the rugby player while negating any other attributes he may possess:

Ben: The guy really liked rugby and remembered me from rugby and he was more talking about rugby than the job, then he just tells me to turn up the next week. So the interview for an hour was just about rugby.

Tony also spoke about the assumption that sporting honours is all that Māori young people should aspire to. As a Māori student, Tony reflected on the irrelevance of a curriculum and the ignorance of teachers which could not help him to make sense of everyday experiences:

Tony: My participation was just through sports, didn't help me feel smarter though did it? They didn't explain in simple reason that man if you can work out an angle to run on, that when you cut onto someone's ball that it's going to put you in a gap. It's an amazing amount of mathematics that you've just worked out in a split of a second, but nobody said that.

Through talking about his own school transitions, Tony spoke of his acceptance onto a trade training course in Auckland and having to leave the comfortable surroundings of a rurally-based Māori boarding school. The challenge for Tony came from the fact that there were gaps in the information provided regarding his school transition. He reflected on his experiences when adults neglect to pass on essential information such as where to get off the bus and where to find accommodation while in Auckland:

Tony: People don't realise that that can still happen. You can go from having such privilege to suddenly being on the bones of your ass because of really simple things I think that weren't conveyed to you because of your age.

When it comes to determining the options for transition, sometimes it's just a matter of good fortune as Terina pondered. Her line of thinking takes into consideration that Māori proportionately work in lower paying jobs opposed to owning their own businesses:

Terina: You think other people have better choices, grass is always greener and all that, but who knows really, sometimes it's just that the Mum or Dad owns their own business and that it's just a statistics thing, more non-Māori own their own businesses than Māori, so it must be easier for their kids to get jobs in those businesses. More non-Māori have professional jobs, so they have a closer affinity with what those professions might look like, what they need to make it in those

worlds, instead of the huge leaps that people have to make to get from having a Dad who is a welder by trade to becoming a doctor. Lifestyles, life experiences all play a part in how easy it is to know those worlds to making money and having a job with choices, instead of just surviving and being at the bottom rung in the ladder, the easily expendable.

Place

Hunia was the one person out of the six research participants who identified strongly with being from Porirua. With the support of his mum, Hunia strategically placed himself in a community that he perceived to be forward thinking, opposed to the community of Porirua where there were too many distractions for a teenager. What he comes to find out is that regardless of the amount of planning that can go into entering employment opportunities; sometimes it's just plain bad luck which creates an unplanned pathway to boredom:

> Hunia: I tried to get a job in Paraparaumu because at that time a lot of my friends in Porirua were trouble makers and yeah I knew that I was better off in Paraparaumu, but that fell through. McDonalds fell through, the clothing store fell through and for half a year I bummed around more or less. That's when I pretty much didn't have nothing to do.

Hunia needed to unravel what it meant to grow up and socialise in Porirua. At the time of his school transition, Hunia did not believe Porirua was going to be beneficial to this transition. Hunia finally pinpointed it down to a community mindset that was relentlessly perpetuated through negativity:

> Hunia: It showed me yeah Porirua East, where people drive around with frowns on their faces. It's like it's not cool to smile, when people see you you've got to be at your hardest. The order of the day is to be tough, to be strong. I think especially for the young guys, if you're caught laughing or smiling you felt like a dick you know.

The absence of role models and the prevalence of racist attitudes also helped feed into this pervasive form of negativity. Hunia is critical of stereotypes about Porirua Māori and the damage such thinking can cause:

> Hunia: I never saw that people from Porirua or people from the East or from my area could be doctors. I didn't know any doctors. I didn't know any accountants. …I remember talking to a policeman in Wellington who was harassing us, and I was like, man why are you harassing us for? Just because we're from Porirua, you think that we're Mongrel Mob prospects? And he went yeah 'cause you fucking all are, and I was like, whoa cheers then aye, so yeah it's the old stereotypes, still alive and well.

A significant consequence of an unfulfilling school transition for Hunia is that all roads lead to the place where the most excitement can be had, to hanging out on the street and pushing the home/parental boundaries; all in an effort to beat the boredom of having nothing to do. The challenge that Hunia reflected

on related to the consequences of boredom and of unfulfilling experiences, and how prolonging these experiences can become a self-fulfilling prophecy:

> Hunia: When things weren't happening for me I spent quite a lot of time just hanging out on the streets. From Wellington to Porirua to anywhere really, and that was a bit of upheaval at home but I just didn't know what to do, where to go. At school I was always in the advanced classes and I always got the reports that said, if only he listens more in class, but yeah so I didn't know what I was going to do. I still don't know what I want to do.

Hunia acknowledged the complacency of school classrooms for young Mäori and how this permeates and is sustained by its community context. The mindset is what Hunia sees in Porirua East, where young urban Mäori live in the 'now':

> Hunia: It's real easy, it's a mindset, it's a day to day mindset that I think a lot of our youth and a lot of our community struggle with. It's that struggle, just living in struggle.

Transformative Action

<u>Being Mäori</u>

Tony attended an elite Mäori boy's boarding school which maintained that Mäori culture and Päkehä teachings were the foundation of good transition preparation. In reality, transition was tokenistic and many of the Mäori boys that Tony attended school with were either touted to become rugby players or came to school with the expectation that whänau would provide for their future employment. In his senior year, Tony decided that he would have to facilitate his own transition and set about getting himself an apprenticeship as a butcher. This meant leaving small town New Zealand and heading up to Auckland for the training. Along the way Tony worked in a variety of different industries and became a father.

Tony spoke to me about hope, a reason to keep aspiring and pursuing excellence in education even when education and schooling can be perceived in a negative light. He had already spoken to me about the disappointments of his schooling career, of being ridiculed by a primary school teacher and his classmates, of being Mäori and the negative connotations that brought. On the other side of these experiences, Tony relished in the opportunity to think about a future, about a new way to support Mäori students to succeed:

> Tony: I've had a dream, quite awhile ago and it's a reoccurring dream, and I see myself in a Marae setting and I see a lot of prefabs and I see a lot of people, adults and young people, they're in classrooms, they're laughing, they're learning. Different people are taking the classes, young and old people and I'm walking around and for some reason I feel like I'm part of the place. I get out to the front where the wahanui is and I see the sign on it, Te Mauri, that's what it says and it's

something that I dream about every now and then and I think that's more of the mission of an education system, where there is equal participation right across the board, a place where kids will teach us, and we will teach these kids.

At secondary school, Terina was streamed according to her educational abilities. She was one of two Māori students in her class. The lack of Māori peers in the classroom helped her to make up her mind about the role that she was to play in that environment. She became a truant and a trouble maker. Whilst in her teenage angst, there was also a run in with the police. Terina was quite clear about this incident and how it started her on a path to thinking about what to do after leaving secondary school:

> Terina: I think I really first started thinking about what I wanted to do because I had gotten caught stealing, and down at the cop shop I was teary eyed and started talking about how I wanted to go to teachers college to be a teacher. I think that saved me from getting a police record, although being 15 probably helped as well. So yeah, teachers college did start sounding like a good idea.

The reality of how people are brought up can also impact on the pathway that young Māori take out of school. Hunia talked through what people do with the information that they have:

> Hunia: People do what they think is best and what they've grown to know is best. It's like the Mum who brags about her son being able to bash anyone at school, like yeah, that's my boy! She thinks that's best because her life experience taught her that. Somewhere in the back of her mind she knows it's wrong, slapping kids around the ears, kicking up the ass is wrong, but yeah, at the time, that's what they know, that's how they deal with situations.

The continuance of whakapapa for Hunia helped maintain his connection with being Māori, despite growing up in the city of Porirua and away from his tribal homelands. It instilled hope and pride in his identity as a Māori person even as he sees other Māori people around him who have not had that connection maintained for them:

> Hunia: Identity, yeah I am so proud that my Mum was strong in her Māoritanga. She liked her family, if you know what I mean. A lot of our Māori that moved away, of our parents' age didn't want to go back, for whatever reasons. There was a lot of crap happening back in those days, but once they left their papa kāinga, they didn't want to go back. They had bad experiences, so yeah, they disconnected themselves and their kids grow up being told oh yeah, I'm Māori and my Dad says we're from blah blah blah up North, but I've never been there or I went there once with my cousin so there's no meaning there behind it and you can't be proud of who you are if you don't know who you are.

Hunia acknowledged that even when history is against many Māori students, it has been his inspiration to move his whānau forward:

> Hunia: My Mum was a scrub cutter, I'm a support worker, maybe my son might be a teacher, maybe his son might be a council guy, his son might be Prime Minister but yeah moving that goal. Aim for the stars.

Sarah felt it was more about the principles and the work ethic her parents had instilled in her, which kept her actively seeking new avenues and opportunities:

> Sarah: Mum and Dad are really old school, they have really old school morals and values and standards and that kind of stuff, so I've never been allowed to be a bum. Dad was in the army so it was always get up at 6 o'clock, polish your shoes, make your lunch and go to school. It's still like that now, you know that kind of stuff and I suppose I've just carried that through. It's become a normal thing now to wake up at 6 o'clock and get up and know that I've got to go and do this today. I must admit that after I did leave school I sat around for 6 months, and then Mum and Dad were like, nah that's it; you're not sitting around here.

The capacity of whänau to support Hunia while he looks for opportunities 'in between' school and course is a happy reflection for him from his teenage years. Determination and patience are strengths that Hunia cultivates through working and making money while keeping boredom and other negative influences at bay:

> Hunia: My Uncle gave me a job when I was in between me leaving school and going on this course. He was painting at the time. I liked working with him, at the time I learnt a lot of stuff, so I worked with him for about six months and then the work ran out but yeah it was a good part of my teenage years. I was working all day, and didn't have any energy at night and a little bit of money in the weekend.

Identity

Sarah's sense of purpose overrides the complacency she felt while at secondary school. In later years, and despite feeling academically inadequate due to her experiences at school, she was able to transcend that obstacle:

> Sarah: Because a lot of the stuff I didn't think was relevant to me, I wasn't excited about it you know. I went to radio school this year and got a diploma in broadcasting and I came in the top five in my class and that's out of 30 students and going from having nothing in college to getting a diploma in broadcasting.

A clash of willpower is revealed as Hunia talked about being a teenager and rebelling against his parents. There comes a time when what parents want for their teenagers does not fit with what teenagers want for themselves. That it seemed to be a common occurrence for teenagers was highlighted by Hunia as he explored other opportunities:

> Hunia: My parents were good people but when I was 16, I hated them. They tried to bring me up right but all I wanted to do was get out there and do something and at the time the people doing things were my mates who hung out on the streets.

They were out every night, they were doing things, a good group of friends, yeah we'd get into trouble but it'd be a group thing, so yeah it was something to do I guess.

While still at primary school, Hunia worked through his own job aspirations by comparing the differences he believed existed between teacher's and members of his own whänau:

Hunia: When I was growing up, I thought the best job in the world was a teacher's job because they were the person I saw the most. I mean my Mum, growing up my Mum was a scrub cutter, a cleaner. My Dad was a train guard. They worked really hard jobs. I went to school and I saw my teacher in nice clothes. It's probably not real but they knocked off at three o'clock, you know they were there at 9 o'clock. Where I woke up in the morning my Mum, my Dad were gone before I even woke up and usually when my Dad, when my Mum got home late at night, all they wanted to do was have a hot bath, have something to eat and get ready for bed.

What the experience of school taught Hunia was that more needed to be done to keep people like himself at school, which is the message that he chooses to pass onto his whänau:

Hunia: I think confidence is hugely important and when I get in my nieces and nephews ears it's trying to build that confidence. I've got nieces and nephews leaving college and it's like man, you can leave now, get pregnant, have a couple of kids and get a job in a factory in a couple of years, sweet as. You have your unit up the East till whenever, sweet that's cool, if that's what you want, but I want more for you. I want you to finish school, take five years out of your life and become an architect. Take eight years out of your life and become a doctor.

When Tony first spoke to me about his experiences of leaving school and the impact that school had on that transition, he talked about being caught between feeling 'dumb' as a stereotype of being Mäori and the unknown. It is the unknown that kept Tony going, even when there was no guarantee that it would end up in success:

Tony: Other guys had it sussed, their families worked in the freezing works so they had that sussed. Me I wanted to experience something different and do some education as well, but still feeling that I was dumb, and not sure what the other part was about, so I did it myself.

Family or more specifically, aging parents was the motivating factor for Tony taking responsibility of his school transitions. Weighing up the situation, Tony made plans to become independent, working during the school holidays to ensure he was not a burden to his parents. His keen sense of purpose and pride was a determining factor as Tony pushed himself to go straight from secondary school into transition:

Tony: My father retired when I was 14, so from the fourth form I started to create ideas around being able to find holiday work at the freezing works which I did and

putting myself through my senior school years at boarding school with the help of some other family. When I reached sixth form I pretty much promised myself I was never going home. Dad was retired. Mum had never worked for money. She was always just involved with altruistic sort of stuff, giving her time for nothing. So my transition was a little different than others, I was focused because of Mums and Dads age that I just wasn't going to go home. I ate like a horse and I just didn't want to burden them so I decided to gap it my own way which I think boarding school taught me. I knew I could depend on myself.

Talking Back

In this section, each participant was given the opportunity to talk back to their experiences of being rangatahi Māori and experiencing secondary school transition. Each part of this 'talking back' section is headed by the name of the person and their comments. 'Talking back' through this section provides a context for acknowledging some of those factors which were significant to the school transition of these research participants'.

Hunia

Hunia felt the need to talk about the reality of living as rangatahi Māori in Porirua. The stereotypical face of rangatahi Māori on the streets of Porirua needs to be put into a context, where circumstances play a huge part in the creation of the label:

> Keeping the reality, 'cause I think, the reality is that life is hard; our teenagers are finding it hard. They wake up every day with nothing to do, no food in the fridge, your parents are drunk, you don't know what to do. If home isn't good, the next best place is the street.

Employment that required parents to do jobs that took quality time away from children spoke of the sacrifice some parents have to make to look after their families. Hunia talked to the alternative life that might have been his, had it not been for the long hours his parents worked:

> I can't say my parents were wrong, because they done what they done, they did what they knew best. How am I going to tell my Mum she was wrong for being a scrub cutter? For being at work at 5 o'clock in the morning? Working all day till six o'clock at night? It's not wrong, it's just different and if my Mum hadn't have put in those hard hours, maybe shit would have been a whole lot worse for us.

There was a challenge for Hunia as he reflected on growing up in Porirua East, about trying to create different possibilities for himself despite the negativity and lack of role models within his own community. The combination of these things allowed children like himself to grow up not nurturing dreams and aspirations of things outside their worldview. Hunia talked to this challenge and put it back onto the community that helped raise him:

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So yeah at the time, I didn't have any dreams, I didn't know people flew space rockets, designed buildings yeah and I think a lot of the problem is that our kids don't have a dream and we've got to think bigger than where we are.

Understanding the importance put on future generations, particularly children who are nurtured and shaped by parental guidance is the basis for Hunia's thoughts as he makes comment on his own son's exuberance. Hunia believed that his son's attitude had both its benefits and failings, but it was something which gave his son a choice; to speak or to remain silent:

Do I want my son to be the shy guy at the back of the class not talking? Yes my son talks a lot of crap, yes he acts like he knows it all, but it's better him having that self belief that yeah, I know, instead of I don't know nothing.

Hunia believed that confidence played an important part in keeping Mäori involved and responsible for their actions, which he thought would help them with their futures. That young Mäori are framed in a negative light and are not given a chance to redeem themselves is what Hunia thinks is the beginnings of a vicious cycle that could easily be turned around:

Give teenagers a role, let them know what that role is and make them feel proud of it I guess. This is your role, this is your street, you clean the street, you don't throw rubbish on it, if you see your little cousins throwing rubbish on it, tell them to pick it up. I think it works. Their ownership, feeling like a valued part of the community.

Reminiscing on his own experiences as a teenager allowed Hunia to talk through what he wanted for his own family and his determination for them not to settle for second best:

I don't want my kids, I don't want my family to settle and I think that's a big thing, we shouldn't be settling for what we're told we should get. We're told get a good job in a factory. Uncle blah blah's got a job in the construction site or you can get a job with blah blah blah doing this and us thinking that's us, that's us. I got me a job, I got me a house with a 32 inch TV, I got my playstation, man I'm set. I don't want to talk down on people, you know so many people like that, you know that's cool. Comfortable with what they have, and that's cool, you got to be comfortable with what you have but it's not all we could have. I really admire anyone who's got a job because a job teaches you some things; a job teaches you more than the streets can. It teaches you a lot of things, so I admire anyone who's out there with a job putting food on the table for the family but I think as a people we deserve more and we shouldn't settle for the crumbs when we should be baking the cake.

Sarah

From the outset, Sarah believed the secondary school she attended was harbouring institutionalised racism. Sarah retrospectively talked about this school and why it was not a positive experience for her:

Well, ever since I started college, from the day I started from the day I finished, I was constantly in trouble, so I really didn't get a good chance of an education, so I was always put in a box with that bunch of naughty kids.

To be able to look back on the relevance of secondary school and wonder why education was not an exciting prospect is an utmost revelation for Sarah. She began to piece together why she could not relate to school and why she was taught information which had no relevance to her life:

I just didn't think education was important back then, and not only that too, and a lot of the stuff I would sit in class and think, how is this is going to help me in life? It's got nothing to do with me. Adolf Hitler, so what? Who cares?

When Sarah's parents were asked to come into school because of her behaviour, her parents took the side of the school believing that the teacher knew best. Sarah notes the generational difference shown when her parents are again called into school in support of her younger brother. Their latest dealings with the school is in total contrast to Sarah's own schooling experiences:

Yea it's funny that, because now my Mum, I'm the oldest of four children so I notice the difference now with my little brother, she tends not to take the teachers side so much now, he apparently got a disciplinary warning for doing the fingers, it was classed as swearing and they wanted to put him on a behaviour plan and she was like, I can't believe you'd put him on something like that for doing the fingers. Do your job! If you were doing your job you wouldn't be worried about whether people pull the fingers. She doesn't tend to believe the teachers as much now as what she did back when I was at school.

Change brings hope for Sarah as she talks through the creation of the Transitions CD developed by the Porirua Youth Transition Service. Sarah reflected on the opportunity to be creative and to give back to Porirua young people:

Who do you know that has ever had a CD? And not only that, a chance for their music to be produced professionally, and the fact that this would be given out to a lot of the local people, a lot of the young kids and stuff, they were rapt with that, rapt that that's what it was going to be used for and not to be taken and put on someone's mixed tape, there was a purpose for it.

Experiencing the negativity of going to a secondary school that Sarah felt did not support her learning created a lack of confidence for her. It took hard work and completion of a diploma in broadcasting for Sarah to overcome this barrier:

I feel confident now, but not when I was growing up. It probably wasn't until I got my diploma that I thought, yeah I could do this. I can do whatever now. I can do anything and everything, you put something in my path and I would do my damn hardest to move it.

Through talking back, Sarah gave herself the opportunity to send some words of wisdom to secondary schools, teachers and those who develop curriculum for young Mäori, about making learning appropriate and applicable:

> I think school should be teaching real stuff, teach real stuff, teach about budgeting, even if the whole maths thing is about budgeting money, saving money. Why teach them algebra and shit like that, they're never going to use it. I've never used algebra the whole time I've been out of school, and the square root of what. I don't care about that. I've never used it. Never, you know. And I've worked with money, cash handling and big amounts of it too, and I've never used that shit.

Tony

Being clear about how Mäori are represented on television allowed Tony to talk through the function that television plays in role modelling for Mäori:

> Media on TV, Shortland Street have Mäori roles in there, you have a Doctor yeah choice to have the token smart guy aye then you have multiple Mäori playing this Whitetail gang, now that's just tricky media putting the old TK in then all the Mäori will be sweet, now we'll just show them how rat shit they are too. Education, there's more education being done there than there is in some of the schools, not because of the schools problems but because you know what it is that's still being portrayed, as what Mäori identity is. And then as a total blast you get that good looking guy, he should be the next Temuera Morrison, the guy who plays the Whitetail dude who is having a fling with one of the sisters. He has a show where he works with kids cooking in the afternoon. Kids Can Cook, and I thought damn that's smart, getting the boy out there so that they can see that he's an actor not the real thing, but why couldn't they have, oh you know a Russian gang, sorry to the Russians, but at least there's not too many of them here and they sure as hell don't come from this country and that sort of thing so it's still being done, we're still being bolted that way.

Tony concluded by adding his own measure of wisdom to the mix, putting trust in the simplicity of Mäori learning strategies whilst commenting on the potential educative roles that rangatahi Mäori can embrace and make their own:

> Yeah repetition, singing songs and having fun about it. That's where the gold is, and feeling like you participated and coming up with some stuff that you can teach people too. Kids don't get that chance at school, when do they feel like they've taught anyone, anything?

When asked about what was needed for rangatahi Mäori to successfully transition out of school Tony thought that it had a lot to do with whänau involvement, which needed to begin at school:

> It's that separation you know the kid comes back from school. The parents are at home. If she's a single Mum then she's at home. Why isn't Mum at school? Why doesn't the school make it available for Mum to be at school? In a Mum's class, in a

Dad's class, who cares? If you're not working, I think you should be at school. You learn so much better when you see Dad learning it too, or Mums learning it too and they're like far and when you see their light bulb come on, that never leaves your head. You remember that for the rest of your life.

Ben

In talking back, Ben ruminated on the reason why he did not challenge the schools decision to ask him to leave. That this decision is based solely on the opinions of his teacher's is reflective of Ben's time at school:

I felt there was no point in fighting if they didn't want me there anyway.

Having to leave school because of teachers imposing their own ideas on his transition became a positive learning experience for Ben. He mused over the opportunities lost and the insight gained through talking back:

Well it taught me in terms of not letting anyone run you over or run your dreams out the way or run what you want to be out the way, because they did that to me. I knew that I let them win in the end by giving them what they wanted.

On reflection on how he felt at school, Ben began to reminisce about what could have made a real difference at secondary school had he been given the opportunity:

You have to be given the chance at school you know. You've got to have someone that listens to you, just as much as you listen to them.

The motivation to improve his life in the current reality of his circumstances really encouraged Ben to think about his baby boy and what he needed to do in his role as dad. Hope becomes a driving force for Ben as he determines the kind of life he does not want for himself and his child. He also noticed the differences in his perceptions before having a child and after:

Now it's my boy. He pulls me forward all the time, even those down times, depressing times. Got a kid to support so decided to keep pushing forward. And before, I just think it was the dole really. I don't think I liked the dole, I just thought it was for bludgers. And I used to always give everyone heaps about being bludgers, so I don't want to be a hypocrite about it. So it was anything to stay away from the benefit.

Terina

The idea of being Māori and that not having any sway on transitioning from secondary school was accepted by Terina. This was a frame of mind that she felt had been experienced by generations of Māori. Terina acknowledged the mix of emotions she felt when it became easier for her to disconnect her cultural strengths from everyday living:

I don't think I considered myself to be this Māori person, just a girl who was leaving school. I had grown up with all these Māori things around me, Marae, whānau, somewhere to call home but in the bigger scheme of things, that stuff was background information, not exciting, not something to build a career on, definitely not a job.

Talking back is a time of regret for Terina. In hindsight, she chose options which were not accessible to her as a teenager:

There wasn't anyone at my school who would listen to you about your bad experiences of school. The guidance counsellor was more interested in my home life, but I really needed to tell him that my maths teacher was making my life hell, and that something needed to be done. That avenue wasn't available, the principal was too high and mighty, so in the end, I had to change things myself, by not going to maths at all. I hate that this has changed the way that I feel about maths. If I could go back and do it again, I would have gone to the form dean and taken myself out of the maths class and put me somewhere else. So simple and yet too late for me.

Josh

In regards to his parents, initially Josh didn't think that it was fair on him and his two younger brothers that their Mum worked 12 hour shifts at a factory job, sometimes six days a week. The loss of quality time with Mum because of work was a moment of sad reflection for Josh. However Josh did reminisce on how this became a positive experience when he and his siblings were allowed to go to the factory as well:

I was working when I was 11, 12, 13 working with my Mum, helping her out. Work became pretty cool, better than staying home by yourself. We got an opportunity to get out of the house. Even though it was kaka work, it was still good, got to hang out with my Mum.

Reflecting on school, Josh recalled how strategies of punishment which had nothing to do with learning devalued the education that he expected. In talking back to the school system that failed him, Josh felt such strategies left resistant students like himself with very little choice:

Nobody asks you why you're not doing your homework; they just go if you don't do your homework you're on detention, so you don't do your detentions. Why have you got so many detentions? You can get an afterschool detention, oh yeah sweet I don't mind afterschool detentions. So you get a few more afterschool detentions. Why are you not doing your afterschool detentions? Oh we're gonna suspend you. Oh sweet I don't mind, suspend me I'm off school. I don't have to do homework oh you know too many suspensions, next thing probably gone, don't have to worry about it.

Josh talked at length about rangatahi Māori dreams and the need for these aspirations to be tempered with cold hard facts. He compared the hard work that is required for sports with school assessment and that both do not necessarily equate to instant success:

> Yeah, it's just like a coach saying you're at college and you're playing first 15 and the coach saying you can be an All Black, but the coach needs to also say, look you have to make the secondary schools, you've got to make the 21s, you've got to make NPC, you've got to make Super 14s, then you might become an All Black. Whereas if they tell you at school, if you don't do your homework, you won't be a lawyer, or if you do your homework, you can be a doctor, not knowing that you have to go to university, spend three years there then be a junior doctor for another three years before you can even get paid properly.

Josh spoke about the differences between primary and intermediate schooling with secondary schooling. He believed that the motivation instilled into students was more directed in primary/intermediate schooling, opposed to the gaps exposed at the secondary school level:

> I think primary and intermediate school equipped me more than anything because you know back in primary you have to do everything. You have to do the plays; you have to do the speeches, whereas in college if you didn't do it they didn't force you. They just put you on detention.

Josh continued to question how aspiring to a successful school transition could become reality when the odds seemed stack against him. As he reiterated earlier, reality tempered the understanding that if rangatahi Māori put their minds to it, they can achieve anything. Josh identified parents as unknowingly getting themselves caught up in the rhetoric, encouraging Māori children to buy into a dream that inevitably came down to two choices; achievement or failure:

> Parents have been brought by that dream of their sons and daughters being doctors, they buy into it as well, just as much as students and just as much as teachers who think it's the right thing to do. They just think it because they were probably told the same thing at school as well, but because they're so brainwashed into wanting to be a lawyer, into wanting to be a doctor, wanting to be a scientist, mathematician whatever, all those flash jobs, everybody's into it, everybody wants to do it, but when there's failure, nobody knows what to do next, what else is there to do?

Conclusion

These narratives help to explain the complicated and complex nature of rangatahi Māori secondary school transitions. What this research illustrates is that despite poor experiences of school and transition, rangatahi Māori were able to make agentic decisions with the information and resources they had at hand. There were several common threads through the narratives

which highlighted shared stories that have been generated through the education system. These stories tell of young Mäori who struggle to maintain a Mäori identity and of schools that chose not to acknowledge this identity. They tell of an anxiety about school learning which has no relevance to their lived realities. There was mutual agreement from the research participants that transition support was generally unhelpful and that secondary school transition became their personal responsibility, despite government rhetoric about transition support. The narratives spoke of the stark reality that young Mäori need to negotiate as they work through the multiple layers involved in transitions.

In talking back, research participants literally spoke back to their experiences of being rangatahi Mäori and those factors that determined their transitions. The participants engaged in reflection about their younger selves and were able to give advice and provide wise counsel to future generations of rangatahi Mäori going through the transitions process. In talking out their encounters with transition, these narratives also served as a process of transformative practice where knowledge transforms the response. Through sharing and speaking, research participants walked their talk. These actions are endorsed by the words of Mahatma Gandhi, who strongly believed that "We need to be the change we wish to see in the world" (cited in Potts, 2002).

6. Discussion

> I said to a friend of mine, a professor, recently, "What kind of children arrive at the University to you?" He said, "They're all exactly the same." "But" I said, "How can it be like that? The whole plan of primary education at least is for diversity." " … in the infant room," I told this professor, "we still have identity. It's somewhere between my infant room level and your university level that the story breaks."
> (Ashton-Warner, 1963, p. 96)

It is the writing of New Zealand educator Sylvia Ashton-Warner, noted for her well intentioned work with Mäori primary school children who through the above quote, explicitly identifies the disconnect that exists within secondary schooling. What is clear from the Ashton-Warner quote is that the homogenising effect of secondary school is problematic. Identity and the 'politics of difference' (Johnston & Pihama, 1995) that feed into identity is a difficult concept for education systems to grasp, particularly as the homogeneity that characterises this system does not facilitate difference in a successful way. This quote sets the scene for discussion about rangatahi Mäori transitions and a multiple and diverse number of 'disconnects' that occur over this process. In relation to the findings chapter of my research, I look to 'reconnect' and reintroduce the six research participants and the theoretical concepts that provide insight into their transition experiences. These themes have been organised around a number of sub-themes that contextualise rangatahi Mäori school transitions. To help make sense of this transition, this discussion chapter will focus on the sub-themes of urban identity, whänau, peers and community, transition rhetoric, what students' know, deficit thinking, culture of failure, marginalisation, resistance, agency/transformative practice and talking back.

An Urban Identity

A significant amount of a young person's time is spent within the schooling system, and throughout this time there are a number of tangled identities (Kearney, 1998) that rangatahi Mäori negotiate; identity relating to school, life after school and being Mäori. Juggling a multiplicity of identities can be an infinitely confusing journey. Terina along with Hunia both acknowledged the complexity of the journey of knowing who one is and where one is from, particularly for those who were not confident in their own tribal identities and cultural standing. Terina struggled with the ambivalence created between living in a Mäori world and needing to find a job in a Päkehä environment. Hunia also spoke of the disconnect between his urban surroundings and tribal identity. That the journey is fraught with uncertainty did not stop Hunia reflecting on how his mother helped to solidify that identity in comparison to those of his peers and their experience of growing up in Porirua.

The loss of a traditional means of identity for urban Mäori was significant for Ben who grew up not knowing a lot about his Mäori genealogy. Although the reasons for Ben's limited knowledge rested heavily on the fact that Ben's father was adopted out of a Mäori context, Ben's identity as an individual and communally isolated self (Cushman, 1990) with no aspiration to reconnect with being Mäori, brought clarity around the influence of Western culture on urban Mäori. In moving to urban centres, Mäori progressively became alienated from their cultural identities (Durie *et al.*, 2002), the implications of which continue to play a major role in the disconnection and fragmentation of urban Mäori from their tribal affiliations. Key western concepts such as individualism, independence, progress and scholarship (Cushman, 1990) became entrenched ideologies for ensuing generations of Mäori. This was helped by the intermarriage of Mäori with mostly Päkehä people, which Nash described as Mäori becoming Anglo-Mäori (1993, p. 199), reflective of the working class status of Päkehä people who were marrying Mäori. Four of the research participants fell into this category, two had Mäori mothers and Päkehä fathers, two were of Mäori and Pasifika heritage and two had both parents who identified as Mäori.

Mead (1997) makes the connection between the current state of Mäori identity and the subsequent loss of Mäori language as the first language of Mäori people. Although two of the research participants could confidently converse in the Mäori language, the other participants shared varying degrees of competency. Three of the participants were Te Köhanga Reo graduates. This called into question the confidence of the research participants' to be Mäori taking into consideration that no one was fluent in the Mäori language. Sarah felt the lack of confidence for rangatahi Mäori mirrored the lack of confidence of teachers that Mäori students could achieve in secondary school. Sarah believed that the only time that she felt confident and valued at secondary school was when she was learning and achieving in the subject of Mäori. Hence Sarah felt her identity at school was framed by teachers and school management who she believed had unfairly branded her as 'naughty'.

Whänau

The importance of whänau in rangatahi Mäori perceptions of school transition plays a fundamental role in the shaping of post-school experiences. Tony explicitly set about organising his own transition pathway so that he did not burden his aging parents. He spoke about other school friends who had whänau connections in such industries as meat processing and who would go straight into these jobs on completion of school. Hunia noted the marked difference between his parents and teachers careers. Josh felt that parental expectations put pressure on rangatahi Mäori to seek careers in science, medicine and law where pathways were unclear for Mäori. Josh believed that schools did not invest enough resources into Mäori students to meet the expectations of Mäori parents. Ranginui Walker (1991) supports this premise by detailing how the

natural learning capabilities of young Mäori were cancelled out through the introduction of formal schooling systems. Historically this is evident in how church missionaries used the written word to initially entice Mäori into schools but then restricted access to what Mäori students could read.

A line was drawn between the research participant experiences. Aspiring to professional careers without adequate support highlighted the injustice of education as was the experience of Josh. On the other side of the spectrum; Tony, Hunia and Sarah believed that Mäori students needed to raise their expectation of education and pursue careers outside of their own realities. Tony and Sarah did go on to add that the education system needed to be overhauled so that Mäori students could be involved in education that was relevant to their cultural contexts. However the sentiments expressed by Tony, Hunia and Sarah suggested that rangatahi Mäori deserved the opportunity to dream and to think outside their lived realities.

Historically, the reason behind a lack of an academic lineage for Mäori students could be attributed to a 1906 Royal Commission inquiry (Walker, 1991) into Te Aute College, where headmaster John Thornton tutored promising Mäori students to sit the matriculation examination of the University of New Zealand. After Thornton left Te Aute and as recommended by the inquiry, the college changed its curriculum from academic to agricultural. This strategy paved the way for a pronounced 50 year gap (Walker, 1991) between the first and second waves of Mäori university graduates. Those young Mäori who were academically inclined were not given the option to explore careers as doctors, lawyers and politicians. Instead Mäori men were considered to be good farmers and labourers and Mäori women as good wives to Mäori men (Barrington, 1974).

The factors that contributed to the whänau dynamics of the research participants' were in some way all affected by the urban drift around the 1950s (Durie, 1997). This movement saw whole families move from their traditional homelands to urban centres for employment and education opportunities. The parents of five of the six research participants had participated in the urban drift in varying degrees. Ben's father, through the process of urban-based adoption had very little information about his Mäori heritage. Although Sarah affiliated strongly with her mother's whakapapa, the union between her Mäori mother and Irish father in Porirua created another form of whänau. Urbanisation during the 1950s to 1980s led to the evolution of different whänau realities (Durie, 1997). For those friends that Hunia acknowledged who did not know their tribal connections, taking away ones affinity to relate meant that generations of urban Mäori were still coming to terms with what it meant to be Mäori, and what place Mäori identity had in that. Urbanised Mäori grandparents, parents and secondary school students have awoken to the need to acknowledge this conflicted understanding of 'self' as recollected by Hunia. Urban-based Mäori whänau may not feel the need

to question their urban-based cultural idea of 'self' against a traditional cultural idea of 'self'. However, schooling has been a challenge to students labelled as Mäori regardless of whether they identified themselves as being Mäori or not.

The Importance of Peers & Community

My understanding of Mäori realities within urban settings is from my own experiences as an urban Mäori and through my community work in Porirua. When I reflect on the spectrum of urban Mäori that I have encountered on my trails, I question whether cultural identity sits comfortably within an urban existence. Hunia talked about living in Porirua East and how Mäori who have very little connection with whakapapa contend with the struggle of everyday life. He also spoke of being urban Mäori and living in poverty. This makes me wonder whether there is such a thing as symbiosis between traditional culture and urban life, or whether this a dichotomous relationship? Could living between two conflicting positions cause pain? Hunia suggested that mamae has been caused by colonisation. How does this affect the already complex school transitions for Mäori? Durie (1989) believed that pain exists for urban Mäori as they live in between the spaces of being Mäori and being urban. This is supported by Hunia and his experiences of urban Mäori who are disconnected from their whakapapa. Durie (2001) suggests that Mäori are perceived to be a generic population which would benefit from generic solutions. This 'one-size-fits-all' approach has successfully infiltrated the New Zealand education system due to its ease of use (Thrupp, 2008, p. 58).

Perceptions that privilege a systemic approach have an affinity with the cultural deficit theory located in a sociological framework (Gay, 2005) as it relates to culture as 'collective'. Tony challenged the media portrayal of Mäori (culture/collective) as gang members and thugs (deficit). Terina accepted the fact that many Mäori students did not have good role models when it came to Mäori-owned businesses. The cultural deficit theory enabled teachers to blame the environment of the student for their failure rather than the education system, whether social, cultural or socio-economic. Communities such as Porirua East were seen to be key locations of underachievement and failure (Hill & Hawk, 1999) and this ideology is echoed in the narratives. Hunia shared his aspirations for extended whänau to not buy into the lifestyle of Housing New Zealand units and Work and Income benefits associated with poverty and Porirua East.

Hunia showed pride in coming from Porirua East but as a student he consciously chose to leave this community to attend secondary school in a more affluent area. Sarah believed that friends were one of the contributing factors to how well rangatahi Mäori did at school. This cultural deficit theory acknowledged the conflict between the student's environment outside of school and their academic life (Gay, 2005). This exposed the marked differences between school and outside environments of family, peers, community and

culture. That rangatahi Māori rely heavily on these outside settings puts them in direct conflict with schooling. In 1880, the Native Schools Act was passed which denied Māori the right to further academic education based on the notion that the purpose of educating Māori was to prepare Māori for "...life amongst Maoris" (Simon & Smith, 2001, p. 112). The influence of this theory and its associated historical attitudes has far reaching implications particularly relevant to how rangatahi Māori transition out of school today. Josh was of the belief that secondary schools either let Māori and Pacific Islanders leave school too easily or prepared the boys for limited careers in representative sports. Ben felt pressured by teachers to take up a pre-trades course, despite demonstrating an aptitude for mathematics. This lack of foresight inadvertently set a precedent for the quality of transition available for rangatahi Māori students.

The Power of Rhetoric

The rhetoric of secondary school transitions is that good jobs come from working hard at school and getting a good education. Trying to live up to this expectation is one of the reasons why rangatahi Māori fail secondary school, which then subsequently determines their inevitable transition. Josh strongly believed that secondary school taught him nothing about getting a job even when it is the identified stepping stone towards an eventual career. There is an implicit understanding that secondary school will support students to transition, but Josh felt that his experience of secondary school set him and his friends up for failure. His experience was of a system that neither cared nor adequately supported those students who were already expected to fail the academic component of secondary schooling.

One of the reasons that the rhetoric of school transitions does not match up with the reality of rangatahi Māori transitions is the idea of participation. When Māori students leave secondary school before completing, it is because they are not contributing to their own education. The rhetoric of participation suggests that young Māori are able to engage in the opportunity of secondary schooling on equal footing with others. However in reality, the complexity of participation for rangatahi Māori conceals the conflicting relationship that many Māori students have with the education system. This relationship invariably ends in the deployment of resistance strategies against the system due to its inability to provide adequate support.

Josh provides clarity around a common resistance pattern amongst Māori students; the use of punitive measures by teachers as a consequence of non-compliance. These measures start at detentions and markedly increase giving Māori students' very limited choice but to leave school early. Sarah believed that Māori secondary students chose to opt out of education when education did not reflect their current reality. Learning algebra and vectors for Sarah and Tony while in secondary school and never using them again, is a theme that weaved itself through this research.

History plays a significant factor in attempting to make sense of the role of education. The provision of a systemic colonial discourse on the education of Māori can be traced back to a defining piece of legislation that set up the Native Schools Act in 1858 (Walker, 1991). Missionary Schools taught in the medium of Māori language until the establishment of a subsidy system imposed the teaching of English-only to Māori children. The development of a new platform intent on teaching Māori children the 'mother tongue' was in line with what Judith Simon (Waitangi Tribunal, 2005, para. 13) described as "...social control and assimilation...for the establishment of British law". The implications of this are clearly evidenced through five of the six research participants being educated in mainstream secondary schools, bar Tony who attended a Māori boarding school.

What Students' Know

Despite being told otherwise, rangatahi Māori students' knew when there were things outside of their control that impacted on the quality of secondary school transition available to them. What has been the experience of the participants' of this research is that the power to express that something was wrong came on reflection of the transition from school. Tony knew that he would need to take responsibility for his own transition pathway as his teacher had a million other things to worry about. Hunia knew that his parents could not afford to pay for his school supplies and since the school did not ask whether he had a calculator for his exam, it limited his ability to pass. The choices rangatahi Māori make are as Hodkinson *et al.* (1996, cited in Higgins, Vaughan, Phillips & Dalziel, 2008) suggest; they are rational and tempered with pragmatism. As they relate to Hunia, these two concepts are conflicting. It would be rational to ask for a calculator to help pass the exam, however it is pragmatic not to ask for the calculator because it is seen as a luxury item. A third component suggesting that culture impacts decision-making for rangatahi Māori transitions is clearly evident in regards to Hunia. The narratives indicate that rangatahi Māori are making decisions and utilising all forms of rationale; including cultural, family and their lived realities outside of school.

According to Vaughan (2003), there needs to be a shift from the assumption that when students leave secondary school they will go onto university and then into a sustainable career. Rangatahi Māori students' know that this is not the most available option to them. Vaughan (2003) believes the use of the term 'pathways' acknowledges the inclusion of vocational, non-academic pathways alongside academic attainment as valid choices for students. These sentiments were supported by Josh who was fairly sure that secondary school was all about transitioning students' into tertiary education, and that if Māori students did not fit the mould, they were considered failures. Josh thought that his teachers' considered him to be one of the fortunate ones who got to attend university but he was unable to understand the level of responsibility that university study required and left after two years. One of the reflections that Josh was able to make

from his time in university was that a lot of his university friends who graduated with degrees did not necessarily go straight into sustainable employment. In fact many of his friends with degrees were either on a benefit or doing casual work such as bartending. Josh noted other friends and acquaintances who went to polytechnics and life skills courses on leaving secondary school who were doing very well as builders, bank tellers, carpet layers and electricians. This was despite many of them being considered 'dumb' throughout secondary school. What Josh was able to reminisce on was the fact that students themselves made inquiries into vocational training opportunities while at secondary school. The one main regret that Josh expressed from his secondary schooling experience was the lack of information about vocational training opportunities.

Sarah provided a strong narrative relating to the gap that many young Māori fell into once they left the secondary schooling system. Although support systems were in place to help school transitions once rangatahi Māori left school, there was a definite lack of understanding from school transition providers of the circumstances faced by these young people. Such oversights implicate community-based providers in inappropriate support structures for rangatahi Māori post-school experiences. This is echoed by Steedman (2004) who highlighted the importance of appropriate pastoral care for rangatahi Māori transitions.

Experiences of Deficit Thinking at School

Without ever saying the word, the role of 'other' and the theme of institutional racism permeated its way through the narratives provided by the research participants'. What has led the charge for examining the place of deficit thinking and the impact of institutional racism within education is the data which continues to challenge the transition rhetoric relating to rangatahi Māori in New Zealand secondary schools. The message coming out of the data and statistics compiled by the Ministry of Education (2009) is that the New Zealand schooling system is consistently failing a disproportionate number of Māori students.

Deficit-based theories such as the genetic deficit theory became a way to explain why Māori students failed school. The genetic deficit theory assumed that the colour of a person's skin determined their superiority or inferiority. Research participants identified with being the 'other'; Josh differentiated between going to a 'white' school and Terina reflected on being only one of a few senior 'Māori' students. According to Gay (2000), theorising around genetic deficit allowed teachers to assume the underachievement of students of colour was due to their inferior genetic disposition towards academic learning. This theory has had huge historical implications for Māori education within a New Zealand context.

Historically, government policy was explicitly designed to subjugate Māori to a Pākehā and dominant worldview (Parsonage, 1956); a view that has had a long and tenuous history in New Zealand. Hunia

associated this subjugation with mamae, a pain he linked to history and colonisation. William Bird (Walker, 1991) an Inspector of Native Schools from the early 1900s insisted that technical knowledge such as farming should not be passed on to Mäori at the same level as that taught to Päkehä. This had the effect of limiting access to education based on the assumption of racial inferiority. The narratives of research participants' suggest that institutional racism continues to be a major issue for rangatahi Mäori transitions, coupled with the expectation that these students' should not engage in academic learning, as in the case of Ben.

A Culture of Failure

There is a culture of failure that has become entrenched in New Zealand secondary schools through a curriculum that privileges academic orientation over vocational choice. The implications speak for themselves but only after careful analysis of the data that comes out of secondary school. On average it is estimated that 57.5% of rangatahi Mäori remain at secondary school till they are 17 compared to 80.1% Pasifika students and 76.6% for Päkehä (Ministry of Education, 2009). That under half of enrolled Mäori students are leaving school before the age of 17 suggests that the academic component of secondary school is not capturing these students'. This academic component expected to further academic learning or vocational opportunities is more in the role of 'gatekeeper', allowing selected academic minded students to continue while making school unbearable for those who might benefit from vocational options. On leaving boarding school to take up an apprenticeship in Auckland, Tony is only given enough information to catch the bus. However information relating to where to get off the bus and where to find accommodation was not provided. The withholding of information such as this identifies how dominant thinking capitalises on tacit knowledge, which can have serious consequences for rangatahi Mäori transitions (Bourdieu, 1986). This mismatch explains how the cultural capital of one group has the capacity to exclude others. This includes the narratives of Josh who differentiates between the 'white' school and its academic orientation and the Mäori and Pasifika students who were assessed as low achievers and left in a 'holding pattern'. The holding pattern describes a context where Mäori and Pasifika students are expected to remain in school but not encouraged to excel; or as Josh believed, only expected to fail.

Josh identified that primary and intermediate schooling for young Mäori was a safe educative context because the learning was directed. The less directive curriculum of secondary school placed more responsibility on the student, which as Josh learnt, meant that if you did not do the work then all that happened was punishment. These punitive consequences became meaningless for these students'. From very little direction in secondary school, rangatahi Mäori fell into the post-school transition and were generally expected to find support for themselves. As was the experience of Sarah, these support systems failed to understand the reality of leaving school and not having access to such things as bus fare to make

scheduled appointments. In Sarah's case, the culture of failure meant not returning phone calls all because of a support worker's misunderstanding of her personal circumstances.

The common narrative amongst the research participants' was that secondary school failed Mäori students. Rangatahi Mäori were not seen to be sufficiently supported by the education system to successfully exit secondary school. Low teacher expectation of the academic abilities of rangatahi Mäori supported an unrelenting belief that Mäori students were only good enough for manual labour. When teachers told Ben that he should use his mathematic prowess while on a building site speaks volumes about the incomprehension that teachers have regarding Ben's potential to complete a degree in mathematics. Historically, Mäori students were not considered suitable enough to learn academically (Walker, 1991). In this current climate, very little has changed.

Through their narratives, research participants discerned a connection between being urban Mäori and living with the expectation of failure. The loss of what Durie *et al.* (2002) consider to be a secure Mäori identity has generated alternate identities. The emergence of these diverse realities corresponds with the loss of intergenerational knowledge that has shaped what it means to be secure and successful in this current climate. In regards to a traditional Mäori worldview, Hunia felt secure in knowing his connection to a family lineage which included a set of traditional values and beliefs and a cultural perspective, despite living away from his traditional tribal homeland. However Hunia also saw how other urban Mäori who did not have a familiarity with whakapapa or tribal knowledge felt about being Mäori. Hunia directly related this 'not knowing' about whakapapa back to parents not being able to pass this information on to their children, mostly due to not knowing this information themselves.

Marginalisation

> Went to school and I was very nervous
> No one knew me, no one knew me
> Hello teacher tell me what's my lesson?
> Look right through me, look right through me
> (Orzabal, 1982)

Tony told me of an experience from his primary school years where his teacher asked him to pronounce the vowel sounds, which he did, but with the Mäori pronunciation. The difference between the Mäori and English pronunciation of the vowels is slight but it is the teacher's unspoken expectation that the English pronunciation is the proper way, that initiates an experience of whakamä (shame) for Tony. As the authority figure within the classroom, the teacher has managed to turn an innocent grammatical misinterpretation

into an ongoing traumatic event. For the rest of his experience of schooling and well into his 30s, Tony actually believes that half of himself is "...a stupid dumb Mäori". More than 100 years earlier, a wave of Mäori children experienced similar occurrences of whakamä while being physically punished for speaking the Mäori language in the classroom (Simon & Smith, 2001). The trauma associated with punishment permanently stopped a significant proportion of Mäori from speaking their own language (Selby, 1999, p. 3) and consequently from engaging in school.

For most of her life, Sarah felt that she was running away from opportunities to succeed in education and it took sustained effort for her to complete a diploma in broadcasting which changed her life. Ben also spoke of his own personal experiences in comparison to a school friend of his, recalling that both of them were made to leave school in dissatisfying circumstances that stemmed from negative teacher interaction. To make sense of these two narratives I look at the responses of *fight* or *flight* (Friedman & Silver, 2007)*,* such as violent behaviour and resistance (fight) as was the case of Ben's friend who chose to use violence against a teacher; or social withdrawal (flight) that saw a disillusioned Ben leave school and not realise his one-time dream of pursuing a career in mathematics. In regards to Sarah, it is the continuance of educational failure which signals a complacency and acceptance of mediocrity (flight). I incorporate the ideas of fight or flight to the Foucault (1979, p. 209) concept of power; particularly sovereign power and disciplinary power. These power characteristics are outlined below:

Table. 2
Characteristics of Power

Sovereign Power	Disciplinary Power
Specific visible agents	Diffuse in operation
Susceptible to resistance	Difficult to locate, difficult to resist
Affects small portion of life	Affects virtually all aspects of living

Adapted from Covaleskie (1993)

McNeil (1986) applies these characteristics of power to the classroom; that teachers have sovereign power over students but that school administration/management has disciplinary power over both teacher and student. Applying this to an event between student and teacher within the classroom throws up a number of possibilities, which directly links to how students and teachers respond to the event. In most cases of marginalisation documented through this research, the student response was one of flight; to withdraw and to feel ashamed. Terina chronically truants from her maths class so as not to come into contact with her maths teacher. Josh spent most of his 7th form year away from the classroom. These examples can be seen as understated versions of resistance, which acknowledge the sovereign power of the teacher and their

capacity to manipulate the behaviours and actions of their students'. It is when Māori students who exit the classroom out into the diffuse context of the school environment, where resistance proves even harder to track and analyse.

Resistance

There is an expectation that Māori students should stay as long as possible in secondary schooling (Ministry of Education, 2004), and that somewhat miraculously this will result in educational achievement. What the reality is, as Josh alludes to, is that prolonging school for those students' who were not getting maximum satisfaction and enjoyment out of the experience, forced rangatahi Māori to engage in choice-making which were neither rational or pragmatic (Hodkinson *et al.*, 1996, cited in Higgins *et al.*, 2008). In relation to secondary school transition, the academic options are fairly well laid out. If a student is seen to be enjoying core subjects such as maths, English or science and excels in the assessment of these subjects, then a pathway towards further tertiary study is seen as a viable option. However the vocational choice is not so obvious. Again, core subjects are the building blocks of secondary school assessment. Vocational choices are not considered until the senior years of secondary schooling, when programmes such as Gateway and Rangatahi Māia are implemented. Access to such programmes is problematic for young Māori who are seen to be resistant if they do not apply themselves to their academic subjects. None of the six research participants could recall any substantive careers/vocational programme, the closest was Hunia who recalled having to input personal information into a computer which later told him what his ideal career would be.

Part of the ability to resist came with research participants leaving school early to follow their own paths. Hunia left school early as he felt that he would be able to find his own jobs, his own way. However the reality ended up being that those prospective jobs fell through and he was left roaming the streets and getting into trouble. Ben left school early after being asked to leave by his teachers'. These narratives show that leaving early became an option for Māori students who were not being adequately supported by their secondary schools. The responsibility for this usually rests with the student even when the reasoning behind the decision is an example of resistance to indifferent support structures.

Agency and Transformative Practice

There were some common themes that came out of the narratives, especially around school subjects and their lack of relevance to rangatahi Māori lived realities. The secondary school curriculum became one of the reasons why rangatahi Māori resisted against school. In thinking of more appropriate ways to teach rangatahi Māori, Sarah envisaged learning that draws on the cultural context of Māori to make information more applicable and relevant. She relished the opportunity as rangatahi Māori to write and sing on a CD

promoting school to work transitions in Porirua. Tony imagined the safety of the marae as an appropriate setting for rangatahi Mäori to teach and learn. Thinking outside the square has given meaning to a number of associated theories that support diversity and transformative practice (Sheets, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1992). Historically Mäori have used strategies to change irrelevance into transformative action which is clearly applicable to the current state of school transitions for rangatahi Mäori. Mäori experiences with education and the near extinction of the Mäori language, established the first Köhanga Reo in Wellington in 1981 (Walker, 1991). This initiated a total immersion learning experience at the preschool level for the teaching of the Mäori language. Indirectly this established strong relationships between these preschool centres and whänau in the education of their children. The success of the Köhanga Reo movement corresponded with the establishment of follow on systems; Te Kura Kaupapa and Te Kura Mäori (total immersion primary schooling), Te Wharekura (total immersion secondary schooling) and Te Whare Wänanga (Kaupapa Mäori tertiary education institutions).

These developments have not come easily, and questions are often raised about the capacity of Mäori to provide Mäori education to Mäori students in a Mäori way (Irwin, 1996) under government legislation. This concern has been part of the motivation behind two claims to the Waitangi Tribunal, one in 1986 about the right of Mäori to learn the Mäori language (Waitangi Tribunal, 1986), and the most recent one in 2005 to do with the right of Te Wänanga o Aotearoa to determine their own approach to delivering education to Mäori (Waitangi Tribunal, 2005). Mäori have the capacity to develop helping strategies such as a suggestion from Sarah that budgeting be taught in secondary schools as an alternative to subjects such as algebra. This is supported by New Zealand budgeting services who believe that the country's young people are financially illiterate. The reality for many rangatahi Mäori is that when they reach the age of 18 and become eligible for such things as store credit, credit cards and loans; they enter into financial contracts not fully realising the consequences. This lack of knowledge has the potential to create crippling financial debt which can lead to damaging consequences for rangatahi Mäori (Radio Waatea, 2009).

The narratives of the research participants' have determined the ebb and flow of this research. They have identified the issues through their own trials and tribulations. They have expressed insights and personal reflections through being reflexive and talking back to the system that overarched their secondary school transitions. In sharing solutions the research participants allowed themselves to be in a position of responsibility to think about what could make a difference to rangatahi Mäori transitions. Ben believed teachers needed to listen more if they wanted to be listened to. Terina wondered about the importance of secondary school qualifications in light of the fact that nobody in her immediate surroundings thought that continuing in education was a viable option. This is supported by educationalist Michelle Fine (1991, p. 23)

who suggests that the significance of secondary school qualifications is more prized by those who are "...already privileged by class, race/ethnicity, gender and geography", than by those who are on the margins.

Talking Back

The silence of rangatahi Mäori as they continue to transition from New Zealand secondary schools makes it easy to put their issues to the side, to make them less visible with less need to deal with any related issues. The narratives around school and transition confirm that rangatahi Mäori knew when they were not welcome or when they felt they had to defend themselves. It is inevitable that standardised pathways for Maori students' transition become their responsibility. Essentially, Mäori students are left to their own devices. This research has deliberately set out to provide a sounding board for Mäori to speak of their school transition experiences. Terina regrettably spoke about the power she gave to her maths teacher by not attending his class. Sarah worked through the feeling of inadequateness that she felt at secondary school by achieving her own academic milestones and through her work as a youth tutor teaching and making learning relevant to the rangatahi Mäori in her course. Hunia talked through the complexities of living in Porirua East, the pride and the realities of poverty associated with this vibrant community. He believed that Mäori kids just needed to be given responsibility and an opportunity. His message particular to his whänau was that small steps and big dreams can create success.

Becoming a first time father at 19 spurred Ben on. He wanted to do something for his son. Working in the field of school transitions, Tony came through an education system which did not give him what he needed to transition from school, so he transitioned himself with all the lessons that came with it. And finally Josh, who firmly believed that secondary school needed to promote vocational training to those who did not identify with academic learning. He felt in doing this, more rangatahi Mäori students would have been given the opportunity to excel in secondary schooling, instead of learning what was required to fail.

It is a poor indictment on the state of the New Zealand education system if rangatahi Mäori are not able to make informed transition choices with appropriate guidance and support. In relation to the participants of this research and their ability to reflect and talk back to their experiences, the commonality between narratives speaks volumes. This research tracked how Mäori coped with experiences of marginalisation within classroom situations and more specifically the interaction between student and teacher. Ben's poignant sigh when expressing regret about having to leave school due to the complete lack of understanding from his teachers' about the passion he felt for maths was heartbreaking to listen to.

If school is the given start point to school transitions, then the quality of that transition is intrinsically interlinked with how well rangatahi Mäori cope with their classroom experiences. Its relevance to school transitions is its ability to hinder progress, intuition, self-confidence and a number of other qualities which should otherwise enable rangatahi Mäori to seek out and engage with school transition experiences. Tony notes the commonality between his own experiences and his daughter's, who he feels is treated more like a statistic than a person at her school. The fact that his own experiences empowered Tony to stand up to his daughter's school validates the strength of talking back. bell hooks (1992a) suggests there is a special association and membership for those historically and consistently undermined by the status quo and the current hegemonic practices which help to entrench and perpetuate western-based practices and policies. She believes the ability to talk back to these institutions helps in the reclamation of self determination (hooks, 1992b).

Conclusion

These contexts provide clarity and understanding to what at times can be seen as 'messy', that is the transition of rangatahi Mäori from secondary school. Successful transitioning for Mäori students is not happening. The complexity of this transition and the agentic abilities of rangatahi Mäori all succeed in confusing the picture even further. It is difficult to hold people and systems accountable, when rangatahi Mäori have to take their transition pathways into their own hands. The narratives suggest that rangatahi Mäori exit school due to a number of contributing factors, some of which clearly hold school curriculum and teachers accountable. The deficit thinking of teachers and the culture of failure attributed to rangatahi Mäori by teachers and school systems, all in some way contribute to the quality of school transition for Mäori. That Mäori are given the opportunity to talk through their experiences has been a valuable exercise for all concerned.

So what of the research participants and their continuing journeys? At the time of the writing of this part of my thesis, research participants were still engaging, reflecting and participating in their particular life stories. Ben was enjoying being a stay at home Dad to his young son. Josh was at the end of studies towards a qualification in sports science. Sarah was following a passion of hers by studying towards dramatic arts. Terina, Hunia and Tony are still working in their respective community roles.

7. Conclusion

> Policies and initiatives have tended to frame young people as the problem of transition—young people need more information, are not responsible enough to make good choices, should be encouraged into areas of skills shortages, should understand student loans as an investment, should have more work experience at school, and so forth. This approach typically focuses on measuring and tracking young people's post-school activities and then drawing conclusions about the state of their transition. For example, some policies aim to ensure that young people get into, and complete, training or education courses. If young people move from these courses into a job, then both the course and young people's transitions are seen as successful.
>
> (Vaughan *et al.*, 2006, p. 4)

If New Zealand is not vigilant against the rhetoric of school to work transitions, then we risk being lulled into a false sense of security. There is the illusion that all young people are well catered for if only they follow the right path. Herein lies the issue. The challenge made by Mäori film maker Merata Mita (1989) in the earlier stages of this thesis needs to be reiterated again. Those doing the defining, maintain the power and control. This power to define is often a subjective process that is so readily validated by a universal context (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). These students are marginalised by these ways of thinking. The six research participants, who represent the state of transition for rangatahi Mäori within this thesis, tend not to be the people with the resources and the capacity to do the defining. This research concluded that the system that defines Mäori secondary school transitions does this at the expense of its end users.

My thesis highlighted the underlying assumption of government rhetoric (Davis, 2009), that the choices made by young Mäori are the reason why their transition is compromised. This research argued against that. The research clearly puts the responsibility of Mäori secondary school transitions back onto the system tasked with supporting transition for rangatahi Mäori. This system provides directed support that stops when students enter into secondary schooling. Inconsistencies in that support are clearly evident at the crucial stages of secondary school and post-school transition. This anomaly has instigated the construction of an alternate reality, a mutual reality experienced by the research participants that placed the responsibility of transition back onto rangatahi Mäori. This shift altered how rangatahi Mäori negotiated their secondary school transitions. Instead of school teachers that identified academic or vocational attributes in their students', young Mäori were often incorrectly labelled or not shown how to access alternate pathways to university. Instead of support systems that encouraged a fluid transition out of school, young Mäori were dropped into the post-school experience, and consequently were unable to access the support that should have been readily available.

Rangatahi Mäori students felt the effects of marginalisation and through limited access to choice, resisted against a system that was not catering to their needs. This resistance, although empowering by nature, is a deficit-loading exercise according to school to work transition rhetoric. In resisting, young Mäori were placed on the outside of support systems and were required to use agentic decision-making processes to re-engage into transition. The agency of research participants is clearly the reason why transitioning becomes a valid course of action. The positive outcomes experienced by rangatahi Mäori due to their ability to make choices relating to their transition encouraged their sense of achievement. However, this is not because of appropriate supports and systems, rather it is despite them. The challenge to policy makers and schools is to engage agentic processes for young Mäori through constructive means, and not through leaving these students' to fend for themselves.

Rangatahi Mäori come up against functionalist regulatory processes where government and policy makers rule (Burrell & Morgan, 1979) and as a consequence they are marginalised. There is little opportunity for young Mäori to share their views about school transition. My belief is that rangatahi Mäori need to be given the opportunity to square up with government so as to talk through the lived reality of secondary school transition for Mäori. School transitions can be a reflexive journey for rangatahi Mäori given the opportunity to critically reflect on their pathways and to make decisions accordingly. The ability to 'talk back' through this research in some way helps with understanding the reality. The challenge is to give rangatahi Mäori an opportunity to 'talk back' through the education system, and to not have to rely on alternative processes to support that.

This research suggests that more needs to be known about how rangatahi Mäori participate in and negotiate their transition from secondary schools of New Zealand. As a scoping study, this thesis hopes to provide a start point for research into Mäori secondary school transitions. The direness of the school to work transition equation for rangatahi Mäori is more than well 'counted', it is overdone. However these statistics belie the limited literature available about rangatahi Mäori transitions. Critically-based research questions need critically-sourced research. This research highlighted the contribution that rangatahi Mäori can potentially make as they negotiate their secondary school transition.

In regards to further research about rangatahi Mäori school transitions, the new government's initiatives for young people will provide ample opportunities for this to happen. Although the Youth Opportunities package of nine new initiatives does not specify Mäori directly, the capacity of these initiatives to target and benefit rangatahi Mäori is very important to Mäori and related communities. The ultimate challenge will be

how these are rolled out. The concern is that existing processes, systems and sites will be used which will only serve to perpetuate the disenfranchisement of rangatahi Mäori.

Glossary

Aroha	Love
Kaupapa	Subject
Kawa	Protocols
Mamae	Pain
Mana	Prestige, influence, control, power
Mihi	Greetings
Pasifika	Pacific
Rangatahi	Young person
Tapu	Sacred
Tikanga	Protocols
Whakapapa	Genealogy
Whänau	Family

INTRODUCTION LETTER – Porirua Transition Providers

Kia Ora
Nga mihi nui kia koe
My name is Moana Mitchell. I have been a youth worker in the community of Porirua for over 12 years. I am also doing my Masters in Education through Victoria University of Wellington this year. I am following up a conversation I had with you regarding your help with my MA research project, which is proposing to find out what Mäori think about school to work transitions. This letter is to formalise our relationship and your support of this project. I am looking at conducting in depth interviews and a wänanga with Mäori.

In a few days I will make contact with you to see whether you can support me by (1) making contact with Mäori who have contributed to the Transitions CD, (2) talking to them about whether they would like to participate in this research by allowing me to interview them, and (3) arranging a meeting between Mäori and myself (if applicable) so that I can provide information regarding my research project and whether they are willing to participate in it. Alternately, you may be able to offer me their names and contact details and I can follow up this contact by myself.

I have included the information sheet and the letter to these young people about the process that I intend to take with this research project, for your information. I have also provided an information sheet about a wider research process that I am involved with, the Education, Employment Linkages research project, of which the data gathered from my own research will be of some benefit. In regards to the actual information gathered from participants, this will help to inform my Masters of Education thesis and other publications I may potentially write about school to work transition. You can contact me on (04) 463 5856 or through email moana.mitchell@vuw.ac.nz or talk with my supervisor Dr Hazel Phillips on (04) 463 6869 or through email hazel.phillips@vuw.ac.nz if you have any questions regarding this research. I look forward to working with you and thank you for your time.

Noho ora mai, naaku noa naa,

Moana Mitchell

INTRODUCTION LETTER – Mäori Research Participants

Kia Ora
Nga mihi nui kia koe
I am writing to introduce myself to you and the research that I am wanting to do. Firstly, I am really excited that you have taken some time to read my letter. I am really interested in hearing more from you about your experiences of school to work transitions. This is the research that I plan to do, which I plan to talk about throughout this letter.

The purpose of my research is looking at school to work transition for Mäori. I would like to interview you about your experiences of school to work transition. The interview should take around one to two hours, and I will have food and refreshments available for you while the interview is happening.

You will be given an opportunity to check your story and I plan to keep in touch with you so that you are fully aware about what is happening with your interview. The information that you provide me will help me write up my Masters of Education thesis and other publications about school to work transition for Mäori.

In a few days I will make contact with you to see whether you would be willing to help me out. I have included information about myself, and the process that I intend to take with this research project. I also have a consent form for you to fill out and am willing to talk to your support people or whänau about this research if that would helpful, as well as an information sheet about a wider project called Education, Employment Linkages of which my research will be of benefit to.

I look forward to working with you and thank you for your time.

Noho ora mai, naaku noa naa,

Moana Mitchell

RESEARCH CONSENT FORM

Research Project Title: Scoping Mäori School Transitions

1. I have read the Information Sheet about this research and have had details of the research explained to me.
2. My questions about the research have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.
3. I agree that these interviews can be audio-taped.
4. I also understand that I am free to withdraw from the research at any time, or to decline to answer any particular questions in the research.
5. I understand that any information I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher and that I will not be identified in the research or any reports on the project or to any party.
6. I understand that I will have an opportunity to comment on the research findings and check the accuracy of any interviews.
7. I understand that the information collected for the purposes of this research study will be used in another research project.
8. I wish to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Participant's Name:_____

Participant's Signature:_____

Date: **/**   **/**

Contact details:_____

_____

Researcher's Name: _____

Researcher's Signature:_____

I would like my information: (circle one)

    a) returned to me
    b) returned to my family
    c) other (please specify)…………………………………………….

I would like to receive a copy of the final report: YES   NO   (circle one)

INFORMATION SHEET – GENERAL

Kia Ora,

My name is Moana Mitchell. I have been a youth worker in Porirua for about 12 years. Currently, I live in Linden and have a 6 year old daughter who goes to Te Kura Maori o Porirua. Also, this year I am doing my Masters in Education at Victoria University. As part of that, I am doing some research. The purpose of this research will look at secondary school transition for Maori here in Porirua. I am really interested in knowing more about how Maori experience and negotiate secondary school transition. This research will be done over the next couple of months, from August to November 2008. The outcome of this research will help inform my Masters of Education thesis and other publications about secondary school transitions.

If you are able to be part of this process, you can expect that the following things can happen. Someone from Porirua YTS has made contact with you to ask if you would like to meet with me. From there I will talk a bit about who I am and what I am doing with my research. I will formally ask you whether you would like to participate in my research and you will sign a consent form, if you choose to participate. From here, I will make contact with you to make a time and date to meet up for an interview. This interview could take between one to two hours, however I will have some light refreshments there for you. This interview will also be taped to ensure that what you tell me is recorded correctly. Your recorded interviews are important to me, so I have to make sure that the data collected is safe. I will do that by storing the recordings in a locked file. I will also have the recordings available for five years after which they will be destroyed. If you have any questions regarding the storing of your interviews, please ask me about it. After this and with your blessings, I will write up this research, and will have a copy of it available for you to read at the Porirua YTS.

I am really interested in your being fully informed about this process and understanding what you are consenting to, so I will spend some time in ensuring that this happens. This is so that you choose to consent because you are interested in my research and how it will help with getting information out there about how young Maori transition between school and work. At any stage, you are able to withdraw from this research. There is no compulsion for you to participate in this research if you do not want to. Also my research has been reviewed and approved by the Victoria University of Wellington College of Education Committee.

If you have any questions about my research you can contact me on (04) 463 5856 or by email moana.mitchell@vuw.ac.nz and you can also contact my supervisor, Dr Hazel Phillips on (04) 463 6869 or by email hazel.phillips@vuw.ac.nz

I am excited to be doing this research in Porirua and with Maori, and look forward to meeting all of you!

Nga mihi mahana, na
Moana Mitchell

INFORMATION SHEET – Education, Employment Linkages (EEL) Research Project

The Research Programme on Education Employment Linkages (EEL) has identified serious problems experienced by young New Zealanders preparing for employment. The government is investing heavily in helping young people make education-employment choices. Despite the scale of that investment, and despite its strategic importance for individual well-being and the country's national goals, there has previously been no research programme in New Zealand devoted to understanding and improving education-employment linkages by young New Zealanders.

The EEL research programme will produce new knowledge about how formal support systems can best help young New Zealanders link education choices and employment outcomes. This new knowledge will be used by policy advisors to design better systems of support, and will be used by practitioners for better implementation of current and future policies. This will lead to improved education and training choices by young people, equipping them more fully to participate in sustainable, high quality and productive employment.

The aim of the research programme is to answer the question: How can formal support systems best help young New Zealanders make good education employment linkages to benefit themselves, their communities, and the national economy?

To achieve this aim, the programme has four core objectives:

Objective 1 To research and deliver new knowledge about effective systems in school communities for helping young New Zealanders make good education employment linkages.

Objective 2 To research and deliver new knowledge about effective systems in regional communities for helping young New Zealanders make good education employment linkages.

Objective 3 To research and deliver new knowledge about effective systems in Māori and Pacific communities for helping young New Zealanders make good education employment linkages.

Objective 4 To research and deliver new knowledge about systems for conveying the needs of employers to young New Zealanders, in order to improve education employment linkages.

For more information about the EEL project click on www.eel.org.nz

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research questions are:
What are Mäori experiences of the secondary school transitions? And, how do Mäori think about and negotiate this transition?

The following are contributory questions that may be extended on and are, due to their flexible nature, in a constant flux of change, as is the premise of phenomenological-based research (Creswell, 2003):
•   What are Mäori schooling experiences?
•   What hopes, dreams and aspirations do Mäori have for their schooling?
•   What hopes, dreams and aspirations do Mäori have beyond school?
•   What are their actual experiences?
•   How are Mäori supported in fulfilling their hopes, dreams and aspirations?
•   Have their experiences changed their aspirations? If so, why and how?
•   Who has influenced Mäori ideas about school and transition? How have their ideas been influenced?
•   Does Mäori culture play a part in Mäori transition aspirations? If so, what part?
•   Does whänau/family have a role in Mäori transition aspirations? If so, what role?
•   Do Mäori think their experiences of transition are different from other young people? If so, what experiences have been different and why? What experiences do they share?

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