

The background of the image is a close-up, high-resolution photograph of a woven basket or mat. The weaving is made from light-colored, natural fibers, possibly reeds or bamboo, which are interlaced in a complex, diagonal pattern. The lighting is warm and directional, coming from the upper left, which creates strong highlights and deep shadows, emphasizing the texture and three-dimensional quality of the weaving. The overall color palette is a range of browns and tans, from light beige to deep, dark chocolate and near-black tones in the shadows.

Rangatira mō āpōpō

“Not one generation more!”

The University of Waikato, Poutama Pounamu Research and Development whānau

We are committed to working for equity, excellence and belonging to build strong foundations for the future.

Our work has been led by Māori with non-Māori, in te reo Māori settings and in English medium settings. Our focus is on supporting leaders, schools and early childhood centres to work more effectively with whānau, tamariki mokopuna, and rangatahi Māori. Our outcomes show multiple benefits for all.

We have learnt that 'Kaupapa Māori' and 'Critical' theories are foundational to the type of indigenising and decolonising transformative reform required for addressing inequity and racism across society.

Our foundational duality of praxis brings these theories and our practice together. These understandings have been learned alongside wider Māori communities through over 30 years of iterative research and professional development.

We are now supported, across a range of sectors, by Māori and non-Māori who recognise that the ongoing disparities for Māori are socially unjust and must not continue.

We believe that not one generation more should miss out on the benefits of effective education for future life choices.

The aspirations of the Ka Hikitia - Ka Hāpaitia The Māori Education Strategy provide a strong system foundation from which to build.

Activating 'critical' change

In order to effect 'critical' change we must develop equitable and excellent learning contexts in which our tamariki mokopuna and rangatahi feel they belong and can be successful as Māori.

We must seek opportunities for mana whenua, iwi and whānau to speak into these spaces so that their knowledge and expertise can define more determined and authentic cultural and learning pathways for our rangatira mō āpōpō.

This requires relational and interdependent engagement processes, informed by past experiences, in order to realise the potential of rangatahi and whānau going forward.

Critical change elements

Critical change elements are the processes or procedures created to understand what is currently occurring across communities, then co-designing and institutionalising innovation for improvement and monitoring the performance of the reform.

These are by their collaborative nature iterative models of implementation. They are not a prescription or a stand-alone programme, but are responsive to each context, building on local knowledge and expertise. They are ongoing and enduring collaborative conversations and investigations that ensure a coherent and aligned indigenising and decolonising approach to our future joint actions and outcomes.

Critical change elements leading to equity, excellence and belonging

Whakawhanaungatanga, hui whakarewa:

establishing respectful bi-directional/two-way relationships and revealing our shared cultural narrative to understand the implications going forward

When you are trying to incorporate te ao Māori or whakaaro Māori into a school within our whenua and include our kids of this whenua, who have mana over this whenua, it is vitally important to have a mana whenua perspective on things.

Mana Whenua

Wānanga:

regularly connecting through mana whenua to iwi, whānau, schools and centres for making decisions and co-creating new knowledge

As a Māori parent knowing my own schooling wasn't the best, I ask 'who am I to question the teacher?'. But actually, we need to speak up and ask for what's right, and what works for our kids.

Whānau

I remember turning up to that first wānanga decidedly nervous. It was the first time that I'd been welcomed onto a marae for probably 20 years and I didn't know what to expect. Those two days, they just opened my eyes to what was possible.

Leader

I must always hold on to the values and practices that have been planted in me by my parents and my elders on the marae - to always be humble; to remain on the same level as my friends; never to think I am above them; remain as one in the group. That's when I believe I will be successful.

Rangatahi

Critical change elements leading to equity, excellence and belonging

Cross-community transitions:

more informed transitions with stronger connections from early childhood, through primary, into secondary and on to employment

We're not preparing them for the next step – we're preparing them for life. We want them to believe in themselves - Mauria Te Pono, believe in yourself. You can't just teach tamariki that, but you can set the conditions and you can certainly empower everyone in that.

Teacher

Schooling is just for a short time. Whānau are forever, they have to be alongside every step of the way.

Whānau

Rongohia te Hau and Playground Observations:

understanding what excellence looks like for tamariki mokopuna and how we can all support more relational and responsive schools, centres and classrooms where tamariki mokopuna and rangatahi believe they can belong

We think that the tool's great but what's even better is the conversation that's happening around it. So the kōrero, the kōrero, the kōrero – that's what's more powerful.

Leader

It's the way we administer the process that promotes cultural, relational and responsive pedagogy. It would be wrong to pick up the tool and use it just as a tool. So we make sure that the people who are involved understand the practice and the thinking behind Rongohia te Hau before we do it and that it's not just about classroom practice, it's about practice across our educational lives. This pedagogy is about everything we do in our school. It's about how we talk to each other, how we talk to our students, our whānau. How we communicate with them.

Leader

Critical change elements leading to equity, excellence and belonging

Poutama Pounamu Blended Learning:

understanding and promoting decolonising and anti-racist actions, for educators, rangatahi and whānau

I experienced an 'initial shock' around my new knowledge about the disparities faced by Māori in education. The conversations conducted at the wānanga had a profound effect on me, which resulted in a strong personal resolve to be more agentic.

Teacher

That deep-centred racism, bigotry, whatever; some are not yet in a place where they're prepared to change. Whether it's pronunciation, whether it's equity, it doesn't matter. I'm optimistic because the younger people get it. These realisations are spreading across the country.

Leader

Building critical leadership:

leading the reform through transformative acts of Indigenisation and decolonisation

"Not one generation more":

understanding, voicing and enacting our commitment to transformative change

It grew leaders, it grew people to be the leaders, to be the facilitators. Some of them thought they weren't capable of doing that but it's growing that leadership, finding those opportunities for people to facilitate a group of adults around some pretty challenging conversations, to tap into their own potential.

Leader

Critical change elements leading to equity, excellence and belonging

Mauri ora pathway:

relational, responsive and connected through the Ako: Critical Contexts for Change in schools, centres, classrooms and community spaces

It means having our culture valued. Having us valued as rangatahi Māori. Teachers actually getting to know their Māori students, just outright getting to know who we are.

Rangatahi

It's taking labels away, taking stereotypes away, just all having a space where everyone can be who they are.

Leader

Critical action plans:

developing and committing to pathways for indigenisation and decolonisation

Hui taumata:

extending and sharing our commitment with others

How often do schools review their school values with all staff? How often are staff asked to explain how they implement these values? How are these values demonstrated daily by all staff? What should they look like, what should they sound like within schools, within the community? And how can we contribute?

Whānau

Titiro whakamua:

revealing the implications of existing systems and structures

It brings the inequity, quietly endured by our Māori students, to the front of all of our teachers' and leaders' thinking. It allows more and more teachers and leaders to realise that they actually have the agency to make transformative change.

Leader

Our journey is definitely a personal journey and it has to be the heart before it gets to the head. For some people there is guilt to get past. They have to realise that actually it's not me, but now that I know this, what can I do to go forward?

Teacher