



The Mauri Ora Pathway

The Mauri Ora Pathway utilises a change model called the Ako: Critical Contexts for Change. It was developed from over 30 years of learning alongside Māori learners, whānau and their home communities together with education leaders and teachers. We wanted to disrupt inequities and better understand what would work to promote effective change. This theory of change model can help educators to ensure the cultural identity of Māori learners is strengthened and valued so that Mauri ora can flourish.

This change within the Mauri Ora Pathway requires a deeper understanding of what is currently happening for learners and the contexts for change within which they can better support tamariki to learn and achieve more effectively. These understandings provide a pathway for other marginalised learners and their families.

If we are to achieve excellence for all of our learners we must understand what is currently happening for learners and where change needs to happen. We must then work to ensure each learner feels they belong within the learning environments we provide. This means educators must take deliberate responsibility for reviewing and constantly improving the following three contexts for change:

1. Cultural relationships for responsive pedagogy are practices of teaching and learning where learners' experiences and knowledge are welcomed, valued and accepted as valid. Learners are supported to connect new learning to their own prior knowledge and cultural experiences.

Effective teaching and learning is dynamic. Learning is relevant to learners' lives, interests, readiness and aspirations for the future. Teachers and learners learn with and from each other. By believing in the potential of learners, agentic teachers can create more effective conditions for engagement.

One teacher, he's followed me right through school and he's made sure I've kept out of trouble, more so this year because I wasn't the best student up until Year 10. He's pushed me to do my best and shown me what I can do, rather than just me, doing what I think I can do. He's shown me that I can do more than I think.

Senior Māori student at Omaka Marae

2. Deliberate professional acts applied with adaptive expertise bring attention to the implicit and explicit drivers that influence the decisions made by leaders, teachers, teams, schools and centres. When these drivers are exposed and understood, educators can take more deliberate and determined actions to address inequity and racism within their systems and structures. Leaders and teachers scrutinise and modify curriculum, policies, practices and interventions with the vision of creating a school or centre community that truly serves their learners and whānau.

Cultural responsiveness requires an acknowledgement of how power manifests itself within interactions and how this power is rooted in our colonial history. It also requires us to consider that the systems, structures and policies that surround us are, too, a social construction born out of this same history.

3. Home, school and community collaborations focus attention on authentic relationships with whānau, community, hapū and iwi and the potential for mutually beneficial collaborations. When whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori organisations are part of planning and decision making, in and out-of-school learning can work together to support valued outcomes for tamariki and rangatahi.

My family, my friends, my teachers – they've been a key part of my life. With them you can strive harder in life, and become the strong person you are.

Senior Māori student at Hūria Marae

Simultaneous Success Trajectories

When these three contexts are focused on and attended to at the same time, Māori learners are more likely to enjoy and achieve education success as Māori and experience mauri ora.

Māori learners told us that equity, excellence and belonging must include:

The strengthening of their cultural identity as Māori and all that entails, and Achieving qualifications that give them real choices for their future.

You really want to make something of yourself and make your family and iwi proud - and you want to beat the stats. You want to just be you and succeed.

Senior Māori Student at Whitiora Marae

Given that the Mauri Ora Pathway is based on the actual experiences and evidence of Māori learners' participation and achievement and their community's high aspirations for their future potential, it must be responsive to each centre, school or community.

Breaking that stereotype and those assumptions that are put on us as Māori. I don't think success for us is just academic. It's finding who we are and being happy with our wellbeing, and being able to confidently walk with te ao Māori and te ao Pākehā. (the Māori and Pākehā worlds). And showing them that we can do just as good as they can, and better.

Senior Māori student at Pūkaki Marae

Links to Te Hurihanganui Pou and Principles

The Mauri Ora Pathway highlights the interdependent relationships, structures and processes in which to apply the Te Hurihanganui pou (*Kaupapa Māori* and *Critical Consciousness*) and principles. These theoretical understandings become the building blocks for positioning ourselves as learners and through the use of evidence and *Whanaungatanga* with multiple community voices, take collective responsibility (*Te Hāngaitanga*) for meeting the needs, aspirations and potential of the community's children (*Te Ira Tangata*) in order to inform transformative change. The positive use of individual and collective power and influence (*Mana Ōrite*) to achieve collaborative and participatory reform leading to social justice and equity for all.