

**MATAURANGA MOTUHAKÉ – SPECIAL EDUCATION FOR MAORI
KAUPAPA MAORI RESEARCH**

**Presentation by Margaret Wilkie to the NZARE Conference, 2 December, 2000
Surviving Paradox: Education in the New Millennium**

***Abstract:** Kaupapa Maori research is a generic term used to describe a range of practice relating particularly to research by, with and for Maori. The use of kaupapa Maori models and frameworks within one qualitative research project “Matauranga Motuhake” includes a wharehenui model, access to research sites by whakawhanaungatanga and an empowering consent process. A wananga drew on the principles derived from the Treaty of Waitangi for analyses of both the process and the content of the research with examples from one case study presented here.*

The term Special Education for Maori is a paradox. While signaling to some people that this paper is probably about education for Maori who can be labeled

“the deaf, the dumb, the blind, the lame, the bad and the not too bright”¹

to others the term itself is nonsensical, because we know that each Maori child is regarded as unique in their own right, and that the education of all Maori children is special.

Whether they are in kohanga or early childhood, or schools or whatever, we look at special needs totally differently. All children are taonga.²

Quoting the Oxford Dictionary one definition of a paradox is

A seemingly absurd or contradictory statement, even if actually well-founded.³

It may be argued that the policies which make provision for the special education needs of all New Zealanders are well founded; but research shows that Maori are over represented in the need for special education services, and under represented in the figures of those accessing and receiving the support. The findings of recent research offer evidence of some of the “gaps” which gape at us from the field of special education. However, statistics can not present the lived reality of what it actually means to be a whanau with a child or children with special needs.

There’s been many a time – I’m not ashamed to say it - I’ve cried and I’ve wept because of Ben's condition. Things that we’ve gone through with him, and the times we’ve seen him nearly die, and the times when he is suffering you know – you can only do your best.⁴

A further definition of a paradox is

A person or thing conflicting with a preconceived notion of what is reasonable or possible³

A report generated from the NZCER Special Education for Maori research project titled

¹ Respondent to SE2000 research process

² Wilkie 2000 P8 Te Kohanga Reo National Trust

³ Oxford University Press (1996) The Oxford English Reference Dictionary

⁴ Wilkie (unpublished) Matauranga Motuhake quote from Tika, the mother in Ben’s whanau.

Matauranga Motuhake presents 11 Case Studies revealing the personal stories that exemplify Maori whanau responding in their own ways to the special needs of their own children. In some case studies whanau are at times in conflict with the preconceived notion of what is reasonable and all of the whanau were at one stage uninformed about what is possible with the government funded provision for special needs and special education.

I think we actually missed out on the handicap allowance⁵. I didn't know about that until he was about eleven years old, and we missed out on it for those eleven years. Nobody had told me that we were entitled to that allowance.⁶

Matauranga Motuhake aims to present a Maori - centred perspective of special education from within whanau throughout New Zealand. The report aims to capture unique perspectives of the impacts of special needs for Maori children, their whanau, schools and communities.

The purpose of this paper is not to present the findings of *Matauranga Motuhake*, it is rather to introduce the whakaaro and aspects of the process of the research project which followed the kawa of kaupapa Maori research. Examples include using a wharenuui model as a framework for the research, using whakawhanaungatanga to access the whanau, and the adherence to a consent process empowering whanau from the first point of contact to have control over the process and their own story as it will appear in the published report. A model drawing on the Treaty of Waitangi and the articles derived from the Treaty were used as tools for the analysis of the case studies, and the analyses of one story and the research process for that case study is presented here.

The Wharenuui Model of the research



The logo created for *Matauranga Motuhake* shows the child of Maori and other bloodlines protected within the shelter of a range of kaupapa Maori supports represented by the **wharenuui**. The roof of the wharenuui is not entirely complete just as structures in support of Maori children and their whanau are not complete. The rising sun offers new hope for a Maori-centered response to the issues surrounding special educational needs.

Koruru: Kaupapa Māori is the centre of the *Matauranga Motuhake* research framework, and as such heads the project. The koruru is traditionally offering a warning and a challenge for all who see it. Descending from the head are the two arms which represent the statistical data available from government and research literature and the frame of whanau, hapu and iwi

The focus of *Matauranga Motuhake* is the child with special educational needs within the context of their own whanau. A range of 11 whanau structures is presented in the report, reflecting the flexible nature of whanau, including schools as whanau.

⁵ Disability Allowance

⁶ Wilkie (unpublished) Matauranga Motuhake quote from Fleur, the mother in Ben's whanau.

Traditional concepts of whanau, hapu, and iwi are critical to frame appropriately the policy for Maori, and an understanding of these concepts is very important for all education professionals and providers of special education services. Acknowledging the uniqueness of each Maori child...⁷

Many of the children were unable to speak for themselves so their stories appear as told by their whanau from their own context, in their own words, in their own choice of language. One case study based in a Kura Kaupapa Maori is presented in te reo Maori.

Amo Amo: The two standing amo amo show importance and significance to the whareniui, as frames for the research. On one side the Treaty of Waitangi which is the basis for the tools of analysis of the research and the other side the government policies and funding for special educational needs including the data on demand and provision for services and support.

Paepae: Under the shelter of the whareniui is the paepae, an important place for tangata whenua to be part of whaikorero. The research questions and process of korero with whanau had a protected place of safety within a clear structure.

Methodology

Matauranga Motuhake offers a qualitative study based on tape-recorded interviews with whanau and education, health and service providers throughout New Zealand. The interviews were the basis of case studies that are not intended to be generalisable to all Maori, although the content of many of the stories will be recognisable to people everywhere.

The research aimed to complete 10 - 15 case studies and a total of 18 sites were initially approached to ensure coverage of New Zealand and a range of special needs. As all whanau were aware they could withdraw from the research project at any stage, 6 whanau withdrew after giving their verbal consent but prior to the interview stage. One draft case study may not be published as the final consent from the whanau was not secured and the story raises ethical and legal issues of concern.

Process of informed consents

The original 18 sites were accessed through contact with Maori people or services working with Maori in the field of special education. The diverse routes of access for the research show the process of whakawhanaungatanga, with contact made initially through existing connections with whanau. As each unique whanau was identified a verbal consent to an approach from the *Matauranga Motuhake* project was sought, prior to a letter of introduction being sent out.

The next response came from whanau who consented in writing to take part in the research. A core schedule of questions was created as a basis from which the interviews with whanau could proceed. Whanau were given a copy of the research questions several weeks before the interviews were conducted at the place and time chosen by the whanau.

From here, tape recorded interviews were conducted in a range of sites and the transcripts made from the tapes were returned to most of the whanau who contributed. Whanau

⁷ (Wilkie 2000, So What's so special about special education for Maori? NZCER, Wellington)

responded with comments on one copy of their transcripts, and these changes were taken into account prior to the Case Studies being drafted. The drafts were then returned to whanau for comment and a final consent to proceed to editing and publication of the report. At this stage, additional comments from the whanau were included, some of which are truly inspirational.

If you have a child like that you can look at it as a unique opportunity rather than thinking 'oh I'm missing out on something'. I'd just like to really encourage people that it's an awesome privilege to have somebody like Ben.⁸

***Matauranga Motuhake* Wananga**

The unique methodology of ***Matauranga Motuhake*** included a wananga process aiming to analyse the research data. The wananga was based e noho marae at Hongoeka Marae near Wellington and followed the kawa of tangata whenua, Ngati Toa in the powhiri and the proceedings of the wananga over three days. Along with the NZCER Pukenga and various kaumatua and kuia of the marae whanau, partners, children and mokopuna of the kairangahau attending joined in the wananga.

Treaty Of Waitangi Principles

Five principles based on the articles of the Treaty of Waitangi were used as a framework for analysis of the case studies,

Article One: The Principles of ***Partnership*** between Maori/Tangata Whenua and the Crown and ***Participation*** of Maori in all aspects of special education development and services.

Article Two: The principle of ***Active Protection*** ensuring Maori are supported by special education support and services.

Article Three: The principles of ***Equality*** regarding the enjoyment of equal rights and ***Accessibility*** or access to provision of services and support on a fair basis

The analysis aimed to identify the themes and issues emerging from the data and to generate recommendations for ongoing development of special education provision targeting Maori. One finding of the wananga was that in the case studies where there was no attempt or evidence of partnership, the remaining principles were also not upheld. Other case studies exemplify active partnerships between whanau and agents of the crown with evidence of all of the principles being upheld and implemented.

Example Of The Analysis From One Case Study - Ben's Whanau

Synopsis

15 year old Ben attends a primary school located in a remote rural area of New Zealand, given the pseudonym Matariki School. The following statement appears in the Matariki School Charter

⁸ Wilkie (unpublished) Matauranga Motuhake quote from Tika, the father in Ben's whanau.

“Matariki School seeks to provide teaching and learning programmes, in a caring environment, to promote the development of each pupil’s needs, endeavouring to meet the physical, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual potential of the individual.”

The case study of Ben’s whanau offers glimpses of how Matariki School provides exactly this for Ben. The kaupapa or philosophy of Matariki School acknowledges the importance of whanaungatanga (relationships), manaakitanga (care), aroha (love), kotahitanga (unity or working together) and whakamanatanga (empowerment). The lived realities of these values are demonstrated in the details of Ben’s story.

Ben is “growth retardated”⁹ with other intellectual and medical challenges and has a Section 9 exemption to attend Matariki School. This refers to Section 9 - Special Education of the Education Act 1989

5 (b) A person under 21 who turned 14 in any year may in any later year be or continue to be enrolled at a primary school, or in a class below form III at a composite school

The story from Ben’s whanau includes this reference to the Section 9 arrangement for Ben:

I think its important to know about this, it may appeal more to parents than to schools in the wider picture. I don’t think any parent should use it to pressure a primary school to keep a particularly physically large or aggressive student on the grounds, because that’s inappropriate. We’ve got a gentle soul in our setting and Ben does have a place here, he’s gentle and he doesn’t physically stand out at present, and there’s room for that. I think we’ve got so much to learn from Ben, our children have got so much to learn from him.¹⁰

The whanau supporting Ben includes his parents and the school working together. Ben had previously been educated in special units and the way he was ‘mainstreamed’ is told in the story. Four narratives present the viewpoints of the parents, caregiver, teacher and principal.

The in-school support for Ben was partially funded through the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS) within the High Needs category. This paid about half of the salary for a full-time caregiver with the remainder found through bulk funding paid to the school. The recent demise of bulk funding for Matariki School may impact on this arrangement.

The whanau had recently begun to access health services and benefits for Ben and for example the gradual improvement in Ben’s ability to speak was acknowledged as a positive result of interaction with the other children of Matariki School. The whanau and school appeared to accept the lack of ongoing speech language therapy specified in Ben’s Individual Education Plan (IEP) to which Ben is entitled but did not receive from the Specialist Education Service.

Well he’s supposed to come here but I don’t know where he is, what’s his name? I never found the speech therapist very reliable myself. So we tried to help Ben and we don’t know whether we are doing any good. Who really helps Ben? It’s the kids in the classroom.¹¹

⁹ Wilkie (unpublished) Matauranga Motuhake as described by Fleur, Ben’s mother

¹⁰ ibid, quote from Urukehu, the Principal of Matariki School

¹¹ ibid, quote from Kereru, Ben’s caregiver

The articles of the Treaty and the principles were applied to both the detail and content of the story of each special child and the process of the research used to generate the case studies.

Principles Analysis

PRINCIPLES	The whanau, the school and the child.	The research analysis
Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Whanau chose the school from a range of options based on word of mouth. ● Ben is free to participate in any school activities at any level at any time of the school day. ● Ben is integrated into a class and has 100% teacher aide support funded by ORTS. ● Ben receives no support in speech language or other therapies due to intermittent service delivery from SES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Kairangahau makes school visit to brief principal and some staff on research kanohi ki te kanohi ● Whanau identified by school who made initial contact for agreement to participate in the research. ● Whanau given time to consider the research and questions ● Interviews by kairangahau at whanau workplace and at school.
Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ben is free to be part of a range of activities with all staff committed to that programme and protecting Ben at school ● School commitment to kaupapa Maori and whanau structures give whanau confidence that Ben is safe at the school. ● Staff are trained for medical emergencies with Ben e.g. epileptic fits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Whanau and school have ample time to give informed consent to participate. ● Whanau and school know that they can withdraw consent at any stage. ● Ethics ensure protection and anonymity of the child, whanau and school. ● Uses own words of whanau and school staff to tell the story.
Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parents are confident that the school ensures Ben's safety and happiness. ● Ben's verbal communication skills are improving. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Story shows the options open to whanau for Section 9 agreements and integration of special needs child into mainstream school ● Whanau and school share positive experiences.
Equality /Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maori are over-represented in ORS applications and under- represented in ORS funding ● School subsidises shortfall in ORS funding to enable full-time caregiver. ● Whanau were until recently unaware of state benefits and entitlement to services and support for Ben. ● Transport Allowance enables Ben access to the school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Research recommendation ● Publish case study to show this option available under Section 9 and ORS for the school and whanau response to inclusive education.

The full report *Matauranga Motuhake* will be available in early 2001, in closing this address, I wonder, how do Maori survive the paradox of special education ? Perhaps Ben's father Tika can answer that

Ben's our boy that's our responsibility, we'll bring him up and do the best for him, and we don't sort of expect others to really help. We've just carried on, and we pray for him every day, before he goes to school. Before he goes to sleep, that's a prayer time. Ben knows how to pray in his own language, and we just really have that in place all the time. I think its been our choice that we haven't looked for other supports, you know since we've been able to look after Ben.

The report "*Matauranga Motuhake*" is scheduled for publication in February 2001. Direct all queries for purchase of the report to:

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