

# Maori schools getting results

by Justin Latif

Max Guptill, a Maori community worker in Mt Wellington, is concerned that Maori students are slipping through the gaps in our education system.

Kura kaupapa are much more effective at educating Maori, according to Guptill, having studied in a kura kaupapa himself.

As he is currently studying part-time at Auckland College of Education, he has an insight to appropriate education methods.

Being closely involved in Bailey Rd School, a primary school in Mt Wellington, he is worried a school with such a large percentage of Maori students does not give enough consideration to Maori students.

He has started a kapa haka group at the school but thinks it isn't enough.

"They are teaching from a Maori perspective," he says.

"There is a lot more opportunity for discussion and more critical thinking."

One important difference is "with the pakeha system everyone is treated the same, but that's not as good as it could be" adding that Maori education has a more holistic approach.

"You can't compartmentalise everything. Everything is linked.

Because it is [pakeha schools] more authoritarian it's not the best - it doesn't answer the 'whys'."

He this is part of the reason why Maori don't meet national averages in schooling performance.

He believes te reo Maori emer-

sion schools are more beneficial because "language gives identity".

Diane Facon, principal of Bailey Rd School, believes most of their Maori students are performing on average or above the national average.

She says that only one or two Maori students in each year group are getting results lower than the national average.

To cater for struggling students they incorporate more group work and one-on-one teaching.

"Maori aspects come into all areas of the curriculum," she says.

Ben Mason, deputy principal at Te Kura Kaupapa Maori O Hoani Waititi, is proud of what his school has done for Maori. Over a five-year period his school can boast a 92 per cent retention rate from year 9 to year 13. For the last three years all year 11

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students have passed numeracy and literacy. The national pass rate in these subjects for Year 11 is only 50 per cent.

While "success in school is all about academic results" for pakeha schools, Mason believes his school is also preparing the students with life skills.

"They'll be successful in the world - being bi lingual means

they'll be better equipped for the world," he says.

Mason's school is part of the Hoani Waititi Marae which is the local marae for Maori Party co-leader Dr Pita Sharples.

Another Maori Party MP, Hone Harawira is chairman of Te Rangi Aniwaniwa, a kura kaupapa Maori in Kaitiaki.

He believes his school is achieving remarkable success for their students. The aim of his school is to give students opportunities to reach their potential.

Harawira says, "we prepare pathways in all areas through introducing tertiary study while still at school, and through setting up apprenticeships."

Qiane Corfield, who is of Tainui, Nga Puhi and Te Arawa descent, can see the positive side of kura kaupapa but has some reservations.

"If you come out of kura kaupapa there's no doubt you can survive in the Maori world, it can become so pro-Maori that its anti-everything else - it's great they are really strong on Maori but they tend to exclude the pakeha world," she says.

She adds: "It is all about balance". She is concerned that some kura kaupapa schools aren't teaching the basics of reading and writing.

"I have two nieces [at kura kaupapa] who are behind pakeha."

However she does believe "it brings back a sense of identity".

Hone Harawira believes schools like his and Te Kura Kaupapa Maori O Hoani Waititi will have a dramatic impact on the socio-political landscape in New Zealand in the future.

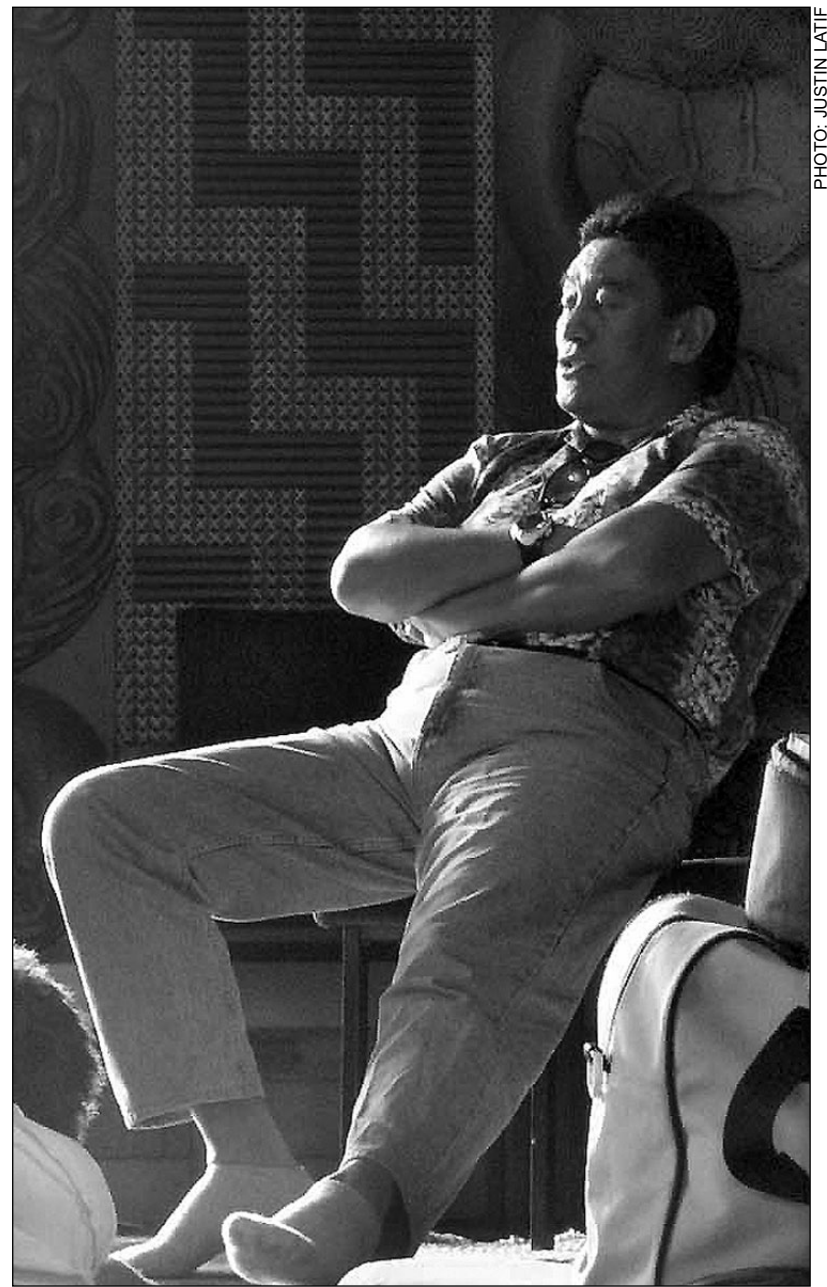


PHOTO: JUSTIN LATIF

**PRINCIPLES OF SUCCESS:** MP Hone Harawira's Maori school is succeeding where pakeha schools are failing Maori students.

## Educator backs NCEA

by John Edwards

The National Certificate of Educational Achievement is a better, fairer system of assessment than its predecessors says educationalist Dr Stuart Middleton of the Manukau Institute of Technology.

Dr Middleton says that contrary to what was published in the media, students are being fairly assessed.

"NCEA gives credit to students for what they do. People aren't getting credit for doing nothing," says Middleton.

Dr Middleton did not see the benefits of failing half the country, which was essentially what the previous examination systems did.

Under the previous School Certificate and Bursary examination systems just over half the student were passed to match the "bell-curve" and keep the examinations success rate statistically sound.

"There were never standards in our exam system. Pass or fail, where is the sense in that?" Middleton says.

"That kind of system becomes self-fulfilling".

But headmaster of King's College Roy Kelley is still unconvinced the system can be successful.

"At our school we give no cred-

its for work experience, nor do we offer what I would regard as questionable subjects," says Kelley.

"As a result, a student who went through King's College has a worthwhile qualification.

"The worry is that in the end, employers or universities might start interpreting NCEA based on where you went to school, which is exactly what this system didn't want to happen."

Dr Middleton's response is to say that any credits are awarded as part of a competency-based system.

"You can either do something or you can't. Is there an error in that?"

University of Auckland media studies senior lecturer Margaret Henley is equally positive on the NCEA.

"It is too early to make any assumptions on the NCEA system but what I can say is that for the first time we're setting a literacy standard in high schools and this literary testing, I think, may be weeding out the weaker writers."

An early assignment this year had shown the highest average grade in the last four years, she said.

Kelley said he does see the thinking behind the implementation of NCEA but to be effective New Zealand needs to use a combination of two systems.

Writing to the *New Zealand Herald* on his arrival in New Zealand two years ago Kelley said that the country needed to adopt a "horses for courses" policy.

"One of the problems with the NCEA stems from trying to provide one qualification system for all students yet a one-size-fits-all mentality restricts its effectiveness."

"While some students feel an NCEA course best suits their abilities, interests and future career choices.

"Most clearly feel best suited by an examination system."

Even now Kelley believes that the "dual pathway" offered at King's College is the best option for New Zealand.

"At King's 30 per cent of students have selected a solely NCEA-based assessment.

"It's quite clear those 30 per cent are the lower ability students."

This "dual pathway" would be a way to ensure all capable students were awarded some qualification and rewarded accurately, according to their academic or practical abilities.

Such debate, however, only encourages Dr Middleton.

"It actually makes me happy to hear about uncertainty and aggravation because all that means is that the kinks are being worked out."

## Good literacy tutors getting harder to find

by Carmen Gray

Adult literacy teaching centres in Auckland fear controversial plans to increase the amount of training new tutors must undergo will make it even harder to attract volunteers.

Tutors must currently complete 100 hours of training and practice for the Literacy Aotearoa Certificate of Adult Teaching necessary to volunteer.

But there are plans to double requirements to 200 hours by the end of the year.

Allison McNab, tutor co-ordinator at Waitakere Adult Literacy, says the amount of training already required is off-putting for many would-be volunteers.

"I'm incredibly concerned the level of training expected is perhaps getting too high. It's a bigger and bigger ask of their volunteer time, when all they want to do is come along and get involved in helping in a hands-on way with the students."

Criticism of current standards of literacy teaching comes from Kirk Sargent, head of the School of Foundation Studies at Manukau Institute of Technology, who says better training for tutors is urgently needed.

"The Government has certainly identified capability within

New Zealand as being an issue. They've invested a lot in this being developed."

The institute is offering a new two-year, part-time qualification in adult literacy education for the first time this semester, and it will be possible to cross-credit units of the 200-hour certificate towards that.

One in five New Zealanders struggles to cope with the demands of work and daily life because of poor literacy, an international study has found.

Barbara Menzies, training manager of Literacy Aotearoa, dismisses fears about the new training regulations by saying that the extent of New Zealand's current literacy problem makes a volunteer shortfall almost inevitable.

"Given the scope of the bigger picture, there's no way the 1400 trained volunteers can meet that demand."

But McNab says while some training is essential, making added training compulsory could lead to an even bigger volunteer crisis.

"I hope the certificate we have now will always be around as it asks for a smaller level of commitment, with the new certificate just there as an option for those who want it.

"If we make the higher qualification a standard ballpark - we probably won't exist."