

Ngā Huatau Taiohi - Oakura Marae

Enjoying and achieving education success as Māori is:

- **Being able to resist the negative stereotypes about being Māori**

I'm one of a few Māori students in a prefect leadership role at our school. I think my success as a Māori student is I don't have to put away any part of my Māori identity. I'm allowed to walk in that identity and speak te reo Māori.

- **Having Māori culture and values celebrated at school**

We have teachers who have come from England and from other countries who have no te reo Māori. They learn te reo Māori and try to understand it. I can help them. That's important for me because it shows that they have motivation, they have a passion to understand students at a deeper level. It shows me that they take into consideration my culture and who I am as a person, as a Māori person. It shows that they appreciate that as well.

One of the good things that the teachers at school do is - there's a teachers' kapa haka group, and that really shows in class work. Teachers are doing karakia; they're able to pronounce Māori names properly. Because, not being able to have a teacher pronounce your name properly is quite irritating. A lot of the teachers do try and are working hard to interact with Māori students.

She does karakia in the morning and when we leave, so that she can impact Māori on all other students in our class. She was from South Africa.

- **Being strong in your Māori cultural identity**

For me, I guess it's important having an understanding of tikanga Māori, having an understanding of te reo Māori, and knowing yourself through your identity as Māori. I think that's very important - being able to express to others and portray that you are succeeding, but you are succeeding as a Māori student.

We were asked to do a haka to show all the other countries some of our culture. It was an honour being able to show people who had never seen a haka. Doing it for them and giving them a real New Zealand Māori feel of what haka is about.

All the teachers, instead of just saying: "Stand up!", they'll say: "E tul!". And instead of saying: "Sit down!", they'll say: "E noho!". And they're using those small Māori sentences and scenarios to be able to make the classroom a friendlier environment for Māori students.

- **Being able to contribute to the success of others**

Last year in our Māori class, we had a few Pākehā boys who hardly knew any Māori at all. We kind of thought that they weren't enjoying it, but then you see them the next year coming back. It's really cool to see that they're actually enjoying it and learning it, like actually liking te reo Māori.

We hang down at our gym and there's these Pākehā boys, and they start speaking te reo. It's a cool thing to see. And then we can just go and speak it with them, just for fun, and they're actually having fun doing it.

He's Pākehā. He took Māori right from the junior years to senior year, and he's near to a fluent level of speaking Māori. He's been one of the only Head Boys since I've been there, that will get up on stage at the appropriate times and speak in Māori.

I guess being a New Zealander means you've got the best of both worlds.



- **Experiencing the power of whanaungatanga**

All of the boys that take Māori have been a huge support for me. When we went down to Porirua for Manu Kōrero, we took all of the senior Māori boys and a few of the junior Māori boys. They did a haka tautoko for me up on stage, and they were the people that calmed my nerves at my most nervous point, and really made me relaxed and calm.

- **Developing and maintaining emotional and spiritual strength**

We have a teacher from England who's gone over to the kura next door to learn te reo Māori. That shows me that he appreciates my whakapapa; he appreciates where I come from; who I am as a person, and my culture. That helps me understand where they're coming from as a teacher, and what they're trying to teach me. I understand that they want to know who I am, so I want to know what they have to teach me. It brings them to a level where you're able to respect them as a teacher and as a person as well. You understand that they value who you are and what you do in your life, so you value them and you want to learn from them.

- **Knowing that you can access explicit and timely direction**

He helps us with anything we need, anything at all. If I have problems at home or at school, if you're not really studying that well, he'll take the time to help you with that. Whenever I'm lacking in schoolwork - anything at all - he just helps us out.

She focuses on everybody, but if you're a Māori student in her class, she really helps you out and tries to impact you as much as she can.

He helps out with anything we need for schoolwork. We can just go see him, because we know that we can talk to him about anything.

- **Knowing, accepting and acknowledging the strength of working together**

Our headmaster, the Māori department, and our teachers - they have all been strong supporters of Māori students, our work and our culture. They want to see us prosper and thrive into the successful young people that we can be. One teacher helped me to develop leadership skills; he's been a strong supporter in my personal life and where I want to go in the future.

