

Ngā Huatau Taiohi - Omaka Marae

Enjoying and achieving education success as Māori is:

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

If you're a Māori, you're probably already put in those classes where they're not pushing you to succeed as much, so automatically you do not achieve well. That's the overall stereotype of Māori achievement. People aren't expecting as much of you.

Back in the day, you never used to find very many successful Māori people out there doing things - and these days you do. We're kind of changing that. I want to do managing and marketing and go into Māori business, and get more of that kind of thing rolling.

Success as a Māori student, for me, is breaking the stereotypes of not succeeding and not doing as well in school. For me, Māori is my strongest subject. But it doesn't get acknowledged as much as if you got endorsed with Excellence in English. So to break the stereotypes for a Māori student, is to succeed well and be acknowledged, just as much as succeeding in a non-Māori based subject.

This year, being Head Girl has been pretty cool. That breaks the stereotype. Māori can be leaders and they don't just sit around and do nothing. We're passing NCEA Level 1, 2 and 3, and now getting UE and going off to University.

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

You sort of have that pride. You know, that mana, that you carry with you, because you know you're bigger than something other than yourself.

With the Māori culture, there's something that you can just own. You don't have to be afraid to be yourself. Even though some Māori don't do kapa haka, some don't do certain things, you still are Māori. You carry pride, you carry mana, and you're still part of something that is really cool.

It was pretty incredible. We went around Nelson and Marlborough to learn about our culture and our history. I think that was really successful for every single one of us. We learnt all about the area where we're living and all about our own whānau. We made some awesome friends and met a lot of Māori people who will tell you everything about the history to help you along your journey.

There's been a lot more interest in Māori things. Māori successes have really been acknowledged, like a lot, a lot more. And it makes you feel really good.

Our system has changed quite a bit. For assemblies, at the beginning, the Māori Prefect goes up and does a karakia to begin the assembly. That's happened within the last three years, and there was more interest in Māori culture after the Manu Kōrero was held at our school. It was like, look at all these successful people. That opened our school up a lot more to the Māori side of it, I guess. We can acknowledge them as well.

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

It's been cool being able to teach the younger students what I learnt as a younger student. It's all about the family, the whānau and sharing our knowledge. I learn things from the junior students every day, as well as they learn things from me.

My biggest success was probably getting Māori Prefect. There were other people going for it, but for me it felt really right, because I was connected with all the teina. I've grown with them through school. They've been my biggest support and I've been theirs.



So it's pretty cool for me to get a role that goes higher up into the school, so I can bring it back, if that makes sense?

Everyone who puts themselves out as Māori, we're really close. We have a classroom and we just hang out in there. We support each other and we share our successes together and we grow together. We are just this huge whānau. We're a little bit separate from everyone else, but it brings us a lot closer. We know that we can be ourselves, we feel good to be ourselves. We're proud to be Māori.



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

I think it's always good keeping your cultural values with you - as in who you are - with everything that you do, so you can always go back to them. If you're going to succeed, you're going to succeed as yourself, not as someone else. As Māori people, you hold that mana. I'm proud to be a Māori person.

Kapa haka is like a big family, a second family. You can go there upset, confused, frustrated, and by the end of it, you're fine again. It's that place that you can go and put all of those emotions into something like a haka. It helps a lot, for sure.

It gives you that little mana boost. You feel good after a period of kapa haka. It makes you more focused.

It's about not comparing yourself with others and doing the best that you can, and having fun doing it - just enjoying learning.

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

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.

Often you don't think that teachers are there to help you, but they really are. They are so open to helping you, helping you succeed.



- **Experiencing the power of whanaungatanga**

It doesn't matter what skin colour you are, or where you're from. There are different protocols and things you have to follow, but it's still the same - you still belong to one big family.

No matter where you go, you have whānau. No matter if you're related to them or not, you've always got people there. Other Māori people are always going to support you and help you out if you need it. And yeah, it's just a really good feeling of, like, having family just everywhere.

If you're struggling with anything at all, even if it is social or anything to do with school, teachers always have your back. They're not afraid to step out of the box for inspiration; they're always there. I've heard of Māori students coming back to our school and asking for help.

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

I'd have to say the biggest help in school is probably my mates. Because if the teacher explains it to me and I don't understand it, my mates will have my back and explain it to me in a way they know I'll understand - and that's always good.

You can approach most people - pretty much all the teachers at our school. And they're willing to drop everything and help you out. They're always willing to help anyone, even if you are Māori. If you're not Māori, it doesn't matter.

I've succeeded because I've had the help of others. Doing it on your own is just not easy, so having those others there, helping you, is essential.

