



THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND  
NEW ZEALAND

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# Optimising Maori Potential: Learnings from Ka Awatea, MACs & Starpath



*Every child in New Zealand deserves to thrive physically, academically, socially, and culturally. Achieving their potential is important for them and for every New Zealander, because our future prosperity depends on an educated workforce. Therefore, it is important that the education system serves all students well.*

*(Controller & Auditor General, 2016)*

# Ka Awatea: An iwi case study of Maori student success 'as Maori'



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*How do Te Arawa define educational success?*

*In what ways do whānau , teachers and the wider Te Arawa community foster conditions that enable the characteristics of success to manifest?*

*How are the characteristics of success enacted by successful Te Arawa students? To what effect?*

# Ngā Pūmanawa e Waru

*What are the qualities of success (from a distinctively Te Arawa perspective)?*

*In what ways do these qualities manifest in successful Māori students?*



## Quality 1

*Successful Māori students have a positive sense of Māori identity*

### Characteristics

A belief in and knowledge of one's self; strength of character, strength of personality; a strong will; boldness and a tendency to take risks

### Application to school & work

- Resilient to negative stereotypes
- Positive self-concept
- Some knowledge of language and protocols to successfully contribute/participate in Māori contexts
- Connection to land and place (genealogy)



Te Arawa Icon - Tamatekapua



## Quality 2

*Successful Māori students are diligent and have an internal locus of control*

### Characteristics

Patience, commitment and a sacrifice of time and effort; an ability to overcome difficulties; resolute confidence often balanced with a quiet, unruffled calm.

### Application to school & work

- Disciplined
- Self-motivated
- Attentive
- Focused



Te Arawa Icon - Frederick Bennett



## Quality 3

*Successful Māori students learn how to nurture strong relationships*

### Characteristics

The ability to sustain relationships that are premised on a balance of assertiveness and warmth (manaaki) because this provides sustenance for the inner person.

### Application to school & work

- Encouraging
- Willing to learn from others
- Willing to mentor others
- Aware of own strengths and weaknesses



Te Arawa Icon - Te Ao Kapurangi



## Quality 4

*Successful Māori students are curious and innovative*

### Characteristics

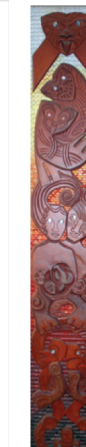
An enquiring mind which probes, draws conclusions and makes associations; an exploratory orientation that is exploited in social and academic activities.

### Application to school & work

- Courageous
- Competitive
- Curious
- Creative



Te Arawa Icon - Ihenga



## Quality 5

*Successful Māori students look after their wellbeing*

### Characteristics

Attention to physical, spiritual and mental health needs that are needed to flourish at school, affirming the inexplicable link between wellness and learning.

### Application to school & work

- Healthy
- Fit
- Resourceful
- Balanced



Te Arawa Icon - Nanny Bubbles Mihini



## Quality 6

*Successful Māori students are committed to advancing their own knowledge. They are scholars who know where they want to go and persevere to achieve their goals*

### Characteristics

An aptitude for things scholarly and a commitment to excellence are evident. A intrinsic desire to learn and an innate curiosity.

### Application to school & work

- Can apply themselves
- Driven
- Purposeful
- Aspirational



Te Arawa Icon - Makereti



## Quality 7

*Successful Māori students possess humility*

### Characteristics

A quality which is often a cultural point of difference because it is about service to others, generosity of spirit and putting others before the self.

### Application to school & work

- Puts others before self
- Accept criticism
- Work in service to others
- Team player



Te Arawa Icon - Dr Hiko Hohepa



## Quality 8

*Successful Māori students understand core Māori values*

### Characteristics

An ability to model the most meaningful qualities in Māori culture, portrayed by way of aroha (love), manaaki (care) and wairua (spirituality).

### Application to school & work

- Manaakitanga – ability to care and be hospitable to others
- Kotahitanga – ability to commit to a kaupapa/vision
- Wairuatanga – moral compass and sense of social justice



Te Arawa Icon - Wihapi Winiata

# Māori student success as Māori

## Mana Tangatarua

- The skills, knowledge and confidence to navigate success in two (or more) worlds

## Mana Tū

- Efficacy, courage, humility, tenacity and resilience

## Mana Motuhake

- A positive Māori identity and a sense of embedded achievement

## Mana Ūkaipō

- Belonging and connection to place.

## Mana Whānau

- A belief that they occupy a central position of importance in their whānau



## Recommendations for Māori students

- Hold fast to your deeply held cultural values and moral standards.
- **Embrace additional opportunities to enhance your cultural competence.**
- Maintain a balance in terms of your wellbeing – especially your tinana and hinengaro – find time to nourish both.
- Value your teachers and friends within the context of the school community because they are valuable sources of knowledge and support in times of struggle.
- Value your whānau because they are you, and you are they.
- **Seek out and maintain relationships with positive role models that you aspire to be like.**
- Mahia te mahi! Drive your own learning – ask questions, do the hard work required, and celebrate all successes (large and small).
- **Be humble – seek out and acknowledge the support, assistance and expertise of others and receive correction, compliments and feedback gracefully.**



## Recommendations for Policy-Makers

- Draw on iwi and local educational expertise.
- Make links to iwi-specific education strategies.
- Find out about iwi aspirations regarding education.
- Personalise and/or contextualise large Māori education projects to local area needs.
- **Provide seminars and workshops on Māori and tribal education, practices, and priorities.**
- Familiarise administrators with local tikanga and kawa.
- Adopt a Treaty approach of shared responsibility for educational advancement.
- Institutionalise a clearly marked path to student success.



## Recommendations for Teachers and Schools

- Value Māori students' cultural distinctiveness and support them to develop a degree of academic and cultural self-confidence and self-belief.
- **Articulate hapū and iwi features in teaching and learning.**
- Actively support Māori students toward a state of cultural enlightenment and encourage them to embrace opportunities to engage within the wider community.
- Premise your instruction on evidence-based and culturally-responsive practices.
- Build upon students' cultural and experiential strengths to help them acquire new skills and knowledge.
- **Utilise iwi role models of success, living or dead, to promote aspiration, cultural pride and achievement.**
- Visionary school leaders should promote and model the right balance between whakahīhi (pride) and māhaki (humility) in their interactions with students, whānau, staff and wider community members.
- **Ensure academic programmes have meaningful links to local people, their iwi history and their reo.**



Tarakaiahi



Te Ao Kapurangi

## Recommendations for Whānau

- Ensure that your home environment is positive, safe, caring and nurturing. Students who are products of such environments are more content, emotionally secure and resilient.
- Nurture your child's sense of Māori identity – give them a sense of belonging and connectedness to their reo, marae, hapū and iwi.
- **Be tamariki-centric – place your child at the centre of your whānau. Make their success and wellbeing the most important thing in your household.**
- **Be present and active in the school context – this signals to your child that you value education (and their education in particular).**
- **Make your home a place of learning – establish routines and rituals that prioritise education.**
- Encourage dialogue, open communication and good listening in your home.
- **Ensure that your children are exposed to positive role models – children emulate the behaviours and characteristics of 'significant others'.**
- **Model coping skills – talk to your children about how to be resilient in the face of adversity.**

## Recommendations for Iwi

- Continue to be involved with local schools.
- Provide visionary and proactive leadership – 'reach in' to schools; don't wait for schools to 'reach out'.
- Provide stewardship to whānau, encouraging them to be tamariki-centric.
- Within reason, provide and promote marae-based reo and tikanga wānanga. Such offerings provide whānau with opportunities to become more culturally competent and connected.
- Where possible, support the organisation and provision of local cultural events (e.g., Te Matatini and Te wiki o te reo Māori) – and ensure they are connected and relevant to the local context.
- **Interact with local educational policy-makers, academics, teachers and interested whānau in your forward-planning.**
- Provide places and spaces for voices to be heard, particularly wahine and rangatahi.
- Provide support for the educationally vulnerable, because they too have talents and gifts to offer.



Tama te kapua



The participants in Ka Awatea told us that Māori success as Māori occurs when schools:

- *Celebrate Māori whakapapa*
- *Localise curriculum*
- *Utilise inspiring Māori role-models*
- *Articulate Māori potential*
- *Nurture and sustain Māori student confidence, engagement and self-efficacy*

# Māori Achievement Collaboratives (MACs)



MACs is a professional learning and development pathway ‘by principals, for principals’ focused on changing education outcomes for Māori students.

The underlying premise of the learning and development programme is that ‘schools won’t change unless the principal does.’

The focus of the programme is on engaging principals in educational transformation through a process of deep learning, mentoring, coaching, critical conscientisation and collaboration

*“The culture of the child cannot enter the classroom if it has not entered the consciousness of the teacher”*  
(McKenzie & Singleton, 2009, p. 5)



Alongside academic gains, MACS principals have highlighted a number of other ways Māori educational engagement and success can, and should, be measured. When asked “how do you know MACs is making a difference and positively impacting Māori achievement?” MACs principals, teachers and whānau Maori talked about four things in particular:

- 1) There is a visible increase in Māori student cultural pride and sense of identity,
- 2) There is a noticeable growth in the engagement of Māori students, whānau, hapū, iwi and wider community members in the everyday activities of the school,
- 3) There is increased Māori student attendance at school, and
- 4) There is an increase in Māori whānau attendance at school events and, in particular, parent/teacher interviews.



# MACs...Tiakina te pā harakeke

**MACs principals who are serious about accelerating the learning of Māori students must understand that the critical lever for positive change is authentic whānau-school partnerships.**

**Whānau engagement activities occurred in three main ways:**



1. Culturally-responsive school processes can make a difference, including pōwhiri, face-to-face kōrero about whakapapa and whānau aspirations and an open-door classroom policy.
2. Whole whānau events, activities and trips – where all whānau members are invited.
3. Refined whānau/school engagement processes – kaupapa that matter for whānau themselves.

# MACs... he aroha whakatō, he aroha puta mai



**MACs principals who are serious about accelerating the learning of Māori students must understand that the critical lever for positive change is authentic whānau-school partnerships. Whānau engagement activities occurred in three main ways:**



*Culturally-responsive school processes can make a difference, including pōwhiri, face-to-face kōrero about whakapapa and whānau aspirations and an open-door classroom policy. Other examples include –*

- Parents involved in the principal and teacher appointment processes
- The establishment of school kuia/kaumātua roles
- Parent-help roster – one parent in the classroom every day.
- Student-led conferences start with a mihimihi from the student.
- Waharoa at the front gate built in consultation with whānau
- Whānau class started
- In-depth feedback on charter goals and aspirations.
- Seeking hapū and iwi information at enrolment so connections can be made

# MACs...kia mahitahi te tautoko



*Whole whānau events, activities and trips – where all whānau members are invited. Examples include –*

- Curriculum hui teaching parents how to help their students with maths and reading (tikanga integrated)
- Mahitahi event – round-robin event where whānau teach children and teachers re poi-making, raranga kete, fried bread etc
- Whānau making tukutuku and poi for the school marae
- School assemblies are student led and include a lot of te reo
- Whānau AND student kapahaka groups, after-school Te Reo Māori and He Papa Tikanga classes. One school has 190 students in the kapahaka group.





Starpath Phase 3 set out to work with nine schools in Auckland and Northland to investigate an enduring problem of practice:

What will enable significantly more Māori and Pasifika students from low socio-economic schools achieve University Entrance (UE) that allows progression into degree level study?



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## **Starpath asked the schools to focus on a UE target because:**

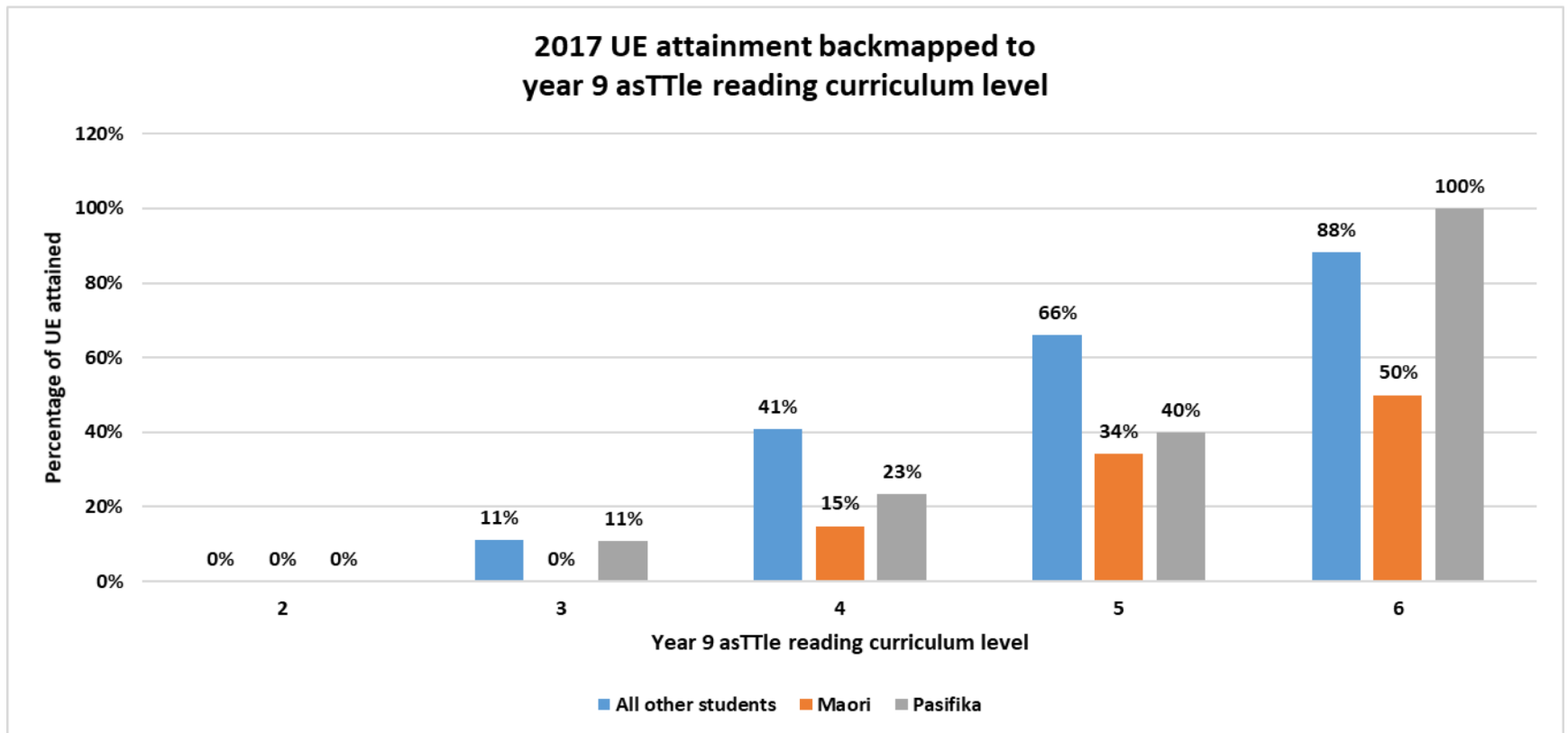
- UE is the highest qualification that can be gained from school;
- No matter what students' immediate post-school plans are, gaining UE opens opportunities for future study at degree level and/or employment;
- It is an ambitious target for the students and the school;
- It requires rigorous tracking (best from Year 9 onwards).

## **To achieve this goal Starpath encouraged schools to:**

- Create an ambitious UE target list, based on course opportunities and student aspirations;
- Track and monitor student progress to ensure systems and processes are in place to maintain their achievement;
- Promote high expectations and ensure opportunities to achieve are kept open;
- Ensure students are offered and maintain viable UE courses, including the opportunity to gain UE Literacy;
- Strengthen data capabilities of managers and teachers;
- Track Year 9 and 10 students of potential for Merit and Excellence grades at Level 1 & 2.

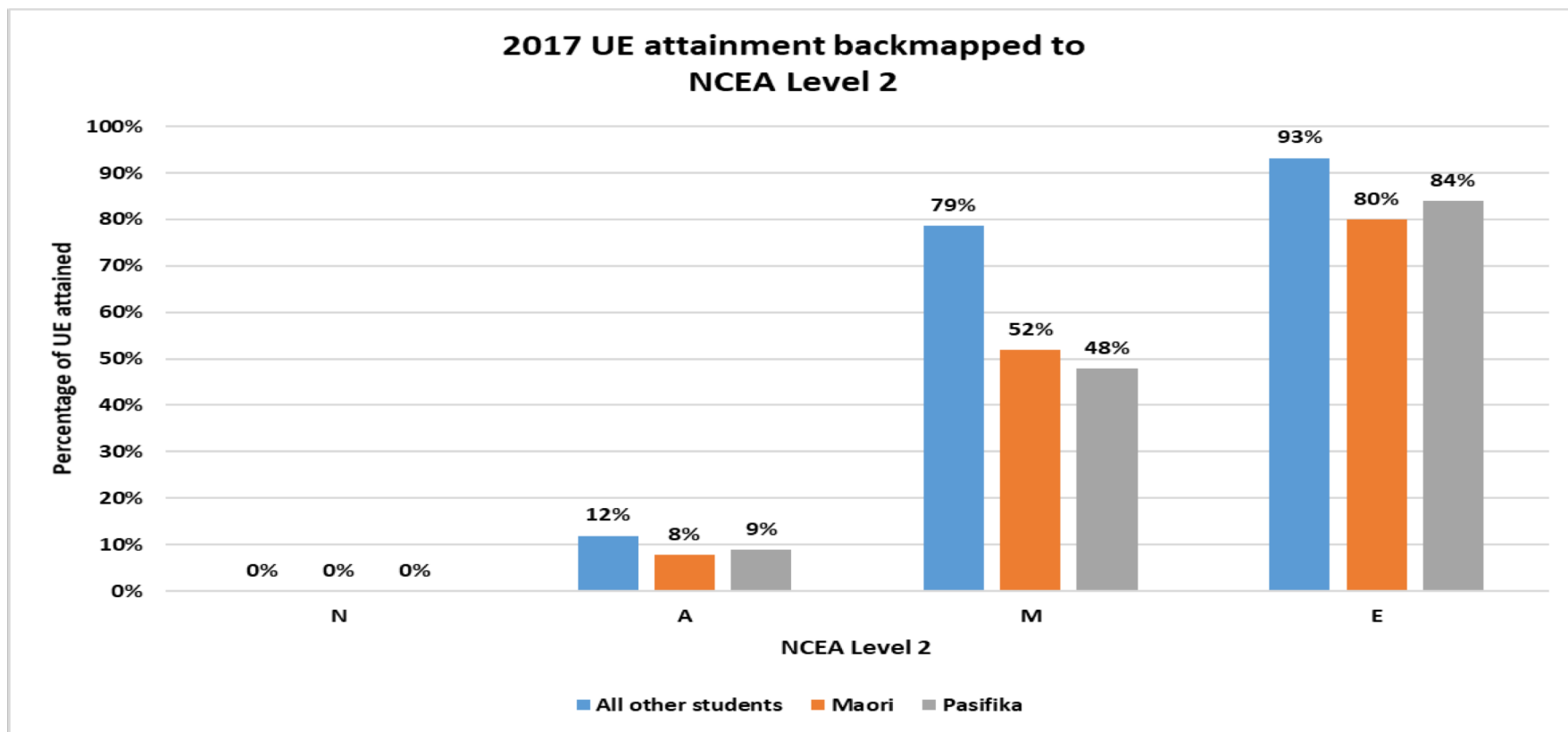
We compared students' Year 9 achievement with their success at UE (for the 503 students for whom we had Year 9 data). Unsurprisingly, we found that prior achievement predicts future success. However, similar to the previous analysis, we found that simply being “at expected” curriculum level is insufficient to guarantee success at higher levels.

Only 41% of students at curriculum Level 4 for reading in Year 9 went on to achieve UE - 66% of students at curriculum Level 5 and 88% of students at curriculum Level 6 achieved UE. Similar to the previous analyses, the risks are compounded for Māori and Pasifika students, for whom proportions of achievement at UE are even smaller, despite above-average prior achievement. Starpath urges all schools to work towards having as many students as close to Level 5 as possible by the end of Year 9.

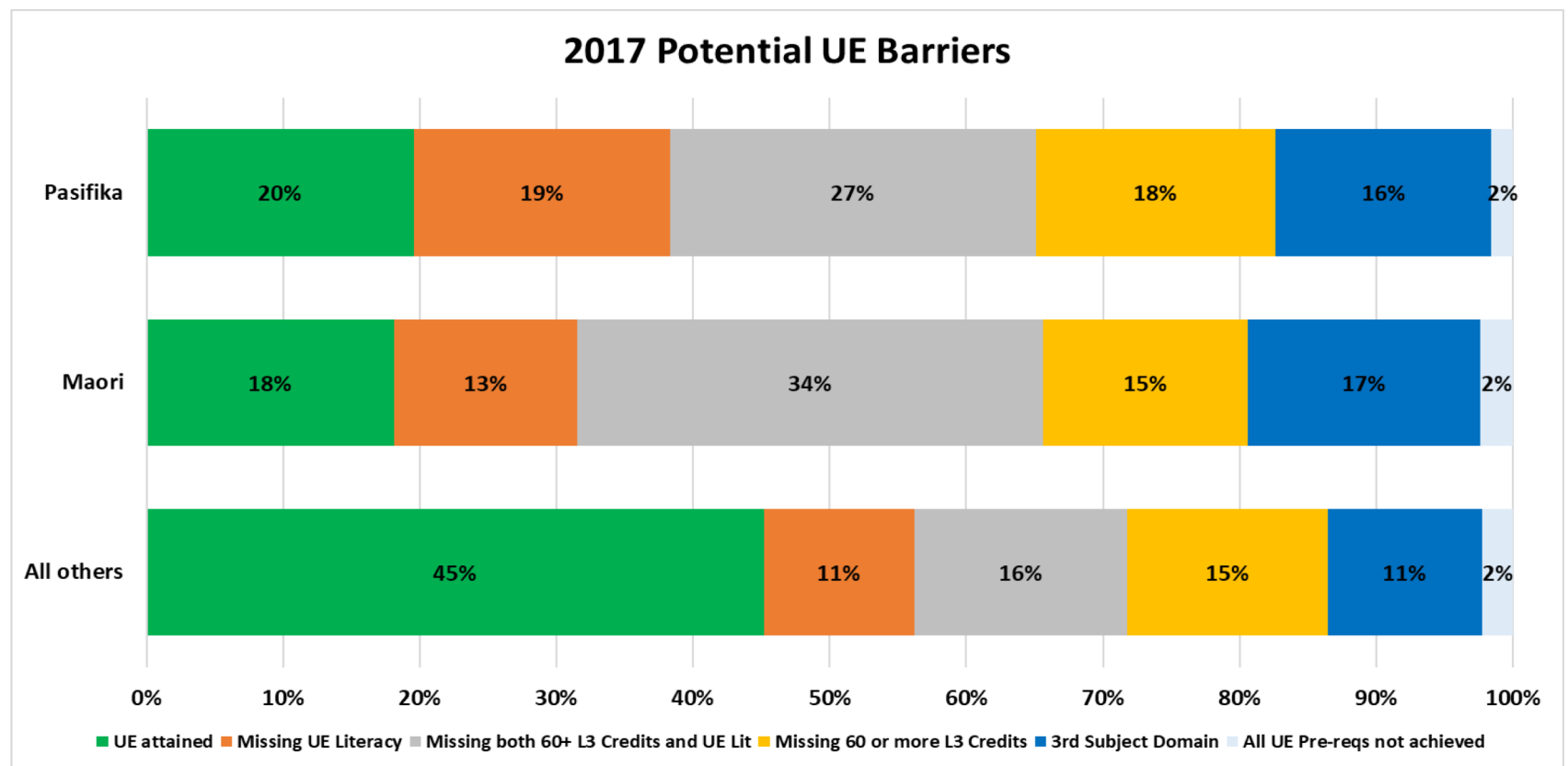


Unsurprisingly, very large proportions (79% and 93% in 2017 respectively) of students that attained Level 2 with a merit or excellence endorsement went on to achieve UE.

What *is* noteworthy is that only 12% of students that attained Level 2 with 'achieved' gained UE. This indicates that students that 'pass' Level 2 must still continue to push hard to achieve the UE Award. This pattern is even more pronounced for Māori and Pasifika students; only 52% of Māori and 48% of Pasifika students that attain Level 2 with a merit endorsement went on to achieve the UE Award.



**Our major finding from the 2017 UE data is that the third subject is a persistent stumbling block for students achieving UE:** 11% of all students (and 17% of Māori and 16% of Pasifika) did not achieve UE in 2017 **solely because they did not have 14 credits in three approved subjects.** It is important to note that these students met all other UE criteria; they had achieved over 60 credits at Level 3, and had achieved UE literacy. In other words, if these students had taken a third approved subject (and gained 14 credits in that subject), the average pass-rate would have been approximately at – or well above – the 2016 national Decile 1-3 pass-rate.



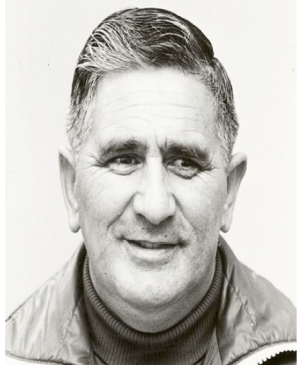
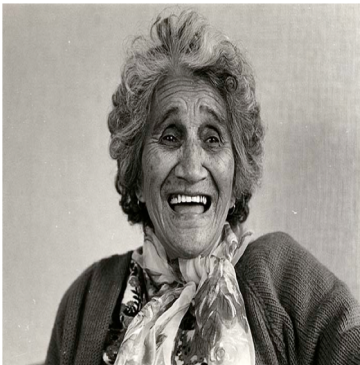
# Phase Three Recommendations

- Students who have UE potential, but have attained their NCEA Level 2 certificate without endorsement, would benefit from closer tracking towards UE. The viability of their courses and the proportion of internal to external credits should also be looked at carefully early in the year. This will enable schools to intervene via timetable, re-assessment opportunities and course changes as needed.
- Establish a school-wide expectation that students will achieve 14 or more credits in every subject. This will ensure that every department is contributing towards students achieving their desired qualification. A simple table (it could be 'traffic lighted') to identify courses with high, moderate, and low success rates would be useful. This information could be used to keep departments accountable to the overall achievement goals.
- Schools also need to expect more accountability from the teachers of UE approved Level 3 courses. Setting targets based on how many students attain 14 or more credits would be the most logical, single target to increase UE attainment within each school. Year 13 is a high-risk year for achievement, as students (usually) only have the one year to attain UE approved credits. Thus, teachers of UE approved Level 3 courses should put extra consideration into offering additional achievement opportunities such as resubmissions, further assessment opportunities, and potentially additional assessments for students, regardless of whether students are on the UE pathway or Level 3 pathway. As soon as an assessment has been attempted and entered, all students should be given next steps toward the next achievement opportunity





**CR programmes of learning**  
**Cultural pride & efficacy**  
**Cultural aspiration**  
**Mana tangata**  
**Whānau involvement**  
**Embedded achievement**  
**Academic guidance**





Webber, M. & Macfarlane, A. (2017). Transformative Role of Iwi Knowledge and Genealogy in Māori Student Success. In E.A. McKinley & L.T. Smith (Eds.), *Indigenous Handbook of Education*. Singapore: Springer

Santamaria, A. P., Webber, M., Santamaria, L. J., Dam, I. L., & Jayavant, S. (2016). Te Ara Hou - A new pathway for leading Maori success as Maori. *Evaluation Matters—He Take Tō Te Aromatawai*, 2, 99-129. [10.18296/em.0013](https://doi.org/10.18296/em.0013) URL: <http://hdl.handle.net/2292/30183>

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*E ngā taitamariki o te ao, e ngā pou o te ako, e ngā pūtake o te mārama, e ngā mana o te iwi, tēnei ngā mihi atu kia koutou. Anei te kāhui rangahau e whāriki atu nei i mua i te aroaro o te hunga mātauranga. Hopukina mai, wānangatia, kōrerotia, me whakamahingia. Nā reira, huri noa i te motu, tēna koutou katoa.*