The critical role of the educative mentor as a leader to support the retention of beginning teachers in Māori-medium schools

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Abstract
Educational leadership in schools is multifaceted and variously impacts on the school context and vice versa. One aspect of leadership in the schooling sector is educative mentoring. Drawing on theories of the important place of indigeneity in Māori-medium education, we examine Te Whatu Kura, an induction and mentoring learning programme. Teacher educative mentoring programmes potentially serve two important purposes: beginning teachers are provided with strong mentoring support at the beginning of their careers, and more experienced teachers receive recognition and support to be more effective mentors. The major aim of Te Whatu Kura is to address the significant retention issue of beginning teachers in the Māori-medium sector by focusing on supporting educative mentors as leaders to guide their beginning teachers to full teacher certification. Approximately 70% of beginning teachers in Māori-medium schools will leave that workforce in the first three years of their career. This has a long-term negative impact on schools' ability to deliver quality education. Data so far, shows the programme outcomes are very positive.

Keywords: *Leadership; educative mentoring; Māori-medium*

Background: Māori-medium education
In the wider political context, the change in status affecting the Māori language galvanised groups in the late 1970s to demand greater use of te reo Māori in government and other public institutions controlled by the government such as the education sector (Walker, 1996). Eventually, the state was compelled to respond, and put policies in place such as the Māori Language Act 1987 to address the low status of te reo Māori (Trinick, 2015). Concurrent with macro-level changes in the status of te reo Māori at national level, was a wave of grassroots initiatives to ensure the survival of te reo Māori (Reedy, 2000). Initially, this was in the form of the bilingual education movement in the late 1970s, the development of kōhanga reo (Māori-medium early childhood education) in the early 1980s, and the subsequent evolution of kura kaupapa Māori (Māori-medium schooling that follows a specific language and education policy namely, Te Aho Matua and Māori-medium schooling options in the compulsory schooling sector in the mid-1980s and 1990s). Te Aho Matua is the foundation philosophical document for kura kaupapa Māori. It lays down the principles by which kura kaupapa Māori identify themselves as a unified group (G. H. Smith, 1990). While Māori-medium schools differ considerably in history and philosophy, in Aotearoa/NZ educational discourse (including this paper), kura kaupapa Māori, kura-ā-iwi, and immersion units in English-medium schools are frequently grouped together as Māori-medium education. Currently, the Ministry of Education defines Māori medium schools as either Level 1 immersion environments (where 81–100% of teaching and learning is conducted in Māori) or Level 2 immersion environments (where 51–80% of teaching and learning is conducted in Māori).

After gaining a recognised teaching qualification, and providing evidence that they have reached the Graduating Teacher Standards (see Education Council, 2014), graduates who are employed as beginning teachers in New Zealand are 'provisionally certificated' by the Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand. For a minimum of two years they are required to engage in an induction and mentoring programme until

they reach full certification. This means they have provided evidence that they have met the requirements of the Practising Teacher Criteria (Education Council, 2016). Irrespective of the type of school, an ongoing major concern in Māori-medium schooling is whether the support provided to teachers is robust enough to support their retention, particularly that of beginning teachers. Approximately 70% of beginning teachers in Māori-medium schools will leave that workforce in the first three years of their career, compared with an average of 30% in the English-medium sector (Ogilvy, 2012). These teachers are not a loss to the teaching profession, as the majority of teachers who leave Māori-medium education move to English-medium schools to teach in bilingual and immersion units and as general Māori language teachers in secondary schools. However, this rate of attrition can negatively affect teacher capacity, professional development, curriculum planning and management, and a variety of other factors, adding a significant degree of challenge to Māori-medium school wide operations and potentially putting student learning at risk.

In response to this ongoing issue, in 2013, the Ministry of Education introduced a nationwide initiative to support beginning teachers in Māori-medium settings with the ultimate aim of supporting teacher retention. Te Puna Wānanga (the School of Māori Education within the Faculty of Education and Social Work at Te Wānanga o Tāmaki Makaurau), along with other providers around the country, won a contract to provide a three-year professional learning pilot programme to address the retention of beginning teachers in Māori-medium settings in April 2014. The name of this pilot programme developed by Te Puna Wānanga is Te Whatu Kura. One of the cornerstones of Te Whatu Kura is ongoing evaluation and research to inform programme leaders and potentially policy development on the effectiveness of these initiatives. While there is anecdotal evidence which suggests that lack of resources, the level of te reo Māori fluency of teachers, and the political tensions all contribute to Māori-medium teacher retention rates, more formal research is needed to confirm the factors that cause beginning teachers to exit Māori-medium education, and to develop initiatives to minimise this.

Prior research has focused on induction and mentoring in New Zealand and the important role of educational leadership in determining positive outcomes for schools (see Cameron, 2007; Langdon & Ward, 2015; Langdon, Flint, Kromer, Ryde, & Karl, 2011; Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, 2009); however, there is a paucity of research specifically in educative mentoring in Māori-medium schooling contexts. Furthermore, there has been an important theoretical shift generally in the approach to supporting beginning teachers and provisionally certificated teachers from 'advice and guidance' to 'induction and mentoring'. The expectation now is that support for beginning teachers will be underpinned by an 'educative mentoring' approach, whereby the mentor teachers, beginning teachers and provisionally certificated teachers co-construct a programme of professional learning which is supported by learning conversations focused on teacher practice (Jenkins, Sinclair, Harris, Morehu, & Williams, 2012).

Against this background, this paper addresses the paucity in the literature concerning the role of educative mentoring as a form of leadership by examining a programme (Te Whatu Kura) that aims to develop the leadership capacity of mentors who in turn support beginning teachers. This paper draws on indigenous education theory to critique the programme in action and outcomes using qualitative and quantitative data. The interim results are then discussed.

Methodology

Indigenous values and practices in education settings
Drawing on ideas developed by Durie (2001) where he promoted "Māori enjoying and achieving education success as Māori" while maintaining and enhancing their identity, language, and culture, we examine the Te Whatu Kura programme. Māori have drawn on indigeneity as a principle and theoretical approach to affect

Māori-valued outcomes in education, research, health and many other areas (e.g., Durie, 2001; L. T. Smith, 1999). O'Sullivan (2007a) posits that indigeneity is identified as a principle and theoretical approach that plays an increasingly critical role in Māori education today in the creation of an education system that integrates culture with education. Specifically, we draw on the following ideas from Durie and other researchers who similarly promote indigeneity:

> Indigeneity is about a set of rights that indigenous peoples might reasonably expect to exercise in modern times [and] unlike other groups in society, Māori can lay claim to a set of indigenous rights and that right has implications for the type of education Māori children might expect. (2001, p. 7)

Fleras and Elliot (1996) and O'Sullivan (2007b) propose that these rights encompass the right to be the same in some senses and to be different in others, and the right to live in today's world while ensuring the survival of one's traditional culture.

Māori educational leadership and Te Whatu Kura

While there has been considerable research on the important role of educational leadership in New Zealand in determining positive outcomes for schools (see Robinson et al., 2009), Hohepa (2013) noted that there were tensions when attempting to fit Māori leadership into generic conceptions of educational leadership derived largely from research findings that sat outside of a Māori worldview and Māori knowledge, understandings, and experiences of leadership. Hohepa (2013) further argues that Māori educational leadership requires an enactment of indigeneity in order to continue to contribute to the transformation of education in Aotearoa/ New Zealand. Therefore, before examining the interim Te Whatu Kura data it is pertinent to briefly discuss the relevant literature regarding Māori-educational leadership that links to the indigeneity rights paradigm.

Research into Māori educational leadership shows that school leaders carry out a range of tasks and duties that centre on the development and enhancement of the broader school community, not just the kura [school] itself (Ministry of Education, 2010). This is supported by Durie (2006), who argues that Māori educational leaders need to acquire specific skills to work across communities and agencies, and contribute to an education system that can transform the lives of Māori individuals and contribute to the realisation of Māori aspirations. This could include leadership presence and engagement in a range of community events where the whānau (families) is trying to reconnect to te ao Māori (the Māori world) after having being disconnected, for example through urbanisation, or as an outcome of English only schooling.

When commenting on leadership in kaupapa Māori education contexts, Barnes (2004) suggested that an understanding of Māori leadership required an understanding of the fusion of both traditional and contemporary contexts. Hokowhitu (1993) similarly argued that Māori educational leadership functioned in a diversity of Māori realities. For example, there are tensions between the ideological paradigms of governance and management that underpin New Zealand education (i.e., teacher certification) and the right of self-determination. While much of this discussion has generally focused at the macro level of schooling, it also has implications for the various leadership roles throughout schools.

To utilise Hohepa (2013) and Durie's (2006) theorising of indigeneity, the Whatu Kura programme designers needed to provide a way of addressing the many interrelated factors that impact on the development and implementation of induction and mentoring programmes in order to develop mentor teachers as educative mentors in Māori-medium contexts. Mindful of Hohepa's (2013) cautionary statement cited earlier, this meant maintaining a focus on Indigenous ways of knowing and doing, in this case Te Puna Wānanga professional learning and development facilitators and mentor teachers' enacting of Māori educational leadership, while also investigating non-Indigenous leadership approaches without one necessarily impinging on the other.

Research aims

In consideration of the factors described above, the evaluation and research into the effectiveness of this leadership model considered the following questions:

- Why is the role of the educative mentor as a leadership role in Māori-medium schools important?
- To what extent does this particular model of educative mentoring and educational leadership address the professional learning and development (PLD) needs of mentor teachers in Māori-medium settings?

Data collection and participants

Now in its third year, Te Whatu Kura has provided professional learning and development to 85 mentor teachers in three different cohorts: 35 in cohort 1; 39 in cohort 2; and a further 11 in cohort 3 – this includes principals who mentor beginning teachers as is often the case in small schools where principals and senior staff carry multiple and diverse roles. Additionally, a total of 128 beginning teachers and provisionally certificated teachers have participated. These mentoring teachers, and beginning teachers represent 47 Māori-medium schools across Auckland and Northland. This paper primarily focuses on the aspects of the programme that involve the educative mentoring role. While beginning teacher quantitative data was collected, the experiences of the beginning teachers will be considered in the future.

It must be acknowledged that the authors of this paper i.e., the Project Director, the Academic Director, and Research/Evaluator Assistant of Te Whatu Kura have variously provided input into the design and management of the programme, which does raise the issue of subjectivity. It could be assumed the researchers' primary motivation might be to protect contractual interests. To mitigate against accusations of bias, data were gathered through a range of formal and informal data collection methods using independent interviewees from time to time and included: participant voice; participant enrolment attendance and demographic information; professional conversations and observations during professional learning and development delivery; self-report evaluation/feedback forms from workshops; online analytics; classroom observations; professional conversations and recorded field notes; evidence in beginning teachers Te Hāpai Ō folders; mentor teacher records; and school documentation and records (see Jenkins et al., 2012 for discussion on Te Hāpai Ō).

Analysis and discussion

Educative mentoring

Mentor education cannot be studied without problematising how mentoring and mentor education are understood and defined. The problem is that there is no universal definition of mentoring (Gold, 1996; Mullen, 2012), and that mentoring is a contested practice (Kemmis, Heikkinen, Fransson, Aspfors & Edward-Groves, 2014) in which different concepts, such as mentoring, supervision, coaching etc., are used (Subdli, 2007). While acknowledging the issues of definition, in this paper, mentoring is considered as an activity, a process and a long-term relationship between an experienced teacher (mentor) and a less experienced beginning teacher (mentee) that is primarily designed to support the mentee's learning, professional development and well-being and to facilitate their induction into the culture of teaching and the local Māori-medium school context.

Mentor education: The Te Whatu Kura professional learning and development design

We define mentor education as a formal programme involving universities, teacher education researchers, facilitators and professional development activities, such as reflective forums for mentors and the establishment of dialogic communities of practice. This includes mentors engaged in multiple and iterative ways in the Whatu Kura programme such as:

- Residentials whereby Te Puna Wānanga facilitators coach mentor teachers, and provide support to principals in developing their systems to sustain a school induction and mentoring programme to transition beginning teachers to full certification (1-2 residentials);
- Regional clusters whereby participants can network with colleagues in other schools and engage in specific aspects of professional learning and development responding to needs identified through school visits (two cluster workshops per year);
- A range of online support when regular face-to-face support is not practical for reasons of time and geographic location, for example, Facebook, podcasts, website for the project; and
- In-school visits to respond to unique circumstances for beginning teachers, mentor teachers and principals in the context of their school community (at least 8 per year).

Te Whatu Kura programme outcomes

In order to respond to the needs of mentor teachers, the programme designers have undertaken an inquiry-based approach in collaboration with tumuaki and mentors, based on the following expected project outcomes:

That mentor teachers will create and implement (along with principals), a high quality induction and mentoring programme for beginning teachers (for the sake of brevity the acronym BT or BTs will be used from now on). This will be typically a two-year induction and mentoring programme coinciding with their first two years of employment as they work towards full certification that includes the use of the resource, Te Hāpai Ō. (Jenkins et al., 2012)

That mentor teachers will develop a deep understanding of what their role entails. This includes regular observations of BTs' teaching practice, opportunities for BTs to observe mentor teachers and other teachers, 'learning conversations' whereby the mentor teacher provides feedback and facilitates critical reflection on practice by BTs, support for BTs completing their practice portfolio (as outlined in Te Hāpai Ō: see Jenkins et al., 2012), and overall develop their practice as 'educative mentors' as described in the guidelines for induction and mentoring and mentor teachers. (Education Council, 2015)

The designers of the Whatu Kura programme responded to Hohepa's (2013) challenge about indigenisation "[H]ow might non-indigenous constructions of educational leadership [of mentor teachers], and non-indigenous constructions and conceptualizations more generally, be accommodated within an indigenous worldview?" It was envisaged that Te Puna Wānanga PLD facilitators, mentor teachers, principals and BTs could critically engage with non-indigenous information, on the basis that they may have needs and goals similar to induction and mentoring programmes found in other educational settings. This provided opportunities to indigenise a range of knowledge, skills, technologies, and resources generated out of non-Māori worldviews to support BTs towards full certification.

Indigenised: Existing induction and mentoring resources

Prior to the development of Te Whatu Kura, as part of the New Zealand Teachers Council's Induction and Mentoring Pilot Programme, a Māori-medium pilot developed by Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi resulted in the production of Te Hāpai Ō: a resource specifically to support beginning teachers and provisionally certificated teachers in Māori-medium schools (Jenkins et al., 2012). Critical to the theories underpinning this resource, and reflecting the understanding of indigenisation, is the organisation of practising teacher criteria under the umbrella of seven āhuatanga [principles] that this research shows resonate with participants in Māori-medium settings. The resource provides a framework and practical guide for BTs to document evidence to show that that they have met the requirements for full certification. While Māori words and labels alone do not necessarily make a practice

indigenous, for Te Whatu Kura, this resource provided a guide upon which to design and implement an induction, mentoring and professional learning and development programme appropriate for Māori-medium BTs. Just as importantly, it provided an efficient way for BTs to collect evidence of their practice that supported their certification.

An integral part of the ongoing evaluation of the Whatu Kura programme is that the programme designers together with facilitators have iteratively built on Te Hāpai Ō and compiled a resource specifically for mentor teachers, principals, and BTs based on the project's unfolding findings about the different educative mentoring practices adopted by primary and secondary sectors within Māori-medium. The aim of this resource is to ensure that inquiry-based processes are encouraged to help identify the ongoing PLD needs of mentor teachers and respond to the following requirements, each of which have implications for mentor teacher practice:

- The mentoring culture of the school and the attitudes of leadership and community towards supporting BTs to move towards full certification;
- Having effective systems to ensure sustainable practices and commitment to developing BTs;
- Effective pedagogical leadership in schools that in turn supports BTs to provide effective teaching and learning to advance student achievement.

Impact of the programme on retention: Interim results

The collection of qualitative and quantitative data across the implementation and delivery of the project has enabled ongoing critical evaluation of the initiative, its delivery and the impact of the PLD. This has been necessary for ensuring that the inquiry approach remained a responsive and iterative PLD model that paid attention to those aspects of practice most important to focus on given the range of PLD needs of mentor teachers, principals, beginning teachers, and provisionally certificated teachers.

As noted, the ultimate outcome of the Te Whatu Kura is an increase in the retention of BTs in Māori-medium schooling. One of the key success indicators of mentor teacher effectiveness is that the BTs they mentor achieve a practising teacher certificate that supports and enables this continuation of teaching service. Currently, we can report cohort 1 outcomes: 54 BTs were enrolled in Te Whatu Kura in the first year, and of these 53, 32 BTs completed the requirements for full certification while still in the programme. Of those who left the programme, 2 are no longer in the teaching profession, and 3 are no longer teaching in Māori-medium. However, they are still in the teaching profession. Feedback and facilitator observation suggest that initially about 15% of BTs were in schools that already had access to robust induction and mentoring programmes in their schools. Among the 39 BTs who have exited the programme, 35 (90%) remained in Māori-medium over the three years of this programme compared to the Ogilvy (2012) report where approximately 30% of BTs remained in Māori-medium schools in the first three years of their career.

To show progress toward programme goals, quantitative and qualitative data derived from mentor teacher cohort 1 nearing the end of the programme and cohort 2, part way through the programme shows the following.

- 72% (21/29) of mentor teachers (some who are also principals), had now created and implemented a high quality programme of induction and mentoring for BTs, which included the use of Te Hāpai Ō.

   This is supported by the following feedback:

   > *All pou tautoko [mentor teachers] are excited to work alongside us facilitators to support them in supporting their pia [beginning teachers]. This enthusiasm and willingness is clearly evident in our interactions and in the work they are doing alongside their pia [beginning teachers]. They ask a lot of questions and continually share positive stories of the Te Hapai Ō journey for them and their pia in their kura.* (Facilitator)

- 45% (13/29) of mentor teachers reported that they fully understood what their role entailed. This included regular observations of BTs' teaching practice, opportunities for BTs to observe mentor

teachers and other teachers, 'learning conversations' where the mentor teacher provides feedback and facilitates critical reflection by the BTs on their practice, and support for completing their practice portfolio outlined in Te Hāpai Ō (see Jenkins et al., 2012).

This is supported by the following feedback:

The pou tautoko [mentor teachers] who have been a part of the programme in the last year and a half now understand their role clearly and have really good systems going. Pou tautoko [mentor teachers] who are new to the programme are still learning about what Te Hāpai Ō is. How does it work? The system? What is evidence? The knowledge is still developing and practice is yet to come...where it makes sense 'ka taka te kapa'. (Facilitator)

This mahi has clear guidelines that are easy for me to follow. Always busy so good to know exactly what's required of me and I can best tautoko my kaiako [teacher]. (Pou Tautoko)

What does your role as mentor/ pou tautoko mean for you?

A responsibility that I need to get right. This is my contribution to a teacher who will be in our kura [school] for a very long time.

Passing on my knowledge and expertise as a mentor, kaiako [teacher] and leader to pia [beginning teacher] as the day will come for the pia to be a mentor.

To guide pia [beginning teachers] to first and foremost achieve and receive full certification, and ultimately grow, guide and prepare our pia [beginning teachers] to become the future leaders of kura [school] where ever they may go.

It is an honour for me to be part of this programme because my ability to mentor pia [beginning teachers] to becoming quality teachers. My grandchildren will benefit from this. I love the way this programme looks at addressing shyness through this programme. My role as pou tautoko [mentor teacher] means that I cannot assume that a pia [beginning teacher] knows what he is doing. I love this role of pou tautoko [mentor teacher] because I know that my moko [grandchildren] will benefit from my efforts of producing excellent certificated kaiako [teachers].

- 41% (12/29) of mentor teachers were reported as developing their practice as 'educative mentors' as described in the Education Council (2015, p. 25) guidelines for induction and mentoring and mentor teachers.

In conjunction with this data, Te Puna Wānanga facilitators and participants, e.g., mentor teachers, principals, beginning teachers, supplied the following feedback:

It is quite unusual that I am speechless and I struggle to find aspects that need improvement. The resources are amazing we are truly beneficial. I strongly feel that it is important that you exist so that Māori medium has a pathway that is strengthened everyday. (Beginning teacher)

Big mihi [greeting] to the team. This has been one of the best PDs I have participated in. Your rōpū Māori humour helped me feel so comfortable, which is really big for me.

The support was excellent and through the deliveries I actually listened to it all, but I just take a little longer to process. But excellent... Autaia! (Beginning teacher)

It's great to see Te Whare Wānanga carry this kaupapa with such integrity. Being lost in the system can be overwhelming and see a loss of confidence. To see the attitude and shift in professionalism really shows credit to the Wānanga and its kaimahi. Just to be able to see the professionalism of ngā kai kawe korero is encouraging enough to say "Hey' I'm worth it". (Beginning teacher)

Te Whatu Kura needs to continue and more importantly, it needs to become the preferred induction and mentoring programme as it is more effective and user friendly than the English-medium equivalent. (Principal)

The workshops that are provided by Te Whatu Kura. Getting out of the kura to focus on improvement in what I do is helpful. Having a room full of experts is reassuring. (Mentor teacher)

To be able to articulate some of the things I think important and to receive feedback. Take on the good ideas that come from the hui. (Mentor teacher)

The tremendous support from facilitators, kanohi ki te kanohi [face to face], online, phone calls, social media. Is my first year completing a full year of support, it's been fantastic! The programme will continue to grow and develop. (Mentor teacher)

All the knowledge delivered today will assist me in supporting my pia [BT]. It is good to know that I can go over the delivery again on webcast. Able to do the WHOA to GO with my pia [beginning teacher] on his classroom management. (Mentor teacher)

Summary

Designing and developing a professional learning pilot programme that aims to retain beginning teachers in Māori-medium schools, by developing the practice of mentor teachers as educative mentors has required the programme designers to piece together multiple understandings, both indigenous and non-indigenous, academic theories and research with professional learning and development facilitator evidence-informed practice. Simultaneously, the programme was bound by contractual constraints and being responsive to people in multiple educational organisations. While the programme is still in progress, we do have enough preliminary data to start to address the research questions.

The need for robust theory that draws on ideas of what works for Māori-medium PLD

The programmes designers posit that while there are ideas about English-medium educative mentoring that can be transferred to Māori-medium contexts, for example, the need for specific training for mentors, there are important considerations which may be overlooked for Māori-medium. Often in English-medium education initiatives, the cultural aspect is taken for granted; it's the covert norm. What the data from this project shows is that the recognition of Māori tikanga (culture & practices) and ways of relating is an important component of an effective educative mentoring programme for Māori-medium schools. The idea that culture 'counts' is by no means a new idea in education but from time to time it needs reinforcing.

For our purposes, the principle of indigeneity (Durie, 2001; Hohepa, 2013) has given us license to 'indigenise' existing knowledge and resources not specifically developed for Māori-medium. It also meant we

could view materials such as Te Hāpai Ō (Jenkins et al., 2012) as indigenised resources that had already navigated through a range of research findings and education policy requirements to produce materials by Māori, for Māori, and added to this with our own professional learning and development materials specifically for mentor teachers as Māori leaders.

Te Whatu Kura also supported Māori-medium schools to develop induction and mentoring policies and programmes that best fostered high quality teacher induction through the creation of small professional dialogic communities of teachers. Furthermore, the partnerships and networks that have been developed to share best practice, understandings and meanings to be effective as educative mentors has been achieved through communities of practice in ways similar to those described by Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002),

> A community of practice is not just a Web site, a database, or a collection of best practices. It is a group of people who interact, learn together, build relationships, and in the process develop a sense of belonging and mutual commitment. Having others who share your overall view of the domain and yet bring their individual perspectives on any given problem creates a social learning system that goes beyond the sum of its parts. (p. 34)

The key point is that the theory underpinning professional development for teachers in Māori-medium schooling needs to include both a cognitive (i.e., inquiry learning) and cultural/social perspective.

The complex nature of Māori-medium schools

Māori-medium schools have layers of complexity distinct from English-medium schools. Many Māori-medium schools struggle with implementing competing curriculum and policy demands. On one hand are the state curriculum requirements, and the other, the demand to implement localised curriculum that enhance te ao Māori (Māori world view) in their respective communities. This dichotomy often results in Māori-medium schools being differently and/or more highly politicised than perhaps English-medium schools, and adds another layer of complexity. Consistent with previous research (see Hokowhitu, 1993), teachers (including principals and mentor teachers) as members of a community have multiple roles beyond the school including supporting the wider community. Māori-medium schools are often the primary source of language and culture revitalisation efforts in the community and thus, school staff are often looked upon as role models and called upon by the community to perform functions and roles not necessarily expected of their non-Māori peers. While it is a desired outcome of the indigeneity model as expressed by Durie (2006) and others, it does have workload implications for all concerned. The geographical isolation of mentor teachers and their beginning teachers in Māori-medium settings can hinder the level and quality of professional learning and development received. This includes the ability to share and develop teaching and learning expertise with others, and as noted the cultural relevance of programmes on offer. The interim indications are that this has been somewhat alleviated in the Te Whatu Kura by the provision of online support including access to resources.

Need for a systemised approach to induction and mentoring in Māori-medium

Up until the initiation of these programmes, teacher induction and mentoring programmes have either been the responsibility of Māori-medium schools themselves or defaulted to existing English-medium programmes. That is not to say that some individual school mentoring and induction programmes have not been productive. However, facilitators have observed that some Māori-medium schools lack systems, and policies, and job descriptions that reflect the practising teacher criteria needed to sustain an induction and mentoring programme to support BTs to move toward full certification. This has been often confirmed by the BTs themselves. What has also emerged is a lack of understanding towards the implementation of the practising teacher criteria – hence one of the major goals of Te Whatu Kura has been to work with mentor teachers on the requirements of the practising teacher criteria.

The programme designers support the argument that induction is important for developing excellence in teaching, building on the initial education experience and establishing the foundations for quality teaching and ongoing learning (see Aitken, Bruce-Ferguson, McGrath, Piggot-Irvine, & Ritchie, 2008). However, it should not be left solely to the devices of schools. Quite clearly it needs to be systematically planned for and would benefit from ongoing external support. The findings of this suggest that explicitly planned induction programmes that include external support that support BTs towards full certification have a considerable impact on retention and quality teaching practice.

The role of mentor teachers as leaders

The relationship between the mentor and mentee can be considered a form of apprenticeship learning, a form of learning familiar to traditional Māori contexts (Hemara, 2000). However, in the context of this paper, mentoring is more than a pedagogical relationship. While it is important in Māori-medium contexts that mentor teachers have the required skills and competency in te reo Māori and tikanga, and curriculum and pedagogical knowledge relevant to their teaching context (Cameron, 2007), it is not enough for mentor teachers to be just competent teachers – they need to be effective leaders. Mentoring is an essential leadership skill. In addition to managing and motivating people, it is also important that mentors can help others learn, grow and become more effective in their jobs. One of the key tenets of leadership is the ability to pass on the knowledge and experience to others. Jenkins et al. (2012) proposed that pou tautoko [mentor teachers] could be regarded as pillars as, "their role is to scaffold the beginning teacher with shelter, advice and key support for their journey into the profession" (p. 6).

A number of mentor teachers noted how they had grown in the role and better understood the implications for the BTs of the effectiveness of their role. Formalising the mentor role also created a step in the career pathway for the mentor teacher, an unrecognised role not always appreciated as a key task amongst the myriad of demands placed on them.

Our findings suggest that the mentor teacher as an educative mentor, has a key leadership role in a school, particularly the important role of the leading the ongoing professional learning of beginning teachers in Māori-medium settings motivated by the regeneration of Māori language and culture and organisational commitment. Second, the leadership skills required to mentor beginning teachers are skills that support leadership more broadly. In time (if not so already), effective mentor teachers may well progress to being the principal of the school, a key mentoring role. On the basis of the data to date we suggest that the Te Whatu Kura educative mentoring programme has gone some way to address the PLD needs of mentor teachers in Māori-medium settings.

We continue to develop understanding of the role and practice of mentor teachers as an educative mentor and as a form of educational leadership, and as a distinctly Māori approach to leadership. With increased theoretical and applied understanding of the practices that result in effective educative mentoring in Māori-medium schools, we can continue to refine the PLD both in content and delivery model and contribute further to theory and evidence and potentially policy development.

Further research and discussion

One of the issues yet to be addressed is the potential role that initial teacher education institutes may have in supporting BTs through to full certification – which is the norm in many other countries. One of the positive aspects of this programme has been the willingness of some Initial Teacher Education (ITE) providers to track and monitor their graduates involved in these programmes. How this translates into positive action is yet to be determined.

The research team associated with the Whatu Kura project will need to examine more closely the various factors that impact on teacher retention in Māori-medium schooling – this is work in progress.

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