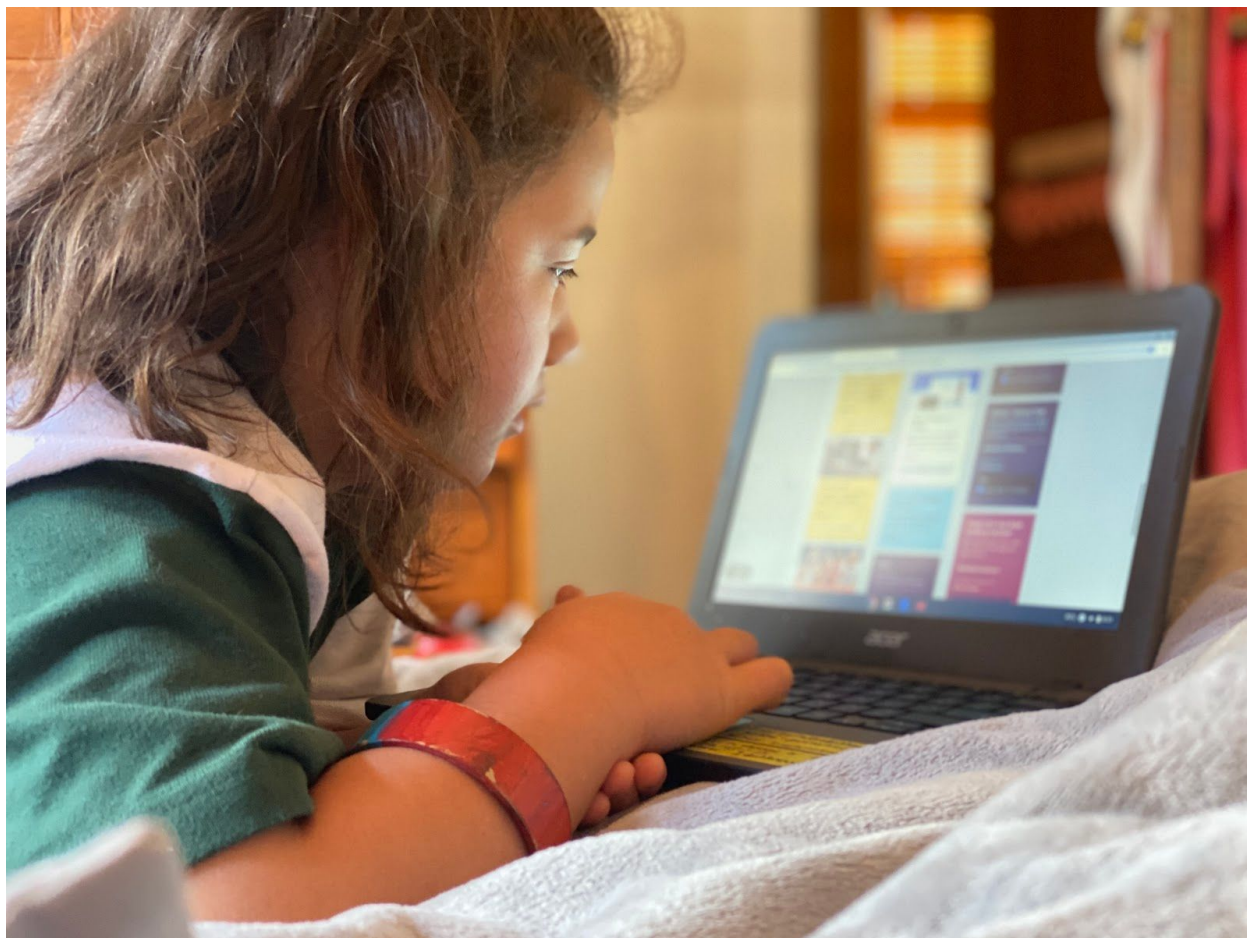


School-led learning at home: Voices of parents of Māori and Pasifika students



He Karakia

Tau mai te mauri o te wānanga
Ki runga ki ēnei pūkenga
Kia mātāmua ai ko te ako kounga a te tamaiti
Ko ia ki mua, ko ia ki muri o ēnei kōrero
Kia puta ai ia ki te whaiao, ki te ao mārama!
Hui e, tāiki e!¹

He Mihi

Kei ngā pakiaka o te whānau, kei ngā mātua huri noa i te motu, tēnā rā koutou katoa.

E tika ana kia mihi koutou katoa i whakaae ai kia whai wāhi o koutou whakaaro ki tēnei pūrongo, i runga i te aroha nui ki ngā tamariki e ako ana ki te kāinga i tēnei wā. Mei kore ake o koutou reo hei tautoko, hei ārahi, hei hāpai i tā mātou whakarite i tēnei pūrongo. Me mihi hoki ki ngā kaiako me ngā kura e whakapeto ngoi ana i tēnei wā kia ū tonu ngā tamariki katoa ki te ako mai i tawhiti, ahakoa ngā taumahatanga o te wā. Tēnei te hā o mihi ka rere ki a koutou, ki ngā pou o ako.

Ko te manako ia ka whai hua tēnei pūrongo hei painga mō koutou, e eke tonu ai te ākongia ki ngā taumata o te mātauranga.

Nā mātou nei, te rōpū rangahau

¹ This karakia was written for Evaluation Associates by Jeremy Tātere MacLeod. The translation is as follows: *Bestow the life force of learning, Upon these repositories; So that aspiration of quality learning for our children is paramount; And remains at the forefront of all of our works; So that they may flourish and thrive; For all eternity!*

Ngā kaituhi | Tusitala | The writers



Dr Melanie Riwai-Couch (Rangitāne o Wairau, Ngāti Kuia) is the Kaihautū Māori and an education consultant for Evaluation Associates. Melanie is an experienced tumuaki, evaluator, and researcher. For her PhD Melanie investigated iwi-school partnerships and how they can support Māori student achievement.

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Kupu tōmua | Upu tomua | Foreword

Warm greetings - tēnā koutou, talofa lava, and mālō e lelei

We are very pleased to be asked to provide a foreword for this timely research.

Inequity is the longstanding and shameful face of an otherwise proud tradition of public schooling in Aotearoa. Dr Melanie Riwai-Couch recognised that the pandemic lockdown of 2020 presented a rare opportunity to gather Māori and Pasifika parent perceptions of school-led learning at home, and to use these perceptions as a window into how better to address some of the issues underlying those long-standing inequities. That she was able to gather these views and present them in a timely way says a lot about her connections and efficacious use of social media, but even more about the eagerness of Māori and Pasifika parents to provide their views to contribute to solutions.

This research is different in that it does not attempt to test any theory. Nor to really tell a story or describe a phenomenon. More simply, and elegantly, it curates the voices of the respondents so that they speak for themselves. It is up to each of us to make use of these views to improve our contribution to a just and equitable education system.

We commend this paper to you. We encourage you to use the questions that Melanie and her research team have provided as prompts to gather and act on the issues facing your Māori and Pasifika parents in your own contexts.

Kia kaha, kia māia, kia manawanui!

Michael Absolum & Mary Chamberlain
Directors, Evaluation Associates



Kupu tōmua | Upu tomua | Foreword

The Covid-19 environment is a time none of us in Aotearoa (and globally) has experienced and none foresaw. For some of us it's been a daily emotionally-laden ride. Our interconnectedness is regularly to the fore in our respective lives, but in the challenges presented in the autumn of 2020 it has become an even more salient force. We are united in this situation as a moral imperative and as a survival imperative, and now is the time to fully express the qualities of our culturally imbued realities. With this immense challenge comes an equally enormous opportunity for all of us to learn from what has happened/is happening and to pave a stronger path forward, both as individuals and as communities of scholars and learners.

It seems that the researchers and contributors (parents and students) to this project seized the moment by swiftly and adeptly fashioning a programme of study for our priority learners and their whānau. Their intention was to work much more closely with parents and whānau to rethink how education provision could be provided into homes in a way that promotes a special 'brand'. This brand is the antidote to 'school as usual' into homes and it succeeds in showing 'how' to facilitate the development of a more equitable system - rather than amplifying existing inequities. Throughout this monograph there is evidence of the importance of working in mana enhancing ways. This means that parents and whānau feel respected and valued as part of the engagement with their children's learning; and a resistance to imposing universal ways of knowing is demonstrated.

When we apply everything we have learned from the science and practice within the education discipline, and from mātauranga Māori and a'oa'oga Pasifika, we can support our communities and the most underserved among us, as well as ourselves. The three Treaty principles, while not explicitly stated in this monograph, have a ubiquitous place. The principle of partnership is paramount, there is a genuine endeavour to place a korowai of protection around Māori and Pasifika ways of teaching and learning, and participation is a routine inevitability.

It is clear that diversity within our society has broadened human understanding, facilitated positive interactions, tolerance and compassion, and kindled our creativity. It has also challenged education systems to consider how education settings can effectively embrace and engage all learners as diversity continues to become the established 'norm'. How are we to understand the worldviews and learning styles of the diverse cultures? What are the origins of these orientations, and what are the most appropriate responses that education professionals can offer? These questions have stimulated lively and sometimes irascible discussion, and, I suspect, motivated the authors of this monograph to reimagine the provision of education in a certain way, at a certain time, for a changeful future.

E ngā pou o te ako, e ngā pūtake o te mārama, e ngā mana o te whānau, tēnei ngā mihi atu ki a koutou. Kia manawanui.

Dr Angus Hikairo Macfarlane
Professor of Māori Research
University of Canterbury



Whakarāpopototanga matua | Aotelega | Executive summary

New Zealand schools are facing a level of disruption and uncertainty not seen in recent times. As a result of Covid-19 and the government's measures to control it, term 2 began without students being physically present in schools. Instead, educators were tasked with providing resources and support to enable students to continue school learning in their own homes. A great deal of effort and resource has been put into managing this situation and the very real challenges facing both families and educators. Perhaps, the biggest of these challenges is finding ways to minimise the potential of the situation to exacerbate existing inequities in the education system.

This paper reports on a survey that sought the views of parents of Māori and Pasifika students on their experiences of the first week of school-led learning at home. 134 parents responded to the survey. These parents represented at least 105 primary and 79 secondary students from throughout New Zealand in English and Māori medium settings. Their perspectives are shared in the hope that these might help schools provide more equitable programmes whilst the restrictions on attending school in person remain, but perhaps even more importantly, to provide insights that might help refocus education in the longer term. The intent is to seize the opportunity afforded by the current disruption, to work more closely with whānau to rethink how public education can best be provided to meet the needs and aspirations of *all* New Zealanders.

In the survey, parents were asked about the benefits and challenges they had experienced, and also to provide suggestions for improving school-led learning at home. They were also asked how satisfied they were overall with the programmes that had been offered and the extent to which the programmes provided affirmed their identity, language and culture.

The responses from parents of Māori students (102) and parents of Pasifika students (32) were analysed separately. The comments for each group were categorised into themes - and in some cases sub-themes. The themes are shown below, and the main body of this report contains the quotes that were used to create these themes.

Responses from parents of Māori students

The responses about the **benefits** of school-led learning at home were grouped into four themes. One theme was separated into 3 sub-themes.

Te tamaiti me te ako: Understanding the child as a learner and their learning	Mana motuhake o te whānau: Whānau empowerment			Te kāinga hei wāhi haumarū: Learning in a safe home environment	Te mahi a ngā kura: School contributions
	Deciding what is important	Deciding what happens and when	Leading learning		

The **concerns** voiced were grouped into three themes, each with sub-themes.

Te ako me ngā hononga: Learning and connection		Te aupēhi i ngā mātua: Demands on parents			Ngā kawatau o te kura: School expectations and design	
Can't get children to engage	Lack of connection and social interaction	Juggling priorities	Parents struggling to lead learning	Parental concerns about wellbeing for all	Difficulty with meeting study requirements	Equity and access

Fifty-eight parents of Māori students made suggestions for **improvements** to school-led learning at home. All of the suggestions related to things schools could reframe, provide, or do differently, and these were grouped into four themes.

Kura Schools			
Ngā taumahatanga ki te whānau: Recognition of multiple demands on families	Kia kaha ake te hono atu ki ngā kaiako: Contact with teachers and increased clarity from school	Kia nui ake te arataki me te tautoko: More guidance and support	Kia whai wāhi te katoa: Greater equity and access

Responses from parents of Pasifika students

The responses about the **benefits** of school-led learning at home were grouped into four themes, each with sub-themes.

Fa'ataua le a'oa'oga ole tamaiti'iti: Knowing children as learners		Fa'atauaaina o filifiliga a'oa'o matua: Parents making decisions		O le si'osi'omaga o le aiga: The home environment		O le aoga: The school
More time and connection	Understanding the child as a learner	Able to make own decisions	Curriculum can be tailored to children	Safe and peaceful	Cultural and spiritual beliefs	Provision of resources and support

The **concerns** voiced were grouped into three themes, each with sub-themes.

Manaoga o tamaiti: Concerns for children			Fa'atauaaina ole lagolago a matua i aoga ale fanau: Parents stressed about supporting learning		Fesiligia aoga ma a latou sini fa'amoemoe mo fanau fa'atasi ai ma auala a'oa'o: Concerns about school expectations and the learning design		
Lack of social interaction	Distractions with study at home	Risk children will not achieve qualifications	Stress about not having the subject knowledge	Not having time, energy and emotion capacity to support learning	Lack of guidance about expectations	Inadequate curriculum	Equitable access to learning

There were 32 suggestions for **improvements** and these were grouped into 2 themes, and several sub-themes.

Tulaga fa'aleleia i aoga: School related improvements							Tulaga fa'aleleia i aiga: home related improvements
Access to technology and resources	Need more support to facilitate learning	Improved communication and clarity about expectations	Increase structure and scheduling of learning	Learning design			Calm and peaceful environment
				Increase social interactions with peers	More flexibility for families	Content that aligns with children's interests	

Looking across both puna kōrero

When asked about their overall happiness with their experience of school-led learning in the home, parents of Māori students were more likely to *strongly* agree or *strongly* disagree with the statement than parents of Pasifika students.

- 19% of parents of Māori students said they were very happy compared with 10% of parents of Pasifika students.
- 10% of parents of Māori students said they were very unhappy compared to 3% of parents of Pasifika students.

When asked about how well the school-led programme and content affirmed the identity, language and culture of their children there were also differences between the responses of parents of Māori students and parents of Pasifika students.

- 21% of parents of Māori students *strongly* agreed with the statement, compared with only 7% of parents of Pasifika students.
- 21% of parents of Māori students *strongly* disagreed with the statement, compared with 29% of parents of Pasifika students.

It is interesting to note that nearly 60% of parents of Māori students suggested improvements, while 100% of the parents of Pasifika students suggested improvements.

The themes that emerged from the data were then used to generate sets of questions that educators could use to investigate further within their own communities.

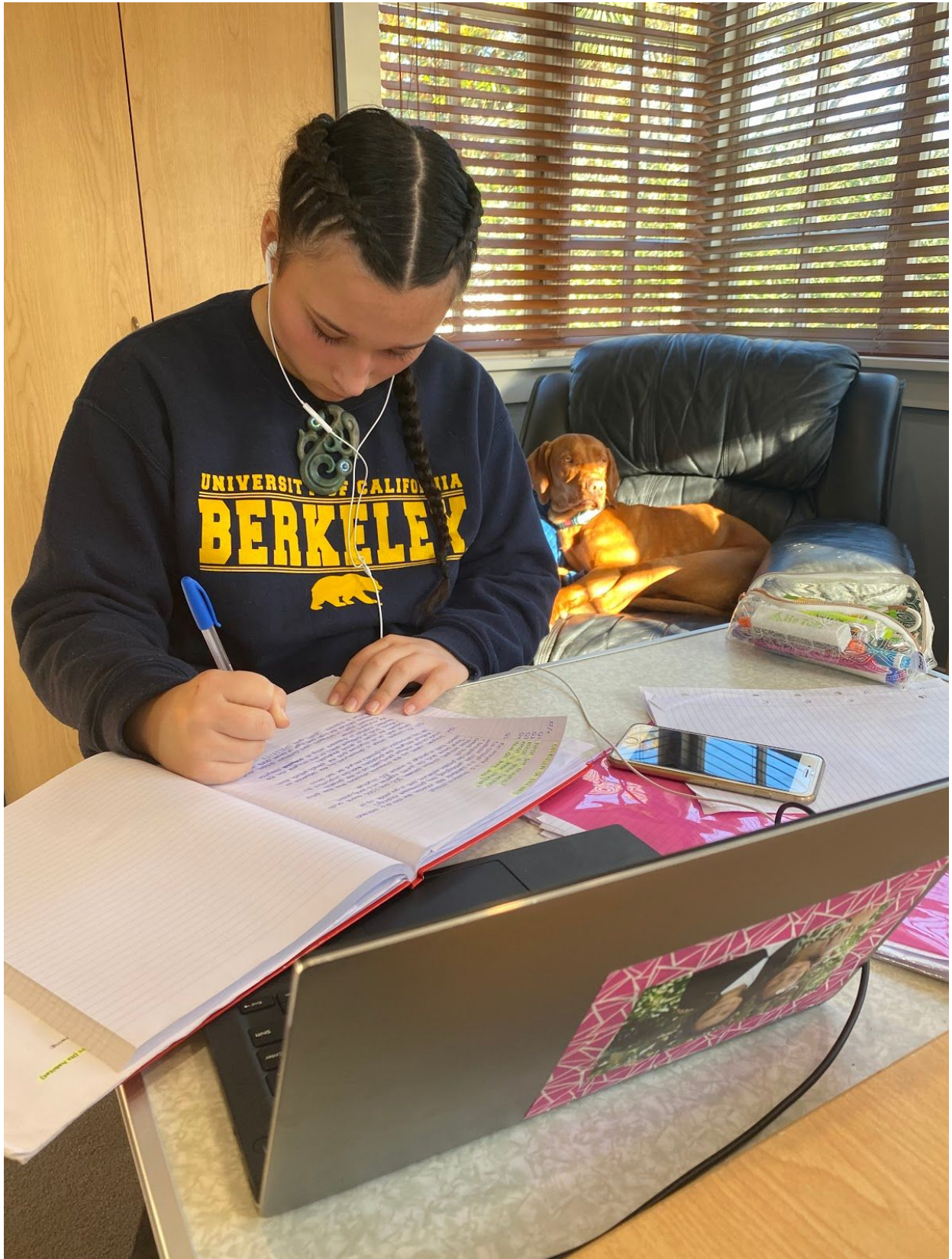
Some discussion is provided in the puna kōrero that gives cultural context for the questions prepared for teachers, schools, and education decision makers (including policy) to consider.

Across both sets of data there seemed to be some common tensions. One of these tensions was between **enjoying the freedom** provided by the current situation and **anxiety about children falling behind**. It seems some parents are enjoying the freedom to expand both *what* is learnt and the flexibility of *how and when* learning happens but some are worried about how children will adapt back to the structures and routines and expectations of school.

There also seems to be a tension between what some **schools are expecting** and what is **realistically manageable**. This is especially an issue when parents are working from home, there are children of different ages in the home all working on different programmes, and when there are limitations of physical space or internet accessibility.

Another tension noted is that while the current situation potentially allows **relationships within whānau** to be strengthened there are also concerns about children missing out on their **relationships with friends**.

Finding ways to further strengthen partnerships and value the learning that happens across the boundaries between homes and schools, seems an important step in expanding our view of what counts as quality education, making schooling more equitable and in honouring te Tiriti o Waitangi. Our hope is that by sharing the voices of parents of Pasifika and Māori children, this paper might be a small step on the journey towards developing an education system that better meets the needs of all students.



Rārangi kōrero | Mataupu | Contents

Ngā kaituhi Tusitala The writers	1
Kupu Tōmua Upu Tomua Foreword	2
Whakarāpopototanga matua Aotelega Executive summary	4
Kupu whakataki Fa’atomuaga Introduction	10
Inequities in education	11
Parental involvement in education	12
Rationale	13
Tukanga rangahau Auala su’esu’e Methodology	14
Data collection using an online survey	14
Puna Kōrero	14
Puna Kōrero 1: What parents of Māori students think about school-led learning at home	15
Benefits identified by parents	15
Overall happiness	18
Affirmation of identity, language and culture	18
Concerns identified by parents	19
Suggested improvements	24
Discussion	27
Questions to consider	28
Puna Kōrero 2: What parents of Pasifika students think about school-led learning at home	29
Benefits identified by parents	29
Overall happiness	33
Affirmation of identity, language and culture	33
Concerns identified by parents	34
Suggested improvements	38
Discussion	41
Questions to consider	42
Kupu whakatepe Upu fa’ai’u Final comments	43
Ngā tohutoro Fa’amaumau References	45

Multilingual headings are presented in te reo Māori, gagana Sāmoa, and English language

Kupu whakataki | Fa'atomuaga | Introduction

Covid-19 and the measures taken by the government in an attempt to control it have created a level of disruption and uncertainty across society that has not been seen in recent times. Many of the structures and systems we are used to can no longer operate as business as usual.

In the educational sphere, schools have had to quickly rethink how they can provide education in a context where students are unable to physically attend school due to the country being in lock down. There has been a great deal of activity across the country around providing resources and supports so that students can continue their school learning in their own homes. As New Zealand schools are self-governing, each school setting has determined what the learning content will be, how students will engage, how communication will occur, and how student participation will be monitored. All these decisions have necessarily been made and implemented in a very tight time-frame and educators have been grappling with a range of challenges. There are issues for both teachers and whānau around the manageability of this way of providing schooling. For example, many homes do not have access to the internet and/or sufficient digital devices. Many whānau are also juggling the pressures of parents working from home, whilst at the same time trying to support children working on a range of different school programmes. Other families are struggling with the stresses of job insecurity and/or poverty. The biggest concern perhaps, though, is that the current situation² has the potential to exacerbate existing inequities in the education system.

Despite these very real concerns, times of disruption such as this also pose opportunities to do things in new ways. In the current context, with the majority of New Zealand students engaging in school-led learning at home, the education sector has the opportunity to work much more closely with whānau to rethink how public education can best be provided, rather than rolling out “school as usual” into homes. In this way the current situation could actually facilitate the **development of a more equitable education system, rather than amplifying existing inequities.**

Working closely with whānau could provide an opportunity to foreground an “expanded view” of learning where students are more secure in their identity, and have the dispositions to thrive in a rapidly changing world. This view of learning is promoted in *The New Zealand Curriculum (2007)*, *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa (2008a)*, and *Te Aho Matua o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori (1994)*. This promotes a holistic view of each learner – and values students’ experiences that happen outside school as well as those that occur in school. **The current situation offers rich opportunities to enact these curriculum aspirations** which have often been difficult to achieve in “mainstream” schooling.

To realise this potential though it will be important to develop **strong partnerships** between educators and their communities. An initial step, and an ongoing requirement, in developing and sustaining the sorts of partnership where collaborative decision making occurs involves multidirectional communication (Bull, 2010). The current situation has provided an opportunity to take a **step towards this multidirectional communication.**

² ‘Current situation’ refers to the experiences of school-led learning at home during Covid-19

This paper explores some Māori and Pasifika³ parents' perspectives on the first week of school-led learning in their homes. The intention is to provide a clearer picture of what is and is not working now, and perhaps more importantly, to learn from this new context to ensure Māori and Pasifika learners are better served by the system when we return to the “new normal”.

This paper is not based on a formal research project. It is more like a “safe-to-fail probe” - a **small investigation in a complex system that is designed to allow new possibilities to become more visible** (Snowden, 2007). Our thinking has been informed both by the voices of the participants and by the existing research literature on parental involvement in education, and inequities in the New Zealand education system.

Readers may wonder why there is not a separate section on Te Tiriti o Waitangi and how Te Tiriti has influenced this paper. The writing team has also pondered this, at length. Suffice to say, our position is that this paper in and of itself, its genesis and intent, is a deep application and exploration of Treaty-centric practice, and to honour the voices of both tangata whenua and tangata tiriti.

Inequities in education

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. (Office of the Auditor General Report, 2016).

The reality in New Zealand, though, is that there are groups in society who are under-served by the education system (OECD Programme for International Student Assessment, 2018). The Ministry of Education identifies four priority learner groups who have historically been poorly served by the education system. These groups are Māori, Pasifika, those from low socio-economic backgrounds, and those with special educational needs. Despite a range of initiatives aimed at reducing disparity, large numbers of young people from these groups leave school with few qualifications.

For both Māori and Pasifika students educational success encapsulates more than just academic success. Ka Hikitia, the government's strategy for accelerating success for Māori, aims for all Māori students to gain success as Māori. The vision is that all Māori students will:

- have their identity, language, and culture valued and included in teaching and learning in ways that support them to engage and achieve success
- know their potential and feel supported to set goals and take action to achieve success
- experience teaching and learning that is relevant, engaging, rewarding, and positive
- have gained the skills, knowledge, and qualifications they need to achieve success in te ao Māori, New Zealand, and the wider world.

³ Our use of the term Pasifika in no way seeks to homogenise the diverse nationalities and cultures gathered under the “Pasifika umbrella” (Wendt-Samu, 2003). As noted by the Ministry of Education, the Pasifika umbrella includes people who “identify themselves with the islands and cultures of Samoa, Tonga, Cook Islands, Fiji, Niue, Tokelau, Tuvalu and other Pasifika heritages.” (Ministry of Education, 2018).

The Pasifika Education Plan (2018) also asserts that educational success is measured not only in percentages of students gaining formal qualifications but also the degree to which it is characterised by:

demanding, vibrant, dynamic, successful Pasifika learners, secure and confident in their identities, languages and cultures, navigating through all curriculum areas such as the arts, sciences, technology, social sciences and mathematics. (p.3).

If these aspirations are to be met, it is essential that educators work in close partnership with whānau.

Parental involvement in education

The research literature is unequivocal in showing that parental involvement in education makes a significant difference to educational achievement (see for example, Biddulph et al., 2003; Bull et al., 2008; Ministry of Education, 2008; Robinson, Hohepa & Lloyd, 2009). Within the literature though, there is a range of meanings as to what constitutes parental involvement. If these meanings are spread along a continuum, at one end parental involvement would involve schools *informing* parents about educational issues and at the other end parents/ whānau and the wider community would be *making decisions with schools*. Recent research suggests that most New Zealand schools are operating nearer the “inform” end of the continuum (Bull, 2010). If we are serious about students becoming secure and confident in their language, culture, and identity then it will be essential to move towards more collaborative relationships.

The current situation, where school-led learning is occurring in homes across New Zealand, provides a unique opportunity to explore what these more equal partnerships might look like. This new environment potentially provides an opportunity for New Zealand educators to learn about the “funds of knowledge” (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005) in Māori and Pasifika homes - and to begin to work towards more equitable outcomes for all. It is with this goal in mind, that this paper shares the voices of Māori and Pasifika parents as they navigate the first week of school-learning at home.

Rationale

The existing research into parental involvement in education is within the context of face-to-face schooling. In the current context, there is an opportunity to explore how parents and teachers might work productively together in the context of family homes, and how learnings from the current situation might transfer back to schools when alert levels allow.

This research is motivated by the desire to capture and share voices for two groups of parents who can contribute to student success, and in a way that retains the authenticity of their messages. The puna kōrero themselves do not filter or deep mine the voices beyond sorting into themes, subthemes, and headings. Rather than providing discussion within the puna kōrero, questions are provided that encourage the narrative to be taken back to individual school communities for discussion. In this way the Māori and Pasifika communities in individual schools and kāhui ako can determine the degree of relevance and application of this research in their own settings.



Tukanga rangahau | Auala su'esu'e | Methodology

Data collection using an online survey

An online survey gathered the perspectives of parents of Māori and Pasifika students about the school-led learning currently taking place in New Zealand homes. The responses were collected and analysed by the research team, then themes were identified and discussed. Questions for teachers, school leaders, and education decision makers were then developed to help prompt consideration of parent perspectives so that they can be used for planning and review. The online survey was developed using SurveyMonkey and was circulated online using Facebook and Facebook Messenger.

As well as demographic information, parents were asked to respond to three questions:

1. What has been good about your children learning at home?
2. What concerns do you have about your children learning at home?
3. How could learning at home be improved for you and your children?

Parents were also invited to share their views on their satisfaction overall and how well the learning is affirming their culture, language, and identity.

I get to be part of their ako. I feel useful

Survey uptake

In thirty-six hours 102 responses were received from parents of Māori students and thirty-two responses from parents of Pasifika students. These parents represented at least 105 primary and seventy-nine secondary students from throughout New Zealand in English and Māori medium school settings. Sixteen of the parents had children who identified as both Māori and Pasifika. Other parents completed the survey but their data will be considered in later papers.

Limitations of the survey

The survey was distributed online for a very short time. The number of respondents is not large given the size of the overall population, but is significant in regards to the timeliness and having a sufficient number to identify themes that are likely to be relevant to the wider population.

Puna Kōrero

This paper presents the views of two specific groups, parents of Māori students and parents of Pasifika students. These views are presented as puna kōrero (Riwai-Couch, 2015). Puna kōrero is a broadly qualitative approach. A puna, as a living thing, is ever changing and is a source of wellbeing for its community. Puna nurture life and are therefore full of parent potential, but also vulnerable to negative effects that require mitigation. The benefits of puna are often unknown, hidden, or unappreciated in a wider context. The metaphor implies context and connection with people and place, including a spiritual connection with temporal and cultural applications.

Puna Kōrero 1: What parents of Māori students think about school-led learning at home

Benefits identified by parents



“I can put more of my own teaching and parenting philosophy into the day. Flexibility around time starting and following their lead. No commute to and from school, and can I add, no kutu!”

There were 100 responses by parents of Māori primary and secondary school students detailing the **benefits** of school-led learning at home during week 1 of term 2, 2020. The responses were grouped into four themes: Te tamaiti me te ako: Understanding the child as a learner and their learning; Mana motuhake o te whānau: Whānau decision making; Te kāinga hei wāhi haumarū: Learning in a safe home environment; and Te mahi a ngā kura: School contribution to the experience. Mana motuhake o te whānau: Whānau empowerment was divided into three sub-themes: Deciding what is important, Deciding what happens and when, and Whānau leading learning. Each of these themes are presented in more detail below with representative supporting quotes.

Te tamaiti me te ako: Understanding the child as a learner and their learning	Mana motuhake o te whānau: Whānau empowerment			Te kāinga hei wāhi haumarū: Learning in a safe home environment	Te mahi a ngā kura: School contributions
	Deciding what is important	Deciding what happens and when	Leading learning		

Te tamaiti me te ako: Understanding the child as a learner and the learning

Parents shared that the period of learning from home was valuable to them as it allowed them to better understand how their children like to learn and how they were approaching learning tasks. This helped parents to understand their children's abilities and interests. They also thought it was good that they were able to see progress firsthand.

I have been able to see how they are really doing in their school work and their level.

Being able to see how they like learning, what works and what doesn't.

Spending more time with them and getting more familiar with their style of learning. What their challenges are and what they excel in.

Parents identified that school-led learning at home enabled them to better understand their children's ways of learning, as well as their ability to self manage and take responsibility for their own learning.

The teenagers have been quite good at managing themselves. The teachers have been good at communicating with me.

I've been really impressed with my boy stepping up to his responsibilities.

Mana motuhake o te whānau: Whānau empowerment

This theme has three subthemes.

Deciding what is important

Parents liked deciding what their children would be learning, being able to prioritise what learning and topics were important, and aligning the learning to the values at home. Many parents shared that they valued the opportunity to focus on life skills and their child's interests.

More time with your child/ren. Prioritising what learning is important for our whānau.

We have returned to a natural rhythm aligned more with the taiao. Time has given us more patience and enjoyment in everything we do. Less tv more doing... exploring, independence, responsibility etc. self driven learning ie enjoyment of reading about what they have experienced.

Deciding what happens and when

Parents liked being able to determine the daily schedule and deciding when to take breaks and for how long. They felt being able to have this control reduced pressure (in regards to following a school timetable) and enabled them to have more time together.

Being able to go at their level, take the time to do purposeful learning and being able to implement life skills like home skills ... cooking, cleaning, running a budget.

Leading learning

Parents valued being present and supporting their children during learning sessions, being part of the learning, and feeling useful. They also identified that school-led learning at home meant that fathers and grandparents who weren't usually involved, could be.

They get to do things at their own pace and at a time that suits them best ... We get to learn together, and go off on tangents that follow our own family values.

I have 3 mokopuna years 2, 3, and 12 living with me plus their mothers who are teachers. It is cool to see all doing their own mahi, eg maths at their level, tuakana support teina.

Accepting that learning is different for each individual. For us, this time was a valuable opportunity for us to come together as a whānau and I hope we move forward and keep building on the foundations we have established in lockdown.

Te kāinga hei wāhi haumarū: Learning in a safe home environment

Parents shared that they liked school-led learning at home because their home provided a safe environment. They mentioned there was less pressure at home than in school classrooms and therefore their children were less stressed and more relaxed about their learning. They also felt that there was good support at home between siblings and learners were able to get one to one attention from their parents. Children also had access to good food during the day, which was beneficial for their learning.

They are safe.

It's great to see what the children are being given by the school. The kids are more relaxed, there is no anxiety. My mokopuna finished all her work ahead of time. The children are hungry to learn.

I like that they can do it in the comforts and warmth of home, and they are safe. It's also nice to get involved but that can also face challenges.

For Māori lucky to be on our whenua it is the ultimate learning environment.

Te mahi a ngā kura: School contributions

Parents liked that they had permission from school to make best choices for their own children and that they would be supported with guidance by the school and teachers. Parents liked that they had been provided with tailored learning programmes for their children, that there was flexibility and that the school-led learning at home could be child driven and managed.

Neither school has pressed the issue - encouraged the learning but always stated health and well-being of students is paramount. What's good is they have been learning for themselves and their father has been helping them as I'm a full time student as well.

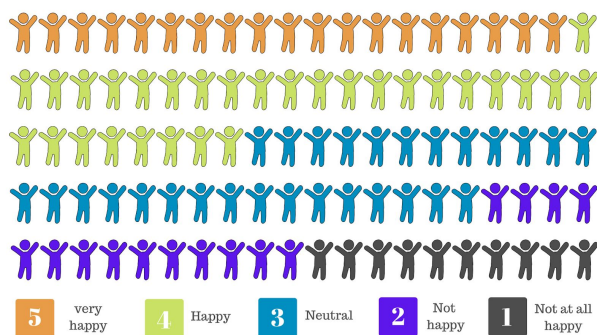
Freedom to learn at their own pace, with plenty of one on one learning.

They have been free to learn at their leisure. No pressure to stick to school hours or curriculum.

Parents were appreciative of the contact that schools had made with them and their children.

Teachers have all made contact with me and have been supportive and realistic. I think it's actually quite good under the circumstances.

Overall happiness

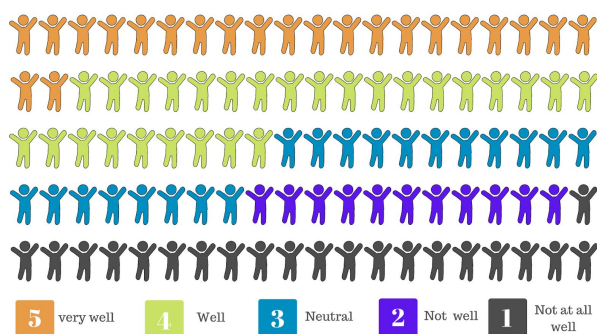


Parents of Māori students were asked how happy they were with how school-led learning at home was working for them and their children. There were 100 responses. Using a 5-star rating where 1 was **not at all happy** and 5 was **very happy**, the weighted average was **3.33**. 24% of parents gave 1 or 2 stars, 28% 3 stars and 48% 4 or 5 stars.

Some interesting comparisons

- 10% of parents of Māori students gave 1 star, compared to 3% of parents of Pasifika students.
- 19% of parents of Māori students gave 5 stars, compared with 10% of parents of Pasifika students.

Affirmation of identity, language and culture



Parents of Māori students were asked how well the school-led programme and content affirmed the identity, language, and culture of their children. There were 99 responses. Using a 5-star rating where 1 was **not at all well** and 5 was **very well**, the weighted average was **3.16**. 32% of parents gave 1 or 2 stars, 19% gave 3 stars and 48% gave 4 or 5 stars.

Some interesting comparisons

- 21% of parents of Māori students gave 1 star, compared with 29% of parents of Pasifika students.
- 21% of parents of Māori students gave 5 stars, compared with 7% of parents of Pasifika students.

Concerns identified by parents



“Am I good enough?”
 “That schools ... expect too much in this situation.”

There were 100 responses by parents of Māori learners detailing their **concerns** about school-led learning at home during week 1 of term 2, 2020. The responses were grouped into three themes and seven sub-themes. The first theme was Te ako me ngā hononga: Learning and connection, with the two sub-themes of struggling to get children to engage and lack of connections and social interaction. The second theme was Te aupēhi i ngā mātua: Demands on parents. This second theme was made up of juggling priorities, parents struggling to lead learning, and parental concerns about wellbeing for all. The third theme was Ngā kawatau o te kura: School expectations and design. This theme was made up of two sub-themes: difficulty with meeting study requirements and secondly, equity and access. Each of these themes and subthemes are presented in more detail below with supporting representative quotes.

Te ako me ngā hononga: Learning and connection		Te aupēhi i ngā mātua: Demands on parents			Ngā kawatau o te kura: School expectations and design	
Can't get children to engage	Lack of connection and social interaction	Juggling priorities	Parents struggling to lead learning	Parental concerns about wellbeing for all	Difficulty with meeting study requirements	Equity and access

Te ako me ngā hononga: Learning and connection

Some parents were concerned that their children seemed to lack **motivation** and were easily **distracted**. They thought their children were not paying full attention or wanting to do certain work because they didn't have teachers at home to encourage and monitor them. Another concern was that they didn't have the **skills to get their children to engage** with school-led learning at home. Some parents felt that the **expectations for self directed learning** were beyond what the children could do, and therefore the children wanted help that could not be provided.

Not putting in effort as they think no one else is. Not taking learning at home seriously.

They don't want to. It's such a struggle.

Some days it's hard to engage the primary aged child and I don't have the skills to figure that out.

Children easily distracted from learning.

That my children are too young and get distracted easily. I get stressed trying to work with them and feel they are not getting the best they can from this.

That it's all self learning. It's very hard to teach yourself level three calculus and physics without teacher input.

A significant number of parents were concerned that school-led learning at home did not provide the **opportunity for social interaction** between children. This lack of connection was identified as having a negative impact on the āhua and wairua of the children. This concern was contributed to by a lack of support from peers when students were undertaking work online. Parents noted that they did not receive the usual support and assurance they would have received if working in groups or alongside their peers.

Not able to socialise with other children outside the whānau.

My children learn from social interaction too and it's great for their mental health.

They don't have peers for motivation. I can't keep up with all the coms for 4 tamariki.

Te aupēhi i ngā mātua: Demands on parents

Juggling priorities

Fifteen responses described the difficulty parents were having juggling priorities when supporting learning at home. These priorities were between the needs of specific children working at **different levels** and when children were learning in **different languages**. The needs of the household including space for learning, and noise, and needs of parents who are also **working full time** from home.

One child can't access her Google classroom, so we are still waiting on a hardpack of mahi. Another child (12), has a huge amount of mahi. As a teacher, with four school aged kids (2 of whom are doing NCEA) it's hard to monitor all children whilst managing my own online class

When you are juggling 3 kids of different ages and have a student who is in total immersion Māori but their work to do on study language is English.

Both parents are essential workers working from home full time, so giving them [the children] full attention and support can be difficult to negotiate.

I am a teacher so I am expected to be available and online for the students I teach also. Hard to support my own child when I'm also having to do that.

Parents struggling to lead learning

Parents struggling to lead their children's learning was the biggest overall concern of parents of Māori children. This consisted of parents worrying that their child would **fall behind**, that they might not experience quality instruction, and that parents **didn't have the skills and knowledge** necessary to fully support learning. This was magnified for parents who were essential workers and not as readily available to support school-led learning at home.

I'm worried my 13 year old boy is going to fall behind as he is only doing the bare minimum of school work.

Just how my two bigger ones in yr 11 are going to get on with their NCEA.

That they are missing out on what I am not confident in teaching.

That the work is not consistent, both parents are essential workers so it depends on the day as to what we can do.

Māori language fluency was a particular concern of parents who had children who usually attend Māori immersion schooling, including children studying at different levels of immersion. When only one parent had reo Māori fluency this placed **extra pressure** on them individually to help the children with their study.

Trying to split my time and attention on one bilingual and 2 kura kaupapa children at different levels is something I'm struggling with.

Just not having another Māori speaker in the whare to accommodate my children as I'm a kaiako and have been doing class/zoom with my students.

Parents wanted to do a good job supporting their children, but many were worried that their **children would fall behind** because the parents could not support them well enough. Some parents had **high expectations** that could not be met. Parents found it difficult to approach leading learning **without the confidence** of having training as a teacher.

I'm not doing as good a job as their teachers. Scared I may be the reason they MAY get behind in their learning.

Am I good enough?

We cannot help as we have no idea what to do.

[I'm concerned] they're not getting their educational needs met properly.

I am the concern, I want it to be perfect work.

Parental concerns about wellbeing for all

Parents expressed concerns for themselves and their children about not being able to find **balance** at home, and how they and their children were feeling **anxious** and stressed.

I have found it hard to find a new balance for myself. As a Māmā I have always put the needs of my children before my own.

Parents mentioned that they were feeling grumpy and were worried about the negative impact their stress might have on their **relationships** with their children. There was also stress as children and parents adjusted to new routines and learning from home.

Frustrated grumpy parents.

As a parent I don't want to nag...

Parents were concerned about children learning online and the amount of time being spent on devices, as well as online safety risks.

They aren't learning enough. I don't have the patience to sit there for long and neither do they.

My year 9 is finding it stressful to learn online.

My only concern is that it can be hard to get them out for physical activities sometimes.

Social interactions with peers are limited to online correspondence and these are not monitored.

Ngā kawatau o te kura: School expectations and design

This theme had two subthemes.

Difficulty with meeting school-led learning at home requirements

Many parents mentioned how much they valued the work schools had done to support learning at home, however even with this support there were many difficulties. Parents needed to learn how to use all the different platforms that schools were using, and it appears that many parents had children in multiple schools using multiple ways of connecting. Whānau were also experiencing differences in expectations and approach with their children who were in different schools.

So many different platforms they all differently need to access.

Understanding Google classroom.

Remote learning from home is challenging with the various apps being used that are not compatible with their online classrooms. Seesaw etc. Time has been used searching and downloading apps that are suitable, causing anxiety for ākongā.

Some online platforms were seen as **limited** and not providing the type of engagement parents wanted. Issues were raised about platforms not being **age appropriate** and not meeting needs due to **too many children** in one online space at a time.

Zoom is one mostly one-sided and no room to negotiate, think about, discuss fully.

They are only 5 and 7 and the novelty of video calling wore off very quickly.

Lack of teacher contact and interaction especially if the class numbers are big.

Some parents noted that **too much work** was being assigned and that children felt **upset** when they did not get everything complete.

That they won't spend the time they need and/or they have too much to get through.

Amount of work they are expected to complete.

Anxiety around workload.

Teachers need to realise that students are feeling overwhelmed and to not overload them with too much mahi.

Equity and access

This situation has focused a spotlight on the issues of equity and access. Whereas some parents say they have everything they need to deliver learning at home, other whānau are struggling with **lack of devices**, poor **internet**, costs of internet, and access to stationery and other **resources**. One parent mentioned the **disparity** in resourcing coming from two different schools her children are attending and wondered if this is because one of the schools was high decile and the other was a lower decile.

There's a real divide between families that haven't been addressed - eg both parents working, no devices or internet, even things like illiterate parents and the pressure they now face to teach. Within our school it's been easy to manage, but broader it seems not well managed at all

Devices not sent out yet so already behind in NCEA learning.

No internet or devices to keep up with school work.

We have internet connectivity issues living rurally and therefore had to sign up to a super expensive deal - so main concern is Internet cost.

Other equity issues (not about devices or the internet) were raised about **resources** and access to them during lockdown.

Not having the same resources or access to resources.

That we do have enough resources for our tamariki to complete their mahi or to last them through this period.

Certainly we lack the resources needed and haven't been able to afford them or they have been inaccessible while in lockdown.

Suggested improvements



“Training offered for parents and caregivers at home to support how the learning can be done and to have the support network to be able to pitch scenarios to a teacher in order to best support.”

Seventeen parents of Māori learners said they were satisfied with the school-led learning at home as they were experiencing it. A further eleven parents said that they were not sure what could be done as it was a difficult situation. The remaining fifty-eight parents provided suggestions for improvements that all related to things that kura and schools could control. These were grouped into four themes: Ngā taumaha ki te whānau - recognition of the multiple demands on whānau; Kia kaha ake te hono atu ki ngā kaiako - contact with teachers and increased clarity from schools; Kia nui ake te arataki me to tautoko - more guidance and support; and Kia whai wāhi te katoa - greater equity and access.

Kura Schools			
Ngā taumahatanga ki te whānau: Recognition of multiple demands on families	Kia kaha ake te hono atu ki ngā kaiako: Contact with teachers and increased clarity from school	Kia nui ake te arataki me to tautoko: More guidance and support	Kia whai wāhi te katoa: Greater equity and access

It is interesting to note that nearly 60% of these parents suggested improvements, while 100% of the parents of Pasifika students suggested improvements.

Ngā taumahatanga ki te whānau: Recognition of the multiple demands on whānau

Many parents identified that this was not a normal situation and that a lot had been done to support learners in a short period of time. They raised issues such as not having enough **space in their houses** for children to use for study and not having enough **space in their day** due to other commitments they are juggling.

If we had the space to have a separate learning space or room where there are no distractions from the rest of our whānau.

Need space for quiet working and good furniture to sit at or on.

We struggle to help as [we] are essential workers and do shift work. Not sure you can help us with learning from home, we are lucky our daughter just does her work when we are sleeping.

We're just taking it day by day and monitoring his device use has its own challenges - I'm working remotely, my husband is ... studying - managing that and keeping our son occupied has been a tough balance.

Parents asked that schools and teachers recognise these issues and have **realistic expectations** of children taking part in school-led learning at home.

The teacher being flexible. They get chastised if they can't access their online meetings.

Don't put so much pressure on the whānau with getting work completed.

Be more flexible with working parents or ones that have younger children.

Kia kaha ake te hono atu ki ngā kaiako: Contact with teachers and increased clarity

Many parents asked for more frequent and consistent **contact with teachers** to help set routines and structures for learning at home. Parents noted that they appreciated the work that had gone into setting up learning from home, and moving forward they would like increased **clarity** in expectations and structure of learning.

If they had an online session with their teachers even 15 minutes to have a Q&A session for questions we cannot help with. They do say to email but I feel this method would be more helpful.

Can a teacher, or senior student check in on NCEA students to support or help with questions occasionally?

Kia nui ake te arataki me te tautoko: More guidance and support

Overwhelmingly parents were requesting support from schools for themselves as the leaders of learning. They wanted more guidance about how the online platforms worked and how they could best support their own children when they were struggling.

Maybe one on one time over Zoom with their teacher.

Teacher being available to go through the learning step by step.

Short face to face online interaction with teachers to support us as parents and to keep relationship between child and teacher strong.

Training offered for the parents caregivers at home to support how the learning can be done and to have the support network to be able to pitch scenarios to a teacher in order to best support, ie my child is struggling with learning a math pattern how can I best support?

Many parents reported that they were impressed with the materials organised by the government, and sent out by schools, however they needed support to be able to make the most of these. Requests were made for clear **timetables**, instructions and expectations being in **one place** and **coherence** between teachers to make things more standardised at home.

Clear instructions by video assigned to class, which can be viewed again if having problems instead of zoom conference.

An online learning program that leads students through and all in one rather than them having to find each resource, use different programs.

Information provided at the start, detailing tasks, due dates.

Clear timetable sent from teachers.

Kia whai wāhi te katoa: Greater equity and access

The concept of universal design for learning was evident in the requests for greater access to multiple forms of learning resources. Parents wanted to be able to access resources in both online and offline formats. Equity issues were raised when identifying disparity between different children and families being able to access learning materials due to remote location and school decile. Suggestions for improvement for equity and access included access to **'offline' materials**:

Maybe being able to have library books for personal reading available for delivery.

More paperwork for those who don't have computers.

Having a pack that's sent every week that includes everything that's needed to be learnt for their level on the curriculum.

More stationery supplies.

Parents also suggested that they needed more access to **devices and internet** if their children were to be successful with school-led learning at home.

We have no ipad/devices, we don't have normal tv and it's not available on demand so I can cast from phone. It's become too hard as we lack the resources other families have.

Reduced rate for the internet. Maybe some extra resources like a working printer. Other aspects we can help them.

We don't have devices at home. Now I wish we had a tablet for her to do some of her school work through the app.

Discussion

Our whānau culture is based mostly in our faith, secondly in te ao Māori, and lastly in language. Language is extremely important to us however as Mātua we are not proficient in te reo. That is why we are so grateful to our kura.

**Kotahi tonu te hiringa
i kake ai a Tāne ki Tikitikiorangi;
Ko te hiringa i te mahara.**

*There was only one spiritual energy
that transported Tāne to the uppermost realm;
It was the spiritual power of the mind.*

These lines from the karakia (blessing) He Oriori Mō Tuteremoana describe how Tāne (name of a significant Māori ancestor) climbed to the highest heaven using intelligence and guile. It was given by Tuteremoana's grandfather Tuhotoariki as a blessing gifted to Tuteremoana at birth. In modern times it is recognised as an oriori (lullaby). It is also a waiata tāwhito (ancient song) and is still used in Māori ceremonial gatherings. This is one of many kōrero from te ao Māori (the Māori world) that speaks of ancestral relationships to knowledge and learning.

The words encourage those who follow to live up to the legacy of educational excellence demonstrated by Tāne. Māori students have more to inherit than negative achievement data and deficit thinking. The preferred alternative is excitement, eagerness to succeed, and a pathway to fulfilling their potential.

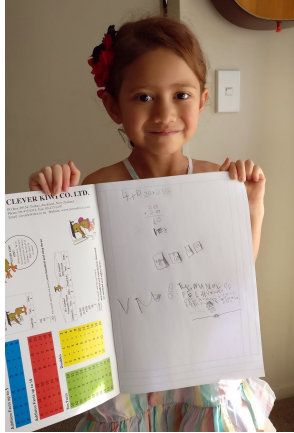
Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engari he toa takitini.
Success is not the work of one but the work of many.

Kura, schools, parents, and whānau working together can contribute to culturally responsive curriculum and schooling. Building effective, collaborative relationships with learners and whānau, regardless of the mode of delivery of education programmes, remoteness, or number of Māori learners within a school community, will add a rich layer and in-depth understanding of what individual Māori learner success, 'as Māori' looks like.

An effective partnership involving whānau, ākonga and kaiako working together to ensure that individual needs and passions are included in the learning, is the foundation upon which learner success 'as Māori' can flourish. In order for Māori students to flourish, their voices and the voices of their parents and whānau need to be actively sought, listened to, understood and used to influence school decision making including pedagogy and curriculum.

Māori parents want their children to succeed in schooling. Equity is not the end goal, tino rangatiratanga and a thriving Māori youth population excelling as learners and leaders should be the ultimate aim. Dealing with Covid-19 presents the opportunity for schooling to be reviewed in a way that considers how Māori can better thrive in education.

Questions to consider from Māori findings



The following questions have been developed to encourage reflection and support future planning. The questions are based on what parents of Māori students have shared in the survey and are designed to help schools better meet the needs of parents as communicated in this research.

These questions are not exhaustive. In addition to these questions, we invite teachers, schools, and education decision-makers to discuss the findings of this report with their own Māori parents and communities to see how well and in what ways they align, and to explore their own experiences of school-led learning at home.

The first set of questions relate to the here and now while the majority of learning is taking place at home. The second set is longer term. They relate to addressing inequities in education by retaining and building on the best of what the school led-learning at home situation has afforded us. How can system leaders, school leaders, and teachers ensure that happens?

Questions to ask now

1. How can your kura/school design learning to help students to feel engaged and motivated despite being physically distanced from their friends?
2. How might your kura/school deal with the technology inequities that are raised by the Māori parents?
3. What is a fair and realistic level of input that your kura/school might expect from Māori parents who are overseeing learning in the home? How do schools, teachers, and parents decide this?
4. What might your kura/school do differently to reduce Māori parents' anxiety about their tamariki falling behind in their learning?
5. How will your kura/school make sense of the constructive feedback from Māori parents and what steps could you take to act on it ?
6. If your kura/school is providing Māori immersion learning, what support could you offer parents and whānau who have no Māori language capability, so they can support their tamariki with learning?

Longer-term questions

7. What insights has the current situation provided you with about how Māori parents define educational success for their tamariki?
8. How might your kura/school maintain the positive impacts on student learning that are happening in the home when learning resumes at school?
9. As you reflect on this situation, how effective are your learning partnerships with your Māori families? How do you know?
10. What support might students and Māori parents need to help them adjust back into the structure and routines of regular schooling?

Puna Kōrero 2: What parents of Pasifika students think about school-led learning at home

Benefits identified by parents



“I've enjoyed doing activities with them, we get to have lunch together, we get to be creative in how we learn, how we spend time together. It's good to be able to give activities around their interests.”

There were thirty-two responses by parents of Pasifika primary and secondary school students detailing the benefits of school-led learning at home during week 1 of term 2, 2020. The responses were grouped into four themes and seven sub-themes. The first theme is Fa'ataua le a'oa'oga ole tamaiti'iti - knowing children as learners which includes two sub-themes: more time and connection and better understanding of the child as a learner. The second theme is Fa'atauaina o filifiliga a'oa'o matua - parents making decisions about the learning, which is made up of two sub-themes: able to make their own decisions and curriculum that can be tailored to children. The third theme is O le si'osi'omaga o le aiga - the home environment, which also has two sub-themes: safe and peaceful at home and cultural and spiritual benefits. The last theme is O le aoga - the school, which relates to the provision of resources and support. Each of these themes and subthemes are presented in more detail below with representative quotes.

Fa'ataua le a'oa'oga ole tamaiti'iti: Knowing children as learners		Fa'atauaina o filifiliga a'oa'o matua: Parents making decisions		O le si'osi'omaga o le aiga: The home environment		O le aoga: The school
More time and connection	Understanding the child as a learner	Able to make own decisions	Curriculum can be tailored to children	Safe and peaceful	Cultural and spiritual beliefs	Provision of resources and support

Fa'ataua a'oa'oga a tamaiti'iti: Knowing children as learners

More time and connection

There were 13 responses connected to this theme. It is clear that for many parents, learning at home has been a positive experience because parents have been able to **connect with their children** in new and perhaps unexpected ways. **New learning relationships** are being forged in families, for example between children and their fathers and grandparents.

Opportunity for me to get more involved in their learning progress.

I think as a father who doesn't have very much schooling but enjoys learning together with my 3 children at home in the last few weeks.

Including her grandparents in play. Lots of cooking and gardening with Gran. Seeing her be so imaginative with her use of household objects in play and recognising dramatic behavior as creativity. Also seeing how she responds and talking about coping mechanisms.

Better understanding of the child as a learner

It was particularly noticeable that parents have gained significant insights into what and how their children learn. Parents expressed pleasure about gaining these insights and **becoming more familiar and in-tune with learning**. These insights have allowed parents to focus on the learning that is important for their family, and are more familiar overall with all aspects of their children's **ability, interests, and ways of learning**.

Spending more time with them and getting more familiar with their style of learning. What their challenges are and what they excel in.

More time with your child/ren. Prioritising what learning is important for our whānau.

Seeing where they are at so I can be more involved, supportive and in-tune with their learning, their challenges and their interests.

Fa'atauaina o filifiliga a'oa'o a matua: Parents making decisions about learning

Able to make own decisions

Another benefit of home learning that was mentioned in many responses was the opportunity for learners and parents to **decide at least some of the content of learning**. Parents were pleased that their children could pursue their passions. Parents also feel more in control of the how of learning and several mentioned the **benefits of being able to flexibly schedule learning** with their children. At least some of this learning involved the transmission of cultural practices and values as exemplified in the first quote.

Prioritising what learning is important for our whānau.

The flexibility of the schedule and the ability to choose what we will do.

It is quiet, the children can focus on their learning and exercise some agency around what they do and when.

Curriculum can be tailored to children

The learning can be flexible in terms of timing and content. They can place greater emphasis on creativity, values, and life skills such as cooking, cultivation, and car mechanics – learning in the kitchen, garden, and garage amongst other places. Parents can focus on what they perceive to be their childrens' strengths and weaknesses. They also noted how there were increased opportunities for their children to self manage their learning.

I can schedule classes as I like, concentrating them on my childrens' weaknesses or strengths. I teach them budgeting, cooking, changing a car tyre, servicing a car, exercising, reading, spelling, math, piano, singing, and program structure.

This is a great opportunity for me to use this time to educate my children in life skills.

[My] 12yr old loves being independent and setting her own schedule for the day.

Learning from home gives the children an opportunity to take responsibility for their learning.

Identifying subjects that they are passionate about. Explore problem solving techniques with them. Spending time with them.

O le si'osi'omaga o le aiga: The home environment

Safe and peaceful

Parents expressed a range of views about why simply being at home was beneficial for learning and for well-being. The responses made clear that parents see **home as a safe place**. It is a place where their children are comfortable and protected. Home was described as being quiet and peaceful, with **few distractions** and **no need to rush**.

I like that they can do it in the comforts and warmth of home, and they are safe.

No distractions, gets it done because I'm looking in on her.

They take their time to study; not rushing to their next class.

My son[s] have said it's easier to learn in peace and quiet at home than to learn in the classroom when it's noisy.

Cultural and spiritual beliefs

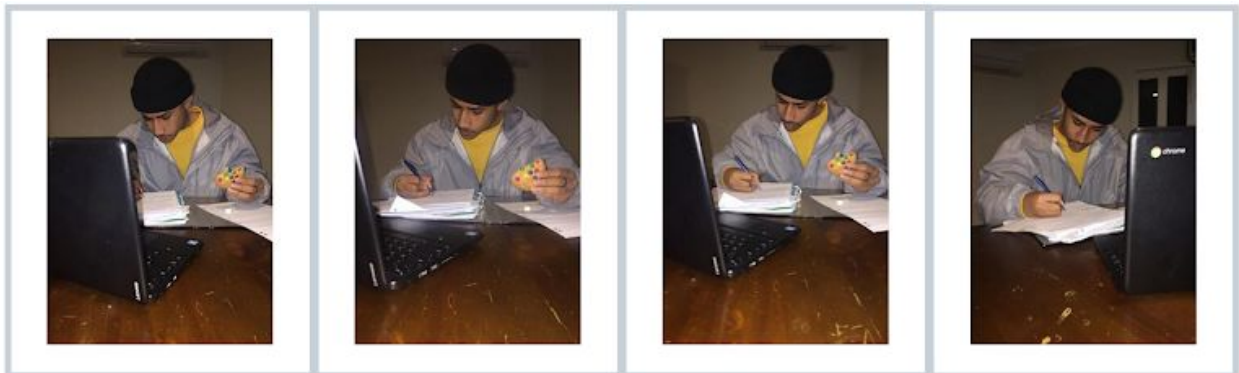
Some parents reported that they could create a congruence with cultural and **spiritual values** when supporting school-led learning at home. At home, parents can teach values such as **respect**, share family and **cultural practices**, strengthen existing family relationships and forge new ones.

Home environment is great - comfortable, culturally/spiritually responsive/supportive. With good structure in place and routines the children seem to enjoy their learning. There is a good balance there that they enjoy [and they are] not bombarded with too many guidelines. They seem to listen well as they are familiar with the tone of our voices at home.

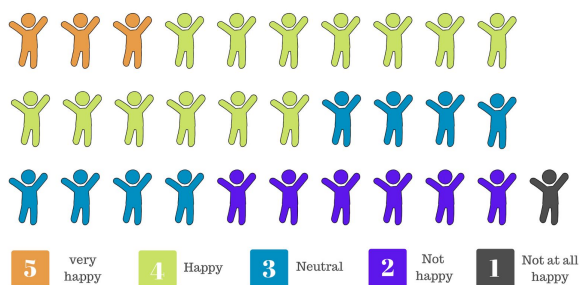
Provision of resources and support

A few parents made quite detailed positive comments about the support they had from their childrens' schools. The comments suggested that **existing, positive processes and relationships** had continued during the early phases of home learning and this was welcomed.

I'm really impressed at how quickly the schools have managed to get work together for the kids.
She is very diligent so gets on with her mahi & her kaiako is in regular touch. Plus I have a good relationship with her kaiako, so can raise any concerns with her.



Overall happiness



Parents of Pasifika students were asked how happy they were with how school-led learning at home was working for them and their children. There were 31 responses. Using a 5-star rating where 1 was **not at all happy** and 5 was **very happy**, the weighted average was **3.35**. 23% of parents gave 1 or 2 stars, 26% 3 stars and 51% 4 or 5 stars.

An interesting comparison

- 3% of parents of Pasifika students gave 1 star, compared with 10% of parents of Māori students.
- 10% of parents of Pasifika students gave 5 stars, compared with 19% of parents of Māori students.

Affirmation of identity, language and culture



Parents of Pasifika students were asked how well the school-led programme and content affirmed the identity, language and culture of their children. There were 31 responses. Using a 5-star rating where 1 was **not at all well** and 5 was **very well**, the weighted average was **2.61**. 50% of parents gave 1 or 2 stars, 19% gave 3 stars and 32% gave 4 or 5 stars.

Some interesting comparisons

- 29% of parents of Pasifika students gave 1 star, compared with 21% of parents of Māori students.
- 7% of parents of Pasifika students gave 5 stars, compared with 21% of parents of Māori students.

Concerns identified by parents



“I get stressed trying to work with them and feel they are not getting the best they can from this.”

There were thirty-two responses by parents of Pasifika primary and secondary school students detailing the concerns about school-led learning at home during week 1 of term 2, 2020. The responses were grouped into three themes and eight sub-themes. The first theme is Manaoga o tamaiti - concerns for children as learners which includes three sub-themes: Lack of social interaction away from school; distractions with study at home; and the risk children will not achieve qualifications. The second theme is Fa’atauaina ole lagolago a matua i aoga ale fanau - parents stressed about supporting their childrens’ learning, which is made up of two sub-themes: stress about having the subject knowledge to support learning; and stress about having the time, energy and emotional capacity to support learning. The third theme is Fesiligia aoga ma a latou sini fa’amoemoe mo fanau fa’atasi ai ma auala a’oa’o - concerns about school expectations and the learning design, which has three sub-themes: lack of guidance about expectations; inadequate curriculum; and equitable access to learning. Each of these themes and subthemes are presented in more detail below with supporting quotes.

Manaoga o tamaiti: Concerns for children			Fa’atauaina ole lagolago a matua i aoga ale fanau: Parents stressed about supporting learning		Fesiligia aoga ma a latou sini fa’amoemoe mo fanau fa’atasi ai ma auala a’oa’o: Concerns about school expectations and the learning design		
Lack of social interaction	Distractions with study at home	Risk children will not achieve qualifications	Stress about not having the subject knowledge	Not having time, energy and emotion capacity to support learning	Lack of guidance about expectations	Inadequate curriculum	Equitable access to learning

Manaoga mo tamaiti: Concerns for children

Lack of social interaction away from school

More than ten parents made direct reference to the **lack of social interaction with peers**. This was mentioned in terms of casual connections like hanging out with friends, and also in terms of peer support for learning and for mental health. Some parents also thought that home learning was not sufficiently challenging for their children, that they were quickly getting comfortable with the reduced expectations and that returning to school would, therefore, present challenges

My children learn from social interaction too and it's great for their mental health.

Lack of social connection at school; distance from teachers; loneliness and isolation.

No social interaction, loves going out with mates.

I feel the boys are becoming very comfortable being at home

Distractions with study at home

Some parents expressed concern about their children being distracted while at home and one linked that to the lack of engagement in the work that schools had provided.

Distractions of tv, [video] games, phone.

The distractions if the learning opportunities are not engaging or personalised. My kids will end up talking with their friends in the chat features or on their phones.

That my children are too young and get distracted easily.

Risk children will not achieve qualifications

Parents have concerns about how older students will prepare and, potentially, be assessed for national qualifications.

Just how my two bigger ones in yr 11 are going to get on with their NCEAs.

I worry more for my yr 11 student opposed to my year 9 student having NCEA coming up.

Devices not sent out yet so already behind in NCEA learning.

Fa'atauaina ole lagolago a matua i aoga ale fanau: Parents stressed about supporting their children's learning

Stress about having the subject knowledge to support learning

Many parents explained that they did not understand the learning that their children were engaged in and so did not feel able to support them. The issue grows when children are older, are involved in or about to be involved in study for qualifications and when children have special learning needs. It is worth noting that "stress" was a word that some parents used to describe their concerns. They expressed a clear desire to support their children and their concern about their ability to do so could have an impact on their mental health.

For my year 9 student I can help him more easily than my year 11. I feel his study needs more resources and his requirements are quite high.

I'm not doing as good a job as their teachers. Scared I may be the reason they MAY get behind in their learning.

Stress about having the time, energy, and emotional capacity to support learning

Stress related to not having the time, energy, or emotional capacity to support learning was mentioned even more than having the subject knowledge to support learning. What connected several comments was a feeling of guilt and/or inadequacy. Parents appeared to be harsh critics of their capacity to support their children even while they were explaining the challenges of supporting children across ages and stages of learning and dealing with their own work commitments. Parents also mentioned feeling apprehensive about checking with their children about how their learning is going.

My kids have differing levels of digital literacy and ability to manage themselves which has proved a challenge with dad working (essential worker) and mum working from home.

That I'm not paying enough attention (I have a 2mos old) that she has 3 adults all telling her what she is doing wrong. That she sees my frustration and takes it personally. She keeps referring to herself as stupid when she's being corrected and I hope that narrative hasn't come from me.

It's tough, and for experts to say don't worry, makes me think I am failing. She should be learning, I wish schools were open.

We have 3 children all different ages and at times I struggle giving enough attention to the oldest child because my time is taken up ... by the primary aged kids who require so much ... attention.

While the younger ones show me what they have to do the older ones don't want to share so I'm apprehensive about their effort.

Fesiligia aoga ma a latou sini fa'amoemoe mo fanau fa'atasi ai ma auala a'oa'o: Concerns about school expectations and the learning design

Lack of guidance about expectations

Parents talked about the **lack of clarity** about how much (e.g., time, number of tasks) and when (e.g., flexibly or following a timetable or routine) learning should happen. Some students at the same schools were being given different advice by different teachers. Even where **expectations** were clear, parents voiced a lack of confidence that the learning was differentiated or personalised or that teachers would be able to evaluate the impact of the learning they had set. Some parents noted that tasks had been set with little or no explanation. Online meetings on platforms such as Zoom or Google Meet promise fewer opportunities for feedback from the students to their teachers in the form of questions and discussion than what might be possible in the classroom.

The expectations aren't clear for the kids because there's too much variance.

A lot of tasks given but not much contact to talk over how to do them.

How will the teachers check in that what they are designing is working?

Zoom is mostly one-sided and no room to negotiate, think about, discuss fully.

Inadequate curriculum

A number of comments focused on the inadequacy of the curriculum. Some parents pointed out the **lack of Pasifika cultural content or context** in the learning. Others suggested that the school-led home learning curriculum did not teach creativity, and too much screen time had an impact on physical activity. Parents also reported they felt learning was not differentiated and was not meeting the needs of learners with **special educational needs**.

The high school aged child is on the spectrum so his learning should look differently... I am not sure how the online learning platform has considered his level of a) comprehension b) learning needs.

I didn't realise some of the anxieties my children had about their own learning with the new way of learning at home, much of it is unfamiliar and presented differently without the scaffolding and levels of differentiation available.

Made me reflect that almost zero content from primary school was culturally contextualised. A lot of the literacy content is very Americanised. The only Samoan content I have seen/heard is talofa lava from the principal's greeting and the books I got from my friends at the Pasefika Teacher's Network but that wasn't through the school.

Having that healthy mix of lifestyles and being at the right stage developmentally.

Los[t] the connection with a balanced curriculum.

They miss a lot of classes like PE and sports which are good for them.

I don't like the reliance on screen time. If my children spend too much time looking at screens it affects their behaviour.

Too much screen time. Not enough exercise or fresh air.

Equitable access to learning

The **lack of suitable or sufficient devices** on which students could engage in learning, access to reliable and affordable internet and the related **lack of paper based resources** was also mentioned frequently. Finally, the quality and suitability of the quickly established TV programmes was questioned by one respondent.

No computer for online work.

No[t] all have their own device, so when they need to go only for hangout meet it's a bit tricky.

Devices not sent out yet so already behind in ncea learning.

Had to sign up to a super expensive deal so my main concern is the internet cost.

I don't think that my daughter's (who is 10 years old) TV learning program is very good. It's more for younger kids. So I pretty much find things for her to do. I think it could be organised better for the different younger ages.

Suggested improvements



“I think flexibility is key. Learning doesn't have to be traditional. You can learn fractions while baking. You can learn about nature from exploring your garden....Structure doesn't work at home for our child. It has to be interactive and hands on. It's got to work for everyone and as long as we have calm at home, we will have minds that can learn!”

There were thirty-two responses by parents of Pasifika primary and secondary school students identifying improvements that could be made to school-led learning at home during week 1 of term 2, 2020. Three respondents said they were satisfied with what had been provided and did not offer any improvement suggestions. The remaining responses related largely to *tulaga fa'aleleia i aoga* - school related improvements (four themes) and one *tulaga fa'aleleia i aiga* - home related improvement. The school related themes were: Access to needed technology and resources, Needing more support to facilitate learning as the school wants it to happen, Improved communication and clarity about expectations, and lastly, Learning design. The last theme was about the environment at home, wanting it to be calmer and more peaceful. Each of these themes and subthemes are presented in more detail below with supporting quotations.

Tulaga fa'aleleia i aoga: School related improvements							Tulaga fa'aleleia i aiga: home related improvements
Access to technology and resources	Need more support to facilitate learning	Improved communication and clarity about expectations	Increase structure and scheduling of learning	Learning design			Calm and peaceful environment
				Increase social interactions with peers	More flexibility for families	Content that aligns with children's interests	

It is interesting to note that 100% of these parents suggested improvements, while just under 60% of the parents of Māori students suggested improvements.

Access to technology and resources

A number of parents wanted their children to have **better (or any) access to technology**. In the absence of those, they wanted paper based alternative resources for learning. Two parents mentioned that they were unable to print material as the teacher had directed due to not having printers at home.

We don't have all the resources like a printer or stationary wish I was more prepared for the situation at home.

Need better, cheaper internet access.

The teacher directs parents to print off stuff to support but we don't have a printer at home and I don't think many in my community do.

Need more support to facilitate learning as the schools wants it to happen

Several parents made clear requests for more support and training in their new role as teachers. They wanted to feel **adequately resourced and prepared** to help their children with learning. This included more direct communication from teachers about expectations for their children. The desire for more support connected with the concerns expressed in response to the earlier question in that parents wanted to do the best job they could but were not clear how to do so.

Training offered for the parents caregivers at home to support how the learning can be done and to have the support network to be able to pitch scenarios to a teacher in order to best support. i.e. my child is struggling with learning a math pattern, how can I best support?

Need more constructive support from schools and close monitoring of learning at home.

It would be nice if the teachers also get a hold of parents through emails, to let parents know about what is expected from their children.

Improved communication and clarity about expectations

Parents want the instructions about the expectations for school-led learning at home to be **clearer** and in some cases mentioned that the clarity needed to be about learning intentions and **success criteria**, not just about how to complete tasks.

Want things to be explicit about the learning.

More clarity about what is expected of parents. I've noticed on social media that many parents are struggling to figure what they should be doing.

Less busy work and more purposeful/explicit learning by helping the kids to understand why their teachers are asking them to do something.

Learning design

Learning design included increasing the amount of social interactions with peers, more flexibility for families, and content that aligns with children's interests.

Following on from their concerns that their children were missing out on social time with their friends, some parents asked for more **opportunities for children to interact** with their classmates through different video-conferencing platforms.

Making activities accessible online with the format so that navigation is simple. Some schools have sites with so many links, the kids and parents get lost.

A suggested timetable or way to break up learning into edible chunks would have been good so that it comes from the "teacher" not from me.

Designing a structured program for each day/set up workable routines that contribute to effective learning.

More Zoom/Skype type interaction with their classmates.

Parents also said school-led learning at home would be improved if schools and teachers were more **flexible** due to parents working from home and/or trying to support a number of children of different ages and needs. Finally, parents asked for more **balance** in the learning so that it includes creative and fun learning that affords them the opportunity to to pursue their own interests and strengths. Including **creative learning** was seen by parents as a way of maintaining engagement and motivation for their children.

Content that is fun, tailored for children. Singing and dancing, more fun.

Less busy work and more purposeful/explicit learning

Help the kids to understand why their teachers are asking them to do something.

More interesting resources at her achievement level not at her age level.

The importance of dance and creativity - away from the focus on just literacy and numeracy. Want the children to be engaged and happy.

I think learning the talent of dancing or singing or things like that would make it more fun for the kids.

Parents also noted that the wide range of sites and links meant they and their children were getting lost. Some asked for weekly or daily programmes or **timetables** for learning.

Tulaga fa'aleleia i aiga: Home related improvements

Environment can be calmer and more peaceful

This theme is a home related improvement that parents identified would be beneficial for their children's school-led learning at home if it could be addressed. This included **reducing distractions** and maintaining **peace**, calm and quiet.

We don't have a quiet space where she can do her study so she would have more likely stuck to a program that was externally mandated than to one I've tried to put together that works around the distractions at home.

Discussion

The sayings from three Pasifika languages - 'Tu'utu'u le upega ile loloto – cast the net into deeper waters' (Samoan), 'Na bula ni dua gone sa vaka edua na ibe ka dau tali' – A child's life is like a mat where everyone weaves a strand' (Fijian) and Fofola e fala kae talanoa e kainga - spread the mat so that we can talk (Tongan), echo the vitality of learning and education for Pasifika students in Aotearoa New Zealand. They raise the urgency and put forward a lu'i (challenge) for school leaders, teachers, and educators as well as Pasifika families and communities to work collaboratively and effectively to provide support to lift the engagement, achievement, and success of Pasifika learners in schools.

Pasifika learners over the years have been characterised (by the mainstream) as deficient learners. This is reflected in words and phrases commonly used in research literature and education reviews and reports such as: 'underachievement', 'disengagement', 'the bottom stream', 'achievement tail', 'priority learners', 'kids at risk', 'students lagging behind', and 'achievement disparity' (Harris, 2008; Taleni, 2017). Educational underachievement among Pasifika students contributes to poverty through unemployment and low paid jobs, which then influences poor health and wellbeing alongside poverty and hardship.

The challenge for all educators who are working on Pasifika achievement kaupapa is to continue to step up in providing support for Pasifika students to raise their levels of achievement and success. The closure of schools as a result of the Covid-19 situation provides an opportunity to hear the voices of parents and families sharing and reflecting on their children's experiences of school-led learning from home. This information has been gathered right at the beginning of the school-led learning from home experience. The data and the report provide critical information about how education might look, both now, when learning is mostly at home, and in the future when it is mostly at school. It suggests effective practices and approaches to learning that schools need to implement to raise the engagement and achievement of Pasifika learners. It is imperative that the voices of our Pasifika families and community are acknowledged and valued. Valuing means that the messages from those voices are put into practice by schools to help to build the capacity and capability of the 'community of learners' to be culturally responsive to the needs and aspirations of all Pasifika learners and raise their levels of achievement and success.

Questions to consider from Pasifika findings



The following questions have been developed to encourage reflection and support future planning. The questions are based on what parents of Pasifika students have shared in the survey and are designed to help schools better meet the needs of parents as communicated in this research.

These questions are not exhaustive. In addition to these questions, we invite teachers, schools, and education decision-makers to discuss the findings of this report with their own Pasifika parents and communities to see how well and in what ways they align, and to explore their own experiences of school-led learning at home.

The first set of questions relate to the here and now while the majority of learning is taking place at home. The second set is longer term. They relate to addressing inequities in education by retaining and building on the best of what the school led-learning at home situation has afforded us. How can system leaders, school leaders, and teachers ensure that happens?

Questions to ask now

1. How can your kura/school design learning to help Pasifika students feel engaged and motivated to engage in learning, despite being physically distanced from their friends?
2. How might your kura/school deal with the technology inequities that were raised by the Pasifika parents?
3. What is a fair and realistic level of Pasifika parent input that your school might expect from parents who are overseeing learning in the home? How do kura/schools, teachers and parents decide this?
4. What might your kura/school do differently to reduce Pasifika parents' anxiety about their children falling behind in their learning?
5. How will your kura/school make sense of the constructive feedback from Pasifika parents and what steps could you take to act?
6. How might your kura/school honour the spiritual and cultural beliefs of Pasifika parents and students when learning takes place both online and at school?

Longer-term questions

7. How has the current situation provided you with insights into your own assumptions about what constitutes educational success for Pasifika students?
8. Parents mentioned that a calm and peaceful learning environment for Pasifika students is beneficial. How might your kura/school take this into consideration when designing learning?
9. What support might Pasifika students and parents need to help them adjust back into the structure and routines of regular schooling?
10. What changes might your kura/school need to make to structures and routines to incorporate the way that Pasifika parents value flexibility around learning?

Kupu whakatepe | Upu fa'ai'u | Final comments

Overall, for both sets of parents there seems to be tension between **enjoying the freedom** provided by the current situation and **anxiety about children falling behind**. It seems some parents are enjoying the freedom to expand both *what* is learnt and the flexibility of *how and when* learning happens but some are worried about how children will adapt back to the structures and routines and expectations of school.

There also seems to be a tension between what some **schools are expecting** and what is **realistically manageable**. This is especially an issue when parents are working from home, there are children of different ages in the home all working on different programmes, and when there are limitations of physical space or internet accessibility.

Another tension noted is that while the current situation potentially allows **relationships within whānau** to be strengthened there are also concerns about children missing out on their **relationships with friends**.

The notion that learning is a linear process with predictable rates of progression was prevalent in the responses gathered. This is a view of learning that has traditionally been valued in schooling (and is deeply embedded in many school practices). In this context it seems to be causing anxiety for some parents. There were concerns that children were falling behind, and/or that the parents felt inadequate to help. Another way of thinking about progress, though, is to consider a child's ability to *use* what they know in a range of different contexts. As discussed in the introduction to this paper, this view of learning is promoted in *The New Zealand Curriculum (2007)*, *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa (2008a)*, and *Te Aho Matua o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori (1994)*.

If this view of learning was foregrounded, could it help educators design a curriculum that draws on the strengths of whānau-based learning and at the same time make school-led learning at home more manageable for whānau? Could such an approach capitalise on the opportunities for intergenerational learning that are evident in some of the responses?

Many respondents commented that they valued the insights school-led learning at home was providing into students' learning and progress. This raised questions for us about the strength and nature of existing relationships between schools and whānau. Given the positive links between whānau engagement with schools and educational achievement, this would seem to be a fruitful area to explore further.

Perhaps, at the moment it is an unrealistic expectation for parents and schools to work together more collaboratively but it seems a worthwhile goal to be aiming for in the longer term. Finding ways of developing such partnerships and valuing the learning that happens across the boundaries between homes and schools, seems an important step in expanding our view of what counts as quality education, making schooling more equitable, and in honouring the Tiriti o Waitangi. Our hope is that by sharing the voices of parents of Pasifika and Māori students, this paper might be a small step on the journey towards developing an education system that better meets the needs of all students.

In 2011 Leadbeater wrote:

One way to see the future of innovation in education is to see the task as creating a social movement of professionals, politicians, parents and children who are bound by a broadly shared ideology of learning as an engaged and participative activity which in turn gives rise to new practices, platforms and organisations which embody this shared practice and eventually dislodge an entrenched approach.

Perhaps, the extraordinary times we are now in have the potential to be the catalyst for this change.

Arohanui and alofa atu,
Melanie, Ally, Brenda, Kerry, Jane, Tifulasi and Richard

Ngā tohutoro | Upu Fa'amaumau | References

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