

CHAPTER FIVE

Pastoral Care

Many Maori children begin their schooling with six tremendous disadvantages.

- 1 They are pre-readers and pre-numerate, with little knowledge of either numbers or letters.
- 2 They do not have the extensive oral histories, from Maui, the Grimm brothers or elsewhere, that spark the imaginations of other three- to seven-year-olds.
- 3 They do not understand the life-determining importance of education, and indeed often begin school regarding it as a waste of time or as something like jail.
- 4 They are unable to sit still or to concentrate for long enough to learn, so much potential teaching time, for all students in the class, is wasted.
- 5 Their schooling is not supported by their home life. At home there are no books, and there is no encouragement and no reinforcement of learning.
- 6 They live in a very small world, one that often ends at the dairy down the road.

These six disadvantages are straightforward and easily understood by teachers. But there is a seventh, and connected, area of disadvantage.

Many Maori children begin school as damaged goods. They are not healthy.

Their health problems may be physical and easily understood by teachers as barriers to learning. The classic example is reduced hearing from untreated ear infections.

Their health problems may be physical, recognised by teachers, and the cause of reduced teacher attention with a subsequent reduction in achievement. Examples are nits, scabies, persistent coughs and running sores. Maori children may be excluded from class because of these, eliminating any opportunity to learn on that day.

Their health problems may be mental and exacerbated by their experiences at school. Maori seven-year-olds who are quick to anger, are verbally abusive, are violent, consistently disobey obstructions or have an attitude are managed as discipline problems. They fall within the Education Act 1989 criteria for standing down, excluding or suspending and this is what schools do, some much more than others.

There is a long and commendable tradition whereby a large number of teachers are extraordinarily generous to Maori kids whom they recognise as disadvantaged but deserving. We cannot thank these teachers enough. At one extreme are those who let Maori kids come and live with them and their families for periods from a night to several years. But there are all manner of other acts of kindness, including the few words of encouragement that are treasured for a lifetime, and the purchase of footy boots or the transport to and from Saturday sports. Teachers and sports clubs have done more to benefit Maori kids with alcoholic, violent, and abusive parents than the legions of social workers, counsellors and bureaucrats.

However, all this kindness and generosity is not enough. It does not compensate for the family and socio-economic disadvantage that is compounded by the systematic abuse many Maori suffer in the education system and which is now evident in teenage suicide, teenage crime, teenage pregnancy and so on.

The key question we wish to address in this chapter is this: how can the education system turn the life of a disadvantaged and undeserving Maori

kid around? For example, what can an education facility do for the little turd who responds to being offered a drink and a feed by taking the next day off school and climbing through the window of his benefactor to rip the house off? The final three chapters will propose and practice Maori solutions to Maori under-achievement in education.

For the Pakeha, pastoral care is something separate from the classroom. Pastoral care is something the dean or guidance counsellor does, or perhaps the teacher does but outside of the classroom. We use the term 'pastoral care' to describe those activities performed by a school or by staff within the school that aim to remove barriers to learning caused by socio-economic deprivation or problems at home. Pastoral care may involve reporting suspected child abuse to the authorities, both because this is believed to be the right thing to do and because of the expectation that a child suffering from ongoing abuse or neglect is not ready to learn. Pastoral care may involve referral of a child to a social worker or counsellor.

This is a very Pakeha idea of pastoral care as something distinct from the core business of a school. The need for pastoral care is a deficit in the child, something beyond the training and skills of the classroom teacher. For us, pastoral care is not about diagnosis and referral. It is about the school's engagement at three levels – with itself, with the whanau and with the student.

Four Counties-Manukau Maori teenagers committed suicide in 2004. All four lived in Papakura, were members of our community and were patients of our medical practice. All four had experienced a destructive cycle of truancy, forcible return to school, continued abuse by teachers and the school, misbehaviour, exclusion, truancy and so on.

By the end of 2004, and after considerable reflection on these suicides and on the interactions between young people, their schools, and their families we had developed a 'waka' model that informed our vision of the ecology of our proposed designated character school and incorporated our understanding of the causes of the outbreak of Maori teenage suicide Papakura was experiencing. This model that was to guide our development of a suicide-prevention strategy represented children as ships and life as

an ocean voyage. In this model the engines represent the child's internal strengths and life skills. The crew represents the child's support network of people, and the maintenance the local micro-environment within which that child operates. The cargo is the load (including stressors) that child carries, and we think of the waters as the consequences of the child's actions.

Some of these ships are luxury super-yachts, well maintained with powerful engines and big crews, and they travel over calm seas. Their voyage is an endless summer. Our kids are not like that.

Our kids are the poorly maintained cargo ships, heavily laden, inadequately crewed and with damaged engines. They have to travel the long way, close to rocky shores and in stormy waters. They are always in danger of running onto rocks and sinking. These poorly maintained and over-laden coastal traders are the ships least able to avoid, but most likely to meet, the rocks and storms that might sink them.

All four teenagers who committed suicide in 2004 had exhibited problem behaviours at school. All had been referred to the truancy service and were well behind academically. The schools were increasing the load these young people were carrying. They were damaging the teenagers psychologically. They were abusing these young people. The youth were responding in predictable ways, with unacceptable behaviour, non-performance and truancy, which in turn had predictable stormy consequences. When the rocks appeared, these under-crewed but heavily laden ships with limited engine power were unable to avoid running onto them and sinking.

This waka model is a quite different way of looking at non-achieving children from the deficit model used by Pakeha schools, which sees schools as the perfect round holes into which the square peg must be reworked to fit. If reworking is not possible, then a bit of bashing; through sarcasm, punishment, verbal abuse or whatever, is in order. The waka model assesses the child's circumstances and needs and the school uses its power to adapt to meet these. In the deficit model the school abuses its power by attempting to make the child fit, often damaging him or her in the process, and discarding the student if the attempt fails.

The underachieving child whose behaviour is unacceptable to a school has been a recognised problem in education for as long as there have been schools. How schools and the wider education system should respond to learners whose behaviour is difficult, challenging both teachers and the school, is a topic of ongoing controversy among educationalists. There are two camps, corresponding to two paradigms.

The first of these assumes that the problem is located entirely within the child. In this 'functional limitation' model, the role of teachers and schools is to identify defective children who are then assessed by specialists, diagnosed, and managed within or outside the school system. This remains the dominant model in New Zealand education. Children who enter school unable to sit still for long, who often do not obey instructions, who confront their peers physically, are not cowed by a mildly raised voice or disapproving tone and do not have any understanding of letters or numbers are on a path to diagnosis and exclusion. In many primary schools these children never catch up academically, their behaviour deteriorates and their attendance becomes erratic. These children are at risk of being diagnosed as having Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) with the consequent prescription of Ritalin.

The principal Youth Court judge, Andrew Becroft, has also identified them as having conduct disorder, in some cases severe conduct disorder. On 29 June 2005 the *Dominion Post* quoted him as saying that about half of the 5000 young people a year before the Youth Court were likely to have some form of conduct disorder: 'They are human time bombs – tomorrow's violent offenders.' He said that children with the disorder were very naughty at pre-school – telling lies and being violent and difficult. By primary school they were committing property offences; by ten they were smoking cannabis; by intermediate school they were violent; and by their early teens they had usually dropped out of school.

We have identified these children as at risk of abuse from teachers, principals, and schools, and at risk of teenage suicide after this abuse.

The second model, known as the 'ecological model', contends that student behaviour is what you get when a student is placed in a particular context. According to this paradigm, student behaviour does not depend

solely on factors intrinsic to the student. Nor does it depend just on the student plus social events in his or her life. It also depends on the teacher, the classroom, the school, the rules and expectations, and all the other features that make up the school environment for that student.

This second model is much more demanding of teachers, principals, and schools. It suggests that the causes of difficult or challenging behaviour may lie outside the student and within the school. Not surprisingly, many teachers prefer the functional deficit model to the ecological one.

Of course, there is truth in both models for Maori children, with neither providing the whole answer. Most Maori children do not begin school ready to learn. They have not experienced high-quality early childhood education so not only do they not know their letters or numbers but also they are not used to the routines and requirements of the classroom. There are a number of requirements including sitting still, listening when others are talking, obeying the teacher's instructions and staying on-task till the task is finished. Many Maori students bring a completely different set of life experiences to the classroom from those of the teacher, and it can be impossible to acknowledge these and to respect rather than judge them. And many Maori children have health problems, both physical and mental. These things may all be seen as functional deficits.

There are also real ecological problems that may quickly transform an eager if unruly learner to an angry, sullen, foul-mouthed, violent and disruptive feature of classroom life. Teachers can do it if the Maori kid feels disliked, picked on, got at, ridiculed or unfairly treated: Maori kids might look and act tough but they are kids, and often very sensitive kids. Rules can do it, if they are perceived as unfair or pointless. Management and support staff can do it by giving the impression that the Maori kid is a piece of dung on the carpet. And, of course, other kids can do it in so many ways.

The functional deficit model has been around in one form or another for as long as there have been schools. Because some children disrupted the learning of others, and because the educational needs of these challenging children could not be met in a mainstream school, these children were educated separately, either in classes of similar children within a school

or by transferring them to a specialist, often residential, facility.

The ecological model became the bandwagon for educationalists who did not believe that difficult children should be stigmatised through removal from mainstream education. They argued that mainstream schools needed to change their focus from group instruction, all too often concentrated on the 'average' student and not meeting the needs of others, to a focus on meeting the wide range of learning needs in the classroom. The mainstreamers with their adopted ecological model have won. The ecological model provided bureaucrats with a plausible theory and credible academic support to use as excuses to save money by closing down specialist facilities. Schools became self-governing with the passing of the Education Act 1989 and the problem of difficult students was passed to school boards.

The mainstreamers' victory has been a disaster for Maori. The long brown tail of educational under-achievement in New Zealand is a legacy of their victory.

The reason why the combination of mainstreamers and the ecological model have been a disaster for Maori is because of a category mistake made by the mainstreamers. When they talk about children with 'special educational needs', they are talking about blind kids, deaf kids, kids in wheelchairs, kids with chromosomal abnormalities, kids with epilepsy, autistic kids and kids who are not behaving well. No kidding. The key difference here is that the child with a genuine disability – for example, the blind kid and others – will always be blind no matter where he or she goes to school. The argument for mainstream education of this child is based on the benefits to the child of learning how to cope in a world of sighted people, and on the lifelong benefits that accrue, over time, to sighted children from daily contact with a blind peer.

The cause of difficult behaviour in some students, those with autism, Tourette's syndrome or certain chromosomal deletions, for example, is truly intrinsic. They have a genuine disability. However, many difficult students (children who do not behave properly or who do not learn quickly) behave appropriately and learn quickly in non-school settings

or at a different school. The majority of these difficult students are Maori, and they are difficult for two reasons – their schools are not up to scratch, and the classroom exposes their socio-economic and cultural disadvantage.

Maori live in poor parts of town, near other Maori, and the local schools they tend to enrol in are more likely to be inferior schools. The reasons for this are clear. The schools get a certain reputation so those teachers able to pick and choose from job offers go elsewhere. Many of those who do accept teaching positions leave as soon as a better job comes along, while many who stay lose enthusiasm and burn out. Similar comments apply to principals.

The board of trustees, which has a majority of parent representatives, is elected from a shallow pool of talent. The typical successful candidate in a school with lots of Maori students is much more likely to have written a campaign blurb something like 'My name is Sally. I have a son, Tony in Room 10 and a daughter, Julie in Room 5. Last year I helped with the school gala by . . .' than 'Peter Howell-Chatfield is a senior commercial partner in Bellamy, Chatfield and Co., a leading law firm founded by his grandfather in 1924. Peter is an old boy of the school, a director of several public companies, and has been appointed by the respective shareholding Ministers to the boards of . . .' One of these two people has many of the skills required to govern a modern school. The other has no idea and will be led around by the principal, domineering fellow trustees and the School Trustees Association.

Schools with a high proportion of Maori students have a limited ability to raise funds from parents and so are often inadequately resourced. This is compounded by the inferior resource management skills of their principals and boards. In the worst cases, schools have a full house – large numbers of children who do not behave properly or who do not learn quickly, a poor principal, a high staff turnover, an incompetent board and few educational resources. These schools have a functional deficit – they just cannot meet the educational needs of the majority of students enrolled with them. It is simply fanciful of the Ministry of Education to pretend that if it allocates a part-time Resource Teacher Learning and

Behaviour (RTLb), the capacity of such a globally incompetent school will increase. These are the very schools where the RTLb is likely to be least well used – directed and confined to individual students rather than to school-wide issues.

What happens in many mainstream schools, good and bad, is that the difficult students are excluded. The exclusion may be overt, as a disciplinary response to behaviour that is disruptive or threatening. Section 14(1) of the Education Act 1989 says:

The principal of a state school may stand-down or suspend a student if satisfied on reasonable grounds that –

- (a) The student's gross misconduct or continual disobedience is a harmful or dangerous example to other students at the school; or
- (b) Because of the student's behaviour, it is likely that the student, or other students at the school, will be seriously harmed if the student is not stood-down or suspended for an unspecified period.

The exclusion may be a matter of school policy, as at Papakura High School where Maori boys who are not achieving are placed in cabbage classes with students who cannot achieve. All expectations of achievement are lifted from these boys, and rules around their behaviour are relaxed so long as their troublesome behaviours do not reappear.

The exclusion may occur at teacher level, with difficult children being ignored. In extreme cases, children may be left to their own devices as long as they are not disruptive.

One mistake many educationalists make is in jumping from the observation that many children are excluded for the wrong reasons, i.e. when the school, the system or some component other than the student is at fault, to the conclusion that all students should be included. There is no logical connection between the observation and the conclusion. The empirical basis for this leap of conviction lies in the United Kingdom experience with special schools, which catered solely to children with special educational needs. In the 1970s and 1980s it was shown that the educational attainment of children enrolled in at least some of these schools was manifestly inadequate, with some children having gone

backwards since their enrolment. Worse, it was shown that a number of black children had been inappropriately placed in these schools.

The response to these findings from a number of practising teachers was to develop policies and ways of teaching that allowed many children who would otherwise have been shipped off to a special school to remain in the mainstream. Policymakers and funders chose to support the move towards integration rather than strengthening special schools (for example, the Warnock report pointed out that only 22 per cent of teachers in special schools had appropriate qualifications).

The integration movement had its roots in the black civil right movements of the 1950s and 1960s when leaders such as Martin Luther King contested the separatist policies of southern states. In the UK, with immigrants from the Caribbean, and in New Zealand with Maori, there was a flow-on effect, a belief that what had gone on before was wrong and that integration was a moral imperative.

What was wrong about the policies before and shortly after World War II was not that they were separatist, but that they were white policies imposed on brown or black people. Integration merely reformulated the same mistake. It was not until the 1990s that academic educationalists, drawing from the black civil rights movement and its intellectual descendants on the one hand, and New Right economic thought on the other, began to argue that Maori communities should be able to decide, in consultation with the Crown as funder and lawmaker, how the curriculum was delivered to their children. Although the language remained different, and although the speakers were very slow to realise that they were saying the same thing, the politics of self-determination had merged with the politics of parental choice.

It is quite possible for schools operating under a functional deficit model to damage some of the students in their care. These schools can be abusive. Pastoral care begins with schools looking inward to make sure that they are not making matters worse for Maori children.

There is general agreement that some practices of previous generations did not benefit all students. An example is the belief of one rector of

Otago Boys' High School that a bit of bullying was good for the boys: it hardened them up. Whatever the merits, if any, of this belief, it led to the suicide of at least one student. Every year there are court or disciplinary cases involving teachers who have had sexual intercourse with one or more pupils. Somewhat more frequently, teachers are found in possession of child pornography. We are not talking about this kind of abuse. Most adults have no trouble remembering a teacher who was particularly sarcastic. This in itself is not abuse, but the words become verbal abuse when they repeatedly target one or two children in a class. Verbal abuse coupled with petty meanness is a devastating combination. Teachers are in a position of power and when they abuse that power they abuse one or more of the children in their care.

It is also possible for inclusive schools to abuse some of their students. Almost inevitably, inclusive schools contain students who are different from the teacher, the principal or the norm. Abuse is a major, foreseeable, potential problem with inclusion and one that has received little attention from educationalists. Abuse can be subtle, but devastating over time all the same. 'How can you show that this child is physically, psychologically and emotionally safe?' is an obvious question to ask of schools, particularly schools with senior staff or boards that are not keen on enrolling children with special needs, including blind kids, kids in wheelchairs and slow-learner Maori kids with behaviour problems. However, the ERO does not ask it, perhaps partly because children with special needs are not anyone's responsibility. The involvement of RTLBs muddies the lines of accountability.

Many Maori children who are falling behind in their learning, exhibiting difficult behaviours at school and not attending school are the victims of child abuse by the school or some component of the school. There is no difficulty making this link when it involves parents. If a toddler is not reaching development milestones on time, screams or flinches when a parent approaches and reaches out for someone else, most health professionals would suspect child abuse. If a Maori boy is not reaching academic milestones on time, misbehaves at school and avoids school, what is this evidence of – a functional deficit in the boy or child

abuse by the school?

This is a serious question. In Papakura the answer is 'a functional deficit in the boy'. Yet when the boy is taken out of the school and placed in Te Kura o Kawepo, with no trained teachers, no stable premises, few educational resources and no funding, he is a keen learner and within six months has improved his reading age by two years and met the achievement criteria for his first mathematics unit standard. This indicates that the problem was in the school, not the boy, and is an empirical underpinning of our claim that abuse by Papakura schools is the common factor shared by the four teenage suicides that occurred in our community in 2004.

We are not saying that the school abuse of these young people was the sole cause of their suicide, or even that it was the main cause. As we wrote in *Maori Health*, 'Youth suicide in Maori is often the final act in a life characterised by social and economic disadvantage, alienation from the state school system, violence, drug and alcohol abuse and sexual activity. Youth suicide is often precipitated by a significant stress such as the breakdown of a relationship, the death of someone close or a negative interaction with the police, truancy service or courts.'

What we are saying is that school abuse of Maori youth can be significant, and is easily removed as a stressor, by leaving or changing school. Our key first step in suicide prevention was to remove Maori who were not achieving in Papakura schools and who were discipline or attendance problems for those schools. This removed some of their load and reduced the frequency of storms in their lives. This one action reduced the youth suicide rate in our community to zero in 2005. (At the same time, we know of two teenage Maori youth suicides in 2005 involving young people who had moved away from our community.)

Pastoral care involves more than a recognition that schools can be abusive and can exacerbate the barriers to learning caused by socio-economic deprivation or problems at home. Pastoral care describes those activities performed by a school or by staff within the school that aim to remove these barriers.

A second aspect of pastoral care, and one which recognises that students

cannot leave their baggage, including their family and in particular their family relationships and dynamics, at the school gates is to invite those relationships into the classroom. This is what we did with Te Kura o Kawepo in 2005.

Te Kura o Kawepo moved, in the space of a few weeks, from being a planned structured tutoring and resource provision service for six- to twelve-year-olds with home schooling exemptions (who had not been achieving at state schools, and who had also had discipline or attendance problems), to being an operating therapeutic community that used schooling as the therapeutic modality for a wider age range of students without home schooling exemptions but with the problems of non-achievement, truancy and unacceptable behaviour.

The primary aim of the kura was to establish a history of achievement in education for each of its students, because educational success is a well-established channel to calm waters. Secondary school students tended to float around the kura, sometimes sitting in on lessons, wandering in and out, and on the whole being mildly disruptive. After one term the younger children were relocated to other premises. The older children were left with two twentysomethings and a community worker, with lunch provided every day.

A complementary step was to involve whanau in the kura in such a way as to improve the ability of the ship's crew to take the ship where the captain wanted to go.

Finally, the kura itself was intended to be a nurturing environment for both its pupils and their families.

Te Kura o Kawepo became an initiative that used a school-type situation to engage children and their families in a way that was life-changing for all, and life-preserving for the children while meeting their educational needs. Adult family members of the majority of students attended the kura, as did a number of kaumatua. They helped in whatever way they could (for example, preparing lunch and cleaning up) and often just sat in on lessons.

Families were placed in challenging situations simply by being forced to interact in a confined space. For example, one twelve-year-old boy

was actively disliked by his Auntie E, and on several occasions she could not keep her hands off him, twisting his arm to direct him out of the room or hitting him. This lady was not his auntie by blood; she was the cousin of his mother's partner. Nor is the boy concerned a saint. His mother and her partner find him difficult to control at home. In 2004 he was stood down several times by his school principal. On the first occasion that Auntie E physically abused this boy at the kura he flew into a rage, kicking a hole in a wall. In his view he had not done what Auntie E thought he had done. On a later occasion, the kuia taking a te reo class sent a girl to summon this boy to class. He was in the next-door room playing on the computers and kicked the girl. Auntie E, having announced that she would like to punch the boy's head in, then said she had had enough, collected her children and left the premises vowing she would never be back. She and her children were back the next day.

In a state school there are automatic reactions to this kind of incident. Auntie E would have been disciplined for assaulting the boy and might well have lost her job, and the boy would have been stood down or suspended for assaulting the girl.

We do not see how this kind of 'safety first' response achieves anyone's long-term goals. Nor do we see how as Maori, as a people who say it's all about whanau, we can reject people in this Pakeha way. Our kuia was mistaken to place one child in a position of authority over another. We spoke to her about this. Not only is our kaupapa to have the kids working together, but these children, often victims and perpetrators of abuse, do not handle authority well, at least in part because they are not familiar with its proper use.

Auntie E is Auntie E. Sure, she is a bit of a drama queen and has a history, like many Maori, of offering to support a cause and then withdrawing in a huff because not everything has gone her way. But hey, she is great. She gets off her arse and helps. She makes a real contribution to our community and that counts for a hell of a lot. She is not a hitter when it comes to her own kids and she has known this boy, her cousin's stepchild, for a long time. She doesn't like the kid and has a 'spare the rod and spoil

the child' approach to him. For his part, the boy had made great progress in the first half of 2005. His schoolwork had improved enormously and so had his home life. He was able to interact positively, or at least neutrally, with his sisters. His parents had a washing machine for the first time in two years, and his mother was proud of his academic progress. He still had the problems of his anger and issues from his past that had Child, Youth and Family, if not the police, involved.

The way forward from this situation for us was for the boy's adult male mentor, a strong advocate for him, to take responsibility for controlling the boy's violence and teaching him strategies to manage his anger. He had to know there were rules and he had to develop the self-discipline to obey them – no hitting, no kicking holes in walls. We ensured that the kuia had an adult helper with each of her classes. This also helped her with her difficulties in managing classroom behaviour.

Aunty E presented us with a huge opportunity to consider how we could engage the adults in a 'professional development' seminar that would appear to be about managing classroom behaviour but which would in fact aim to teach the adults non-violent ways of managing their anger at home rather than directing it violently onto their children. The first part of this is for adults, including teachers, to learn to distinguish their reaction to a behaviour from the behaviour itself. 'Johnny has stolen' must be separated from 'I am angry because Johnny has stolen'. In the classroom, 'Johnny is disruptive' is a different problem from 'I am angry because Johnny is disruptive'. Too often parents and teachers treat these quite different problems as one, and think that both are dealt with by expressing their anger either verbally or physically, when merely venting anger does not solve either problem. It is, in fact, a third quite separate problem, that of poorly managed anger.

This approach to pastoral care which invites whanau into the classrooms on their own terms, assesses the problems in the interactions and attempts to correct these problems using the classroom group as the therapeutic tool is a very Maori way of doing things, closely related to the 'learning by exposure' and the immersion learning characteristic of Maori teaching and learning. The difference here is that it is the whanau member not the

student who has to learn new skills. It is an approach that has its crises and its explosions, although the frequency and severity of these depends on the skills of the kaumatua and rangatira within the group.

The third aspect of pastoral care is management of the individual learner. School can be a sanctuary for a kid whose parents drink to excess, fight to excess and beat him or her to excess. The curriculum can open up new worlds that remove the child from his one for long periods at a time. The sports field and the playground can be places of laughter and positive interaction. Most important of all, though, is the relationship with one or more teachers. Teachers, like doctors, can be therapeutic in and of themselves.

It is vitally important that the teacher like the child. It is equally important that the pupil respect the teacher. Many well-meaning teachers fall down at this hurdle. They are kind, loving, generous and taken advantage of outrageously by Maori kids who see them as suckers. Neither teacher nor child benefits from this relationship.

We believe there are twelve golden rules for managing Maori student behaviour and keeping Maori kids on task. Teachers who follow these will have the respect of their class, and their class will be prepared to take advantage of learning opportunities. The rules are:

1. Whether you like the kid or not, he or she must think you like him.

This is absolutely central and if a teacher is not capable of doing this, he or she should not be in front of a classroom.

2. Be consistent.

Maori children need routine and they need boundaries. They need to know that it truly is 'one law for all'. Maori children enjoy pushing at boundaries, and they like to know that the boundary is still there.

3. Be flexible with respect to time and content.

Some days, the entire class will seem to have left their brains at home. Other days they will all be switched on and will want to run with an idea or a set of problems past the time allocated, past the bell even. It is

a common occurrence for our students to refuse an invitation to have a break or a feed. They choose to finish their work first.

4. Respect the tapu of learning.

Learning is special, and it is best presented to Maori kids in a context of ritual (e.g. class quiet, books out) and in a way that makes learning achievable and inevitable but only after some effort. When Maori kids complain that a piece of work is hard, and they do, acknowledge this and remind them that learning is special. It is not meant to be easy.

5. Test and test and test, using tests as learning opportunities.

Maori are competitive and enjoy tests. We get much more diligent application if, for example, a set of mathematics problems is packaged as a test, and if students are allowed to co-operate in completing it. We also find that tests are often a good opportunity to introduce new work. For example, we introduced the idea of negative numbers as the last question in a test. The brightest students were the first to tell us they couldn't do these problems. We explained the concept to them. They explained it to most of the rest of the class, and we mopped up the stragglers.

6. Be prepared.

This is more than just an injunction to plan lessons. It is a reminder that lessons can go in unexpected directions, and it is important that the teacher is prepared to pursue the interests of the class.

7. Offer rewards and bribes to the class as a whole.

It is amazing what a class of Maori kids will do for a swim after lunch. We often make these rewards conditional on the class getting an average score and one or two individuals getting a certain score. Johnny, for example, has a problem learning spelling on his own. But if everyone having a swim means Johnny has to get thirty out of fifty in a spelling test, Johnny gets the company he needs.

8. Be clear and to the point.

This could have been written as, 'Never negotiate with terrorists.' Maori children are terrorists. They are sneaky and manipulative. If you leave a loophole they will exploit it. They find this funny.

9. Have high expectations of both behaviour and achievement.

Expectations set the ceiling on achievement. Teachers and schools get what they expect to get. Low expectations of Maori are an overt form of racism.

10. Encourage both competition and collaboration.

Maori are competitive people but they also love social interaction. Both can occur at the same time. Teams are one, but only one, way of doing this.

11. Expect gradual improvement.

A long journey is made of many small steps. We keep samples of every student's work, and the kids are amazed to look at how much progress they make over the course of a year.

12. Every day is a new start.

The rules and expectations are the same, but every day the slate is wiped clean. Yesterday's indiscretions, inattention and so on are left there, not carried over to limit today's achievement.