



Transcript of Māori achieving success as Māori – a webinar with Janelle Riki-Waaka

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Tena tatou katoa, ngā mihi nui, tena tatou katoa. Ko Nina Hood ahau. Good evening, my name is Nina Hood and I'm the founder of the Education Hub and it's my pleasure to welcome you all to this webinar this evening. Before we get started, just a couple of things to bear in mind. The webinar will run for around about 50 minutes or so, and we are recording it this evening. So if you have colleagues who aren't able to join us this evening, they will be able to watch it later on. It'll be up on our website. And also to let you know that we are taking questions. So we just ask that you use the chat function, type those in, and we will feed those into the conversation. But also just bear in mind, we do have a lot of people on this webinar tonight, so apologies in advance if we're not able to get to all of those questions this evening.

It's now my real pleasure to welcome our guest tonight, Janelle Riki-Waata. Janelle has significant experience working in the education leadership field and has worked alongside many schools in kura and supported them in developing their cultural competencies and meeting their obligations to uphold the mana of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. We're in for a really rich discussion tonight. So Janelle, welcome. Kia ora and thank you so much for joining us here tonight. Kia ora.

Tēnā koe, Nina. O te rā kia koutou. Tēnā koutou katoa. Lovely to be here this evening. Fabulous.

Well, if we could start tonight with you telling us a little bit about what it means to honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi and why it's so important?

Ka pai. He pātai pai tēnā. That's a fantastic question. So I guess, you know, I don't think anyone would be blamed for asking the question, why is Te Tiriti o Waitangi still relevant to us today? It was written in 1840, rather hurriedly, and you might argue that the language in it and the content of it, you know, isn't so relevant to a modern kura or workplace today, but I think it's about how we interpret Te Tiriti o Waitangi that's most important. Te Tiriti o Waitangi at its essence really was about honourable partnership. It was an agreement between Tangata Whenua and Tangata Tiriti, who initially started off as the Crown and British settlers, and then the British settlers slowly grew into all kinds of different settlers from all different corners of the world. And at its essence, it was an agreement between two people to co-exist peacefully while retaining their language, culture, and identity. And I think

that's really important because the essence of that, I think, is still just as true today as it was in 1840.

Essentially, when it was written, it was an agreement that the chiefs, the rangatira of Aotearoa New Zealand, would continue to have rangatiratanga, or the agency and the sovereignty over their hapū, over their tribes, their right to be self-determining, if you like, and an agreement for the Crown to come to Aotearoa and establish a governor who would govern over the new settlers, the previous ones and any new settlers that came. So that's the sort of essence of this coexistence while we keep each of those parties, keeps their language, culture and identity intact. I think if we look at it today, it is the foundational document of our country. It is the history of this country.

So how might we, in our practice, continue to live the aspiration of I'm sure we all know it was breached. And then we had a process of colonisation, particularly of tangata whenua, and the impacts of that were devastating and continue to be devastating. We're still living with the ripple effects of colonisation. But I think what we can do today is we can deeply reflect the intent of Te Tiriti, which is equitable partnership with Māori, supporting and empowering Māori to have rangatiratanga, or self-determination, to have agency, voice, choice.

There's a quote I often use in my sessions. Now, let me get this right without my slides in front of me. Diversity is a seat at the table. Inclusion is having a voice at the table. And belonging is having that voice heard. And I think that's really important because you can be invited to the table and be silenced. You can be invited to the table, have a voice, but not be heard have that voice acted on. So what we want to do is engage in equitable partnership. And I just want to just finish on this little quote from, gosh, his name's gone out of my head, you can tell it's dinner time, isn't it? Moana Jackson, the amazing Moana Jackson. And he, I went to hear him speak once and he was fantastic, like totally inspiring. And one of the things he said is that, particularly in the Tiriti legal space at that time, he said that we're no longer just using the word partnership on its own because partnerships can be inequitable. You can have someone in a partnership that has more power than the other person or the other party. So I really like the idea of saying equitable partnerships and I tend to say that together.

So I think Te Tiriti o Waitangi is always going to be important in Aotearoa because it's our founding document. It is the essence of Te Tiriti which I hope will, and it will, continue to be relevant forever in terms of us aspiring to have equitable partnership between tangata whenua and tangata tiriti.

I think that was an incredibly valuable way of framing this up and I think that's going to be something that's going to be incredibly important as we go through this kōrero this evening. So for teachers and leaders in schools, how do they think about this in terms of their school context, what it means for them within the education system?

Yeah, such a good question. I think we all know that, you know, we work for the government essentially. If you work in a school, you're a government employee. And so that comes with ethical responsibility. Anybody who descends from the Crown, if you like, from that first

Crown relationship, if you are a Crown-funded entity or a government agent or a government employee, then you have a moral and ethical responsibility to uphold the assertions that the Crown made to Māori. And in education, the way that our employer makes sure that their employees are doing that is through the Code and Standards, and you will see that woven all the way through the Code and Standards, a commitment to our responsibility as Treaty partners with tangata whenua.

I think that a lot of people, a lot of kura have come to me over the years and said, oh, we want a framework for this, or we want to, you know, whether it's to do with behaviour management or it's to do with even developing local curriculum, those kinds of things. And I am always like, we have a framework. It's a really good one. It's called Te Tiriti has four articles, and those four articles are meaningful in so many contexts.

The first one being kawanatanga or governance, or honourable governance from a Māori perspective. And I think we all probably have roles in governance. Essentially, that's kind of like being a kaitiaki. So obviously, boards have a governance role, but leaders in schools have a governance or kaitiaki role over staff and then kaiako and support staff over our tamariki. So Article 1 is really about, like I said before, ensuring Māori have a seat at the table. There's a fantastic quote from one of our runaka down here actually, and they say, nothing about us without us. And I think that's really powerful. It's got to do with our tamariki, we need to be at the table. And I have been present and have seen, you know, many well-meaning, passionate, committed teachers and leaders across schools in this country, sitting in rooms after school, after a long day of teaching, having a kōrero and a wānanga about how are we going to support our Māori students, their engagement or their achievement? And often, I have sadly seen not one Māori in the room. So those discussions are happening about Māori without them.

So what we want to do is make sure we have Māori as part of the co-designing process. So that's that Article 1 and that's how you can make it relevant in your practice practice is representation of Māori, genuine engagement with your Māori community and ensuring they are part of the decision-making process. Oh, I saw that pop up even though I'm not supposed to be reading the chat. Otherwise I'll lose my thought, but that is a really good question. What does at the table mean? I think for me it means, obviously, you know, where possible that means whānau Māori in the boardroom, that means kaiako Māori on staff, and where that's not possible, if that isn't happening, then how do we deeply engage our whānau Māori in our community to be part of decision making at every possible juncture, wherever we can, how do we engage them deeply to be present and help them to see that their skills and their knowledge and mātūranga Māori is valuable, hugely valuable. Because I think we have to acknowledge there's been a long history for some of our parents that the system has told them that knowledge isn't valuable. So we're almost having to undo some of that and go, yes, it is valuable, and we really want you to be at the table, we really want you to be, you know, involved in that kōrero and to be co-designing alongside us. So yeah, I say at the table, but that's sort of, I just mean in the conversation.

So that's Article 1. Article 2 is rangatiratanga or Māori self-determination. And this one is really about Māori's right to be self-determining. And that is closely aligned to Article 1 in terms of us being at the table to have discussions about our tamariki and our whānau. But

this is where I think Māori achieving success as Māori most closely aligns. It actually probably goes across all four articles, but it sits quite comfortably in Article 2. And I can unpack a bit more about what I mean by Māori achieving success as Māori. But Article 3 is about Oritetanga, is Article 3, and that is about us removing bias from structures and systems that have prevented Māori from succeeding as Māori. That is about ensuring as best as possible that everybody's at the start line, at the same place, and that we are co-designing for equity.

I think many of you may have seen some of these graphics around that show the difference between equality and equity. You know, there'll be kids standing on boxes to see the softball game or to pick apples from a tree, and the first picture for equality will have all the same boxes, and some can reach it and some can't. In the second picture, they'll have different sized boxes so everybody can reach the apples. One of the things that I would like to say about that is that actually, although we all need different boxes, what we need to do is co-design those boxes with the people who will be using them. Because sometimes by absolute unintentionally, we may design a box that we think people need without having stopped, taken a moment and said, actually, let's talk about what you do need and let's work on this together. So, genuine engagement, I sort of talk about this word consultation. I'm keen to kind of get rid of it out of our vocab and education because consultation is quite low level. When I consult my husband about something, there's a good chance I've already done it. If it's new shoes, I've already bought them. So engagement is when I come to you to have a kōrero and the piece of paper is blank. Consultation is when I ask you what you think about the plan I've already made. And there's a really big difference.

Māori have been consulted for a long time, we're pretty wary of it. Often my question is, well, where was I for the first hui? Because there's that magical thing in collaboration, right? Sometimes it's not until you get in the room together that the ideas come out. You know, someone says something and that makes my mind go to here. I might not have had that idea if you weren't in the room or it might have sparked another pathway that we hadn't considered. So, yeah, I'm really keen for schools to stop consulting and start genuinely engaging with their community, with their Māori whānau. And, yeah, I mean, I can talk about this for ages, but I feel like there's more questions. But essentially, Te Tiriti or Waitangi is the only framework you need. If we deeply embed that and if we look at those articles as a way of guiding our practice, we are going to be genuinely tiriti-honouring in our practice within our kura.

So if we then take it one step further, what would it look like if schools were to actually decolonise their practice?

Yeah, such a good question. Decolonisation, I think, is an interesting one. So I think decolonisation should be led by non-Māori. And I'll tell you why I think that. And it doesn't mean to say that Māori don't have a role in the wider sense of decolonisation, but I think it should be led by non-Māori. And the reason for that is Māori, for the most part, where we're at in our history, we're still really navigating the after effects of colonisation and the language and identity trauma. And so some things just hit differently for us. You know, there's some things that we hear and some things that we navigate, there's still lots of tears to be shed. So if it can be led by non-Māori, and it's a little bit like, I had someone sort of say

to me, you know, if there's somebody who does something awful to somebody, what we don't want necessarily is the victim leading their rehabilitation. They might be in some ways supporting it, but not leading it.

And so for Māori, I really want to encourage everybody who is tangata tiriti to consider how they can lead decolonisation in their kura. For Māori, we're really focused on re-indigenising our kids and putting the reo back in their mouth and the tikanga back in their hearts and minds and the mātauranga and revitalising that for our people. And that's our part and contribution to decolonisation.

Decolonisation is going to require us to check our bias at the door and that's really hard because most bias is unconscious. You know, we don't necessarily know we have it, but we're all born with a pair of glasses that we see the world through, and our lenses, our prescription, if you like, and our glasses are made up of our lived experiences, our upbringing, the people we've had around us guiding us and teaching us as we've grown. And what that comes with is a set of norms, you know, like we have roasts on a Sunday and we've had it our whole life and people that have pizza on a Sunday feel a bit, to me, it's like, oh, that kind of sense of norm. Norm is a normal thing. I've got a thing about how you fold your towels. I just feel like the way I fold my towels is normal because that's the way I've lived. And the way I put the toilet paper on the toilet roll. I'm an under, not an over, and I think that's normal, but it turns out I've been taking a poll. I'm actually in the minority. Most people put their toilet paper over, so there you go.

But we have this sense, it's human nature for us to have this norm, this sense of norm, and when something pushes up against it, it can cause us, our immediate natural human reaction is to go, that's weird, or that's not right. And so that's part of our bias. So how do we check that? And there's all kinds of bias, affirmation biases, race, gender, ageism, sexuality, it goes on and on. But it is very hard for me to see a bias that doesn't impact me. For example, there will be a ton of bias in systems and structures in everyday life that have a huge impact on our rainbow community that I may never see because I'm not a member of that community and so I've never had it hard for me to see. How do I then train my eyes to go bias hunting for things that don't impact me? And that's why we need diverse conversations and diverse communities and people at the table to support us in that agenda because that's really, really important. So I think bias hunting is a huge part of decolonisation.

The other part I want to just touch on, I guess, is, and I've already talked about this idea of norm. Part of the colonisation process was to assimilate Māori into the dominant culture, the Pākehā culture, if you like, and that was done by design, not by accident. And we need to be very clear about that. That's a fact. You know, you ban a language, you separate people from their cultural norms, how they bring up children, how they educate people, so on and so forth. And you seek to assimilate them into a dominant culture. And Māori is, although growing, it is still very much a minority culture. It is still a marginalised group of people. So decolonisation actually starts with placing a value on our reo, place a value on tikanga, place a value on mātauranga, see it as a skill, as a strength, as a gift within your children, within your tamariki. So that's going to be part of the decolonisation journey as well. And that's a journey towards equity and it starts off with kia ora and your emails with ending with ngā mihi, that's step one. And that's good. And, you know, but we've just got to keep moving.

And lots of times people say to me, we really want to do this, but, you know, is it a little bit tokenistic? And sometimes my answer is, yeah, it is. But here's the truth. The definition of tokenistic is that thing we just did that one time. If you don't want it to be tokenistic, take another step forward. Don't live in that space. I often make that joke of, you know, don't get comfortable in toke land. You've got to take another step. If you don't want to be in that space, take another step. So you have to keep doing more for it not to be tokenistic. But it is a journey and the first step can be uncomfortable and the first step can be it can feel ick, it can feel a bit like because you've gone from zero. So we just have to place a value on it.

The other aspect I think of decolonisation, a really big part of it, to be able to be re-indigenized. So education was really sadly, and I say really sadly because I'm a part of the education community, it was really sadly weaponized to colonize. It was used as a tool to colonize Māori kids how to be, Māori boys how to be farmers and Māori girls how to be farmers' wives. You know, there were subject choices that Māori were prevented from taking and they were directed into trades and service jobs and so we would have them working in those roles. And so my dad's generation, they were all forestry workers and freezing workers, and the woman often worked in factories. And not all of them, but a good majority of that generation, their jobs, they were sort of channeled into those jobs. So we've got to unlearn some stuff. And we've got to, the system wasn't set up for Māori to be successful. The system was designed to assimilate Māori kids. And yes, we've journeyed a long way since then, but there's the remnants of it, the remnants of some of those colonisation sort of policies and processes, and just the way we think and act, and the way education is set up. Some of those things are barriers. They're barriers for Māori kids, they're barriers for Māori whānau. So part of the decolonisation process is going to be, you know, kicking over every table and chair to look underneath it for that bias, you know, the stuff that's not easily seen. It's in the corner somewhere where we haven't looked before. How does this feel for our Māori kids succeed as Māori?

I don't know if we've got a question about that or whether I should just track on into...

We do have, but that leads very nicely into the next question. And I realise that there are lots of people asking questions and we will come to these. Perhaps after we answer this, what actually Māori achieving success as Māori actually means and what it means in practice in schools?

Yes, this is the kind of question that I will answer as a mum more than I will an educator, to be honest. So let's just take success on its own for a wee second before we talk about Māori succeeding as Māori. Success in schools, I think, predominantly, and this is one of those norms we've got to break, predominantly when we talk about success at schools, we're actually talking about academic achievement. And the other aspects of success become secondary to academic achievement. Now, you could argue that's because that's a school's job. A school's job is academic achievement. I would like to think a school's job is to grow good humans and part of that is academic achievement, of course, and you could argue it's the most important part, and I wouldn't necessarily debate that. It could be the most important part. But I think success has, for the most part, and I don't know how we got here, but we got to a place where success is looked at like this, down a tunneled microscope of

this is success. And you walk into school halls all over this country and you see honors boards for academic achievement. And you go to end of year assemblies and there's accolades for Africa for those that have academically excelled past their peers. Now I'm not suggesting that's not a worthy celebration. It really is. It really is. And academic achievement is a very important part of success, but it's not the only part.

You know, I often talk about school reports. I just think school reports and the way we do them is so antiquated. I just, I'm so over them. I think they just need to go. I just think that whole thing needs a complete overhaul. But unfortunately for us as a sector, we trained our parents in some ways to care about things deeply more than other things. For example, page one of most school reports, not all of them, but most of them is reading, writing, and maths, and how nice you are, and the values are on page three. So, you know, we placed a value on it, we put it up front, here's the reading, and by the way, here's the values, you know, like it's, and if you are the parent, like I was, of a disengaged student, school reports are not that great to read, you know, I will tell you what they read like, essentially, if your kid's not doing so well at school. Every comment box is, here's what your kid can't do, something nice in the middle, because, you know, sandwich. And then at the end, here's everything you need to do and he needs to do to fix it. And that's how they read. And so, I mean, I would get to the point where I would be like, do you know my kids? Because there's all this other stuff, and I feel like you're only talking to me about 5% of him. And it's really sad, because he spends a lot of time with you, and I really, really want to know that you know him. And I know that teachers do, because I'm one of the parents that can wear a teacher hat, so I know that we know these kids. I don't think reports in that format are an accurate way of celebrating the success of our kids. So I would much rather tell success stories, and I kind of call them success stories, in that individual in nature. You know what, if you couldn't make your bed at the beginning of the year, but by term three you could, then we should celebrate that out loud. And even though I'm a teacher and I don't live in your house, if you tell me that you made your bed and mum told me that too, then I should write that in your success story because it's part of your success story.

Not everything is going to happen at school. And we've had a long history of, and we know this, right? We've had a long history of some of our kids coming out of the education system worse off than we put them in. That's heartbreaking and none of us want that. No one wants that. Not teachers, not parents, not anybody, not society. So how do we change the script on this reporting thing and tell success stories? And can I just say, I'm a massive advocate for kids telling their own success stories and being part of writing that success story that goes home to their whānau.

So success in the first instance, before we even talk about Māori success, has got to have a wider lens. We've just been too narrow in what we consider success in schools. And that means certain kids get it and certain kids don't, but if we widen the lens, maybe more kids will get to experience that success. Māori achieving success as Māori. Some schools have, you know, they will present their Māori achievement data and they will label it, whether in name or narrative, as their Māori achieving success as Māori data. And you look at it and it will be the reading, writing, maths, whatever, achievement data. And often they will celebrate being higher than the national norm in terms of where Māori students achieve. And to be really blunt, I'm like, really? The national norm is crap. Like it is. It's lower than

non-Māori kids. So like, being better than the national norm, although I get that you want to feel proud about that, and in some ways you should because the national norm is low. Still, we are aiming far too low. Why are we happy to be achieving at a norm that's lower than non-Māori kids for a start? So, for me, that data is still really important. The academic achievement data of Māori kids is still important, but call it what it is. Please do not label it Māori achieving success as Māori. Call it the academic achievement of Māori students. Just call it what it is. Because as a Māori mum, I don't look at that and go, wow, my kid is successful as Māori.

If we were being really crude about it, you might argue that data, which has often used non-Māori tools to measure non-Māori kaupapa and how well our kids did academically in those spaces. If we were being crude, we might say it's how well do we colonise our Māori kids data, to be honest. And I get that that's jarring, I get it. But actually, tell me how my kid is doing in relation to their wellness in terms of their identity. Tell me, tell me how strong their connection is to their language, culture and identity and tell me how you supported that reconnection through school. Because I said earlier, our system was weaponised to colonise, how about we empower it to re-indigenise? How about we use it as a system that gives it all back? You know, the system took it, let's re-engage it for good, use its powers for good to re-indigenise our kids, to ensure that they have every opportunity to learn their reo.

You know, the irony of this is, my dad was of the whole class. And he ran away from home and his dad gave him another belting and said, learn the ways of the Pākehā. You're not going to get a job if you don't. And so he abandoned his Reo through that assimilating process. So he didn't have it to give to us. So as an adult, just like everybody else, raising kids, working a full-time job, I slowly, over years and years and years, went to wānanga, went to university and got my reo back over many years. And I paid an institution to get my reo back. The irony of that, you know what I mean? So I don't want my kids to have to do that. If they want to further their studies into te reo Māori excellence, fantastic, they might go to a university, but actually shouldn't every Māori kid have a baseline of reo that they get in their everyday schooling?

So how do we empower the system to re-indigenise our kids? Māori succeeding as Māori, as Māori, is every single time my kids succeed in their Māoritanga, it might be everything from learning a karakia, to standing on the haka stage, to learning a whaikōrero or a karanga, or learning about matariki, or learning about ikura, or all of that beautiful mātūranga. Every time they reclaim their identity and they re-indigenise, that is Māori achieving success as Māori. Academic success is important, but the re-indigenisation of our Māori kids, I promise you, for those that are not doing so well academically, let's shift the focus to re-indigenising and watch their academics grow, watch their confidence in te ao Pākehā grow the more strongly they are able to walk in te ao Māori.

So I don't mean to be all lectury. I get really passionate about this kōrero.

I'm loving it and I can tell that everyone else is as well. And it strikes me that there's going to be a really interesting sort of interplay that's going to need to make changes to bring about what you're talking about.

And, you know, I wish I could tell you I could change the system. It really will take all of us. I know that there are some posts in education that are seemingly immovable. There's just some stuff we have to do and we can't get away from it. You can't avoid it. It just is. And I get it. And I know what they are. And it used to be National Standards and you just couldn't not do it and it was just a thing. But there are still posts. There are big posts in the middle of the ground and it can feel hard to navigate because the space isn't free. There's this post and this post and this post.

One of the things I do think though, sometimes we give a little bit too much mana to those posts in the sense that sometimes we treat some of those posts as steel reinforced concrete posts when in fact a few of them can be shifted a wee bit. We might not be able to get rid of them, but they're flexible enough that if we're innovative and if we really want to, we can shift some of those things. And for example, it is mandated that we share with our whānau the success of their kids. What isn't exactly mandated is that we report and it exactly looks, it says we have to report achievement and probably uses the report. We need to let them know how well their kids are doing. But somehow we think that's translated to, and you've got to write a report like this and I don't think that's true. That's what I mean by one of those posts that is a little bit more flexible than we're treating it. So for me, I think we're just going to have to be clever and savvy and gritty and we have to go hunting for the posts that can be shifted a little, that have got enough flex in them that we can support some of our diverse learners.

Because we – and I've been the mum of a kid who was a square peg and education was a round hole. It is an awful journey. Damaging to some kids and some, you know, irreversibly damaging. For some of our kids, the trajectory of their life off the end of school just never kind of recovers. You know, their self-esteem and self-worth just never kind of recovers. And some of our kids believe every word we tell them in those reports, every word. And we can't take them back once they're gone. And I would hate to see some of the reports. I'd like to think all my reports are lovely. I'm sure they weren't. Times change in education. There were things that we said years ago we would never say now, those kinds of things. So how do we kick over some of those posts? And how do we look at what we have to do and then go ask ourselves this question? Okay, we have to do A, B, C, D. Do we have to do it like this? Some of it will be, yeah, we have to do it like this. Others will be, actually, we don't have to do it like that. There's no rule about doing it like that, other than we've always done it like that. So that's when we find the opportunities for innovation. So this is something, whatever this is, we can innovate on this. We can flip this over. We can have a talk about how this could look in the future. And that's when we assemble the Avengers around the table and we make sure everybody's present and we go, okay, we've got to tell our parents about the achievement of their kids, the success of their kids. That's a given. It's got to be done twice a year or whatever it is. And sorry if I've got that wrong. I'm sure people in the room will know better than I. That's the stuff that can't move. But outside of that, what could it look like? How could we do that? What could we innovate? Where's the space for innovation? And then how do we get the right people on board to co-design that with us so that it will meet the needs? I just want to just finish this a little bit.

I did some stuff with my kids around success stories. And I've got some examples, which I could share if people are interested, around measuring different things and using different

frameworks to measure them against, if you like. Like, why don't we measure and capture data around our kids' connection to their language, culture, and identity? Why don't we measure our kids' understanding of Mātauranga Māori concepts? And maybe some of you do, but it's not universally happening, I know that. So then how do we change the list of things that we're measuring in terms of equals success? And one of the things I did with our baby in the whanau, and this is a few years back, is he was watching me write it up. And I was like, oh, we could do this. And I was innovating and playing around. And he said, what are you doing? And I said, I'm writing a success story because I refuse to call it a report. And he said, is that like a report? And I said, kind of, except this one's better because it's success. And he goes, man, I wish we could write our own. And I was like, oh, okay, talk to me about that. What would you put in yours? What would you want to measure? And he went through and he started listing all of these things like playing nicely with my friends, keeping my room tidy. And he's the best bedmaker in our whanau. He's even better than me. He still is the best bedmaker. And being a good friend or, you know, he went through, one of them was Minecraft. And he picked, like many kids would, all the stuff he's really good at. And I could hear him and I was like, yeah, you're good at all of that. So what he was communicating to me is I want that to be a good story. If I'm going to tell a success story, I want it to actually be about the things I'm successful in, not just what someone else chose to measure me on. And so I was getting that message from him. So we made one. What was really interesting was, although he picked all the stuff he's really, really good at, we had this sort of framework and it was like a beginning and quite good and very good, sort of a framework for him to use to measure. And he marked himself down on stuff. And I was like, you picked all the stuff you're really good at and you still marked yourself down? So he was still, like I asked him about it, I was like, why aren't you right up the end for this one because you're really good at that? And he goes, no, I still really want to get better. I've still got a little way to go. So kids know, they know what they're good at. They know what they're not so good at. And if we're going to tell their parents a story, why wouldn't we ask our kids what story they want to tell? There'll be some stuff we have to put in there, for sure. We have to tell our kids about how well you're reading and how well you're writing. But what else is there? What if our kids were alongside us designing success stories? So there. I hope that answers your question. I hope you're all following.

No, they are, and people are really enjoying it and really enjoying, I think they're really loving the example that you're giving as well. And I just wonder if we could perhaps build on that to talk about what some examples of culturally empowering practices.

Right back when I was beginning to be a facilitator in the cultural capability treaty space, and this is literally going back 10 plus years even now, I worked alongside a school, a colleague and I worked alongside a school for a whole year and spent a whole year in there with their teachers, looking at everything from their practice to the content they were teaching and just supporting them to really lift their game in terms of integration of all things Māori. And we saw a real difference and we could feel a real difference, but at the end we wanted to make sure there was a difference and we just weren't rejoicing too soon.

So I interviewed some of the kids and some of the Māori kids and there was a moment in one of those interviews that I'll remember for the rest of my life. It was really poignant. I interviewed this beautiful little Māori girl, I think she was in year 7 or 8, and I was

interviewing her and she was sitting across from me and the camera guys behind me. And I asked her a question and when she answered it, I burst into tears. And that is not like me at all. If anything, my husband would say I'm a cold fish and never shed a tear over anything. So I'm not one to get really emotional, like especially not out of the blue like that. But she said something that, and the reason I became so emotional is she had words for something that as a Māori woman, I felt like I'd searched for those words my whole life. And as soon as they came out of her mouth, I was like, yes, that's exactly it. And I asked her, what is it like when you get to learn things Māori? And she sort of thoughtfully, you know, I looked away and she was like, it's kind of like my pieces fit together. And I just remember going, yes, that's exactly what it is. It's like our pieces fit together. And actually, for many of us, we don't realise how apart our pieces are until we get to sit a little while in Te Ao Māori. And you just have to watch a Māori kid singing a waiata and their eyes and their face light up or meeting Māori role models, you know, like there's something, there's two worlds for many of us as Māori. There's no A grade, B grade, C grade Māori.

And there is, however, a degree to which Māori people have walked in te ao Māori. Some people have seen it from afar and know it exists, but have never even dipped a toe in it. Some have gone in and out and in and out, and depending on where they are and who they're with, you know, they've spent a little bit of time in there. Some of, we're starting to see kids that are born in te ao Māori, which is so exciting. They can't avoid te ao Pākehā because that's the world we live in. So they're going to get that. That is a given. That is an absolute given. But their connection to te ao Māori varies for Māori people. So I think at the end of the day, supporting our kids to re-indigenise is going to go such a long way for their wellness and such a long way for their success in life, their ability to navigate both worlds, because our Māori kids have to traverse those worlds all the time. They can't, for the most part, most kids will never just solely be in te ao Māori. They might have 90% but they're always going to have some time in te ao Pākehā. Some of our kids spend most of their time in te ao Pākehā.

Schools, in my opinion, should be Switzerland. They should reflect both worlds. Everywhere in this country should reflect both worlds. However, at a bare minimum, the places where we educate people should. They must. That's the place, you know, the pie shops where you buy pies, the service stations where you get petrol, schools where you educate people. That has to be the place where our Māori kids get to see their world and get to learn how to traverse in both worlds. Did I wander off the question? I might have. I'm a bit bad at doing that. I was just loving what you were saying, so I don't really know what the question was. So please, I'm like, oh, gosh, have I wandered off track? I do that sometimes. There'll be some people in this room who know me well will be like, yeah, she did Wonder of Track and that's a thing that she does. Yeah, but it was brilliant what you were saying. We'll forgive anyone doing it.

I can see that we're very quickly coming to the end of our time. And honestly, I think I and pretty much everyone else on here could listen to you all evening, but we will let you go at some stage. But I just, a number of people have asked this question on the chat tonight, and that's really about how they can, how schools, how teachers can engage effectively with their Māori whānau and with mana whenua, and really in a way that is genuine. So any thoughts on how they might be able to achieve that?

So many, so many. And also none, in the sense that what I mean by that is there isn't a blueprint for this because every whānau community and every mana whenua group is different and diverse. So, you know, the instant fix, but I want to plant some seeds and you know your community and many of you will know mana whenua in your rohe, in your area. And so there might be some things you think, oh yeah, that could work for us. So I'll share some tips as opposed to here's the blueprint for engaging with whanau Māori.

One of the mistakes, and again, well-intentioned, well-meaning, beautifully committed, amazing teachers. But one of the mistakes that they often make when engaging Māori whānau is they'll say, right, we'll have a whānau hui, and it's going to be Tuesday, the 8th of August at 7.30 in this school hall. And they'll send out a pānui and say, this is when it is. And then the whānau will come along to the hui, and there'll be a little bit of an agenda. Some people have formal ones, some people have informal, you know, here's all the things we're going to talk about. And they will say, right, you know, we'll have some whanau ngatanga, we'll do this, and the principal will have this, like, I want to ask them about this, and I want to ask them about strategic plan, and I want to ask them about curriculum, and a list of things they want to talk about. There's very little to know mana motuhake in that space for Māori at all. You've told me when the hui is, you've told me what time it is, and now you've told me what we're going to talk about. There's not a lot of agency for me. That doesn't feel like equitable partnership. Someone has more power and it's not me. And so really, honestly, my recommendation is the very first question you should ask your whānau Māori is this, how would you like for us to engage with you? What would that look like? Allow them to say, actually, I want to have hui on a Wednesday or a Saturday or a whatever. I want to have the hui on the marae. I want to, you know, allow them to have some mana in that space and feel part of the process. Ask them how often they want to meet. Ask them what do you want to talk about, what's important to you, who do you want at the hui, you know, allow them to have mana in that space. Honestly, one of the most powerful questions you can ask your whānau members, because often we want to ask them about academic achievement, again, this is you with success that's down a tunnel and it's about just this.

I really want to encourage you to ask your whānau members, what are your aspirations for your tamariki as Māori? What do you want them to be as Māori? Because a lot of Māori whānau will say things to you like, I really want them to have reo, I didn't have reo. I really want them to have no tikanga, I really want them to have this or that, you know, I didn't get that when I was a kid. So ask them what their aspirations are for their kids as Māori. So genuine engagement, you have to remove the power. You have to try to come at this as a whānau member that wants to sit alongside. And also I want you to just realise that between some of our whānau in the staff room or wherever you want to have your hui, there's a whole lot of trauma about schools. That for me to traverse from my car to that staff room, I've got to walk through some mud. That's a bit mamai. And there's some memories and there's some stuff, yeah? So actually asking them, how do you want me to engage with you? How do you want to have a relationship with your school? We really want to work alongside you. Can help them to, if they need to, avoid walking through that mud and say, actually, we want to meet over here and we want to do it at this time. So that's the first thing when engaging with whānau. Co-design the agenda, if it has to have an agenda. Don't ever skip over some things. You know, always Always follow tikanga, have karakia and

whakawhanaungatanga and all of that stuff. And just know that whatever you think you might get out of the hui, don't plan for it because whakawhanaungatanga could take over the whole time and that's because it's needed. Your Māori whānau wanted to know each other. I want to say this about, and one of my favourite quotes, for Māori, everything moves at the speed of trust.

So if your relationship with whānau Māori isn't good, there's not enough trust. Go back to the relationship. Talk about anything and everything other than whatever kaupapa it is that you want to talk to them about. Just focus on positive relationships. Because we've got some whānau navigating trauma about education just to get to the table with you, just to have that kōrero. So that's sort of engaging with whānau Māori. Let them dictate how often they want to meet and you work with that. I've got to think about teachers coming to whānau Māori hui wherever possible, and I get it. I get it. Teachers have lives. I get it. The kids have got netball training, I've got to be there, I totally get you can't be at every hui. But trust me when I tell you Māori whānau come to those whānau hui and look for their kid's teacher. They want to see a message that you're here because you care about my kid as Māori. So if you can figure that out, and again, if you can't be there, you can't be there. But what I would say is that the principal should apologise. They should say, I just want to put in apologies from, you know, Faya so-and-so. She really wanted to be here, but she couldn't. You make a point of saying, you know, and you put that out. So that's the way around that if you really can't be there.

Here's what I do want to say. Start where your feet are. You need to know who your kura is. And what I say by that is it's been sheltered by a tribe. It's always been sheltered by a tribe. It lives on a piece of whenua. Know what that whenua is, where it's from. Do some learning. Your first interaction with mana whenua shouldn't be knocking on the door and asking for a cup of sugar. You know, the mistake heaps of schools make is their very first interaction with mana whenua is, can I have, can you open the classroom, can you give us a name, can you come and do our pōhiri, can you, can you, can you? Actually, for them, they're like me, they're volunteers, you know, they're mums and dads and working whānau and mana whenua. So often if someone came to me and their first thing was, can I have, my first response would probably be, who are you? Who even are you? So actually your first conversation with mana whenua should be, kia ora, this is who we are. How can we serve you?

I'll finish just by saying, you know, I've got a friend who's a Tumuaki. Actually, she's moved into another role now, but she was a Tumuaki of a kura close to a marae. And I know that not all kura are close to a marae. But she would take her kids down to do the gardens. Not all of them, but 10 or 15 of them. Weed gardens, paint fences, clean the windows, go out into the kitchen and clean the back storeroom, wipe the shelves down, put everything back. When there was a tangi, she would take her kids down to just dry dishes and peel spuds. She taught her kids about service to mana whenua, about understanding and acknowledging we're here on their whenua, they've been here a lot longer than us. If we want them to turn up to our hui, we should turn up to theirs. We should turn up, roll our sleeves up, titau tanga, as they call it, pick up the tea towel, you don't walk in the front door of the marae and ask to sit in the paepae. Most of us have to go through the back door and dry dishes, sometimes for years, you know, we live in service.

So engaging with mana whenua, my question, my return serve question is what can you do for them and give a lot of thought to that and then just start with establishing relationships and thinking about how you can serve them and their aspirations and their whenua. Well, Janelle, this has been such an amazing, such an amazing korero this evening. Thank you so much for sharing with us. I know that I haven't been able to keep up with the whole chat tonight. I've been trying to and it's been impossible. But just the comments coming through there and just the huge respect for what you're talking about, for the ideas, it's just been wonderful. So thank you. It's been an absolute privilege to host you here this evening and you've given us all so to think about. A lot of challenges in there as well, which are always welcome. So thank you. It's been an absolute pleasure. Kia ora. Tēnā koutou katoa. E noho ana i ngā kāinga o Aotearoa. E mihi ana. It's been such a pleasure to be here. It's a weird kind of thing doing these one-way webinars because obviously I can see Nina, but I can see all the chat moving and I know there's lots of people in the room and I feel like you know it's hard for me to not interact with you. So if you see me, come and give me a cuddle. I'm always up for a hug and thank you so much. I know you are all knackered. You've had massive days and you've turned up in your home time, that already tells me how much you care about this kaupapa. So on behalf of all of the akonga Māori who won't say thank you because, you know, they're kids and they're not easily throwing out thank yous, I will thank you on their behalf for the amazing mahi that you do with our kids, for the huge passion and commitment you've shown just by turning up here to have a wānanga and to listen. So e mihi ana and to all of you, thanks so much. E mihi ana. Ngā mihi, whanau.