

CHAPTER TWO - DEFYING STEREOTYPES – CULTURAL NOTIONS OF SUCCESS

My father and grandmother had been punished for speaking Navajo in school. Navajos were told that, in order to be successful, they would need to forget their language and culture and adopt American ways...This pressure to assimilate – along with the complete subjugation of the tribes following the Indian wars of the 1800s, the poverty due to poor grazing lands, forced stock reduction, and lack of jobs – all combined to bring the Navajo people to their knees, and a sense of deep shame prevailed (Alvord 1998:214).

To have been plunged into a White educational environment and to still remain Black created a subtle but forceful dialectical process. Instead of preparing Blacks to be content to enter the mainstream of American life, the White education structure created its antithesis – Blacks all the more aware of the contrast between the ideals of America and the condition of the Black masses (Ballard 1973:58).

Its quite funny to be a graduate Maori. People don't expect you to be like that, don't expect you to use big words, or catch on to what their saying or thinking as fast as they do and it always takes people by surprise...They have a stereotype of what a Maori is. He's a lawbreaker and doesn't do anything. So you meet someone and he's a Maori and he's been through varsity and it just always takes them by surprise (Barrington 1987:78).

Introduction

The nature of education systems created by the dominant White culture, as highlighted in the previous chapter in relation to Maori and in the first quote above, was to maintain White superiority through assimilatory policies. Power structures adopted by the dominant White culture assumed the subordination of Navajo, Blacks, Maori and other indigenous and minority peoples. However, resistance to these power structures, particularly in education, has resulted in many indigenous and minority cultures embracing the White education system as a process to ensure their self-determination as a people, while also maintaining

their cultural links, through language and culture. Durie (2001) labels this type of approach as educational advancement.

This chapter explores attempts to define the concept of academic achievement, and of success. Studies have examined an array of variables that contribute to academic achievement (Bankston & Zhou 1995; C. Barnhardt 1994; R. Barnhardt 1991; Barrington 1966, 1987; Broughton 1993; Chan & Wang 1991; Clifton, Williams & Clancy 1991; Cordeiro & Carspecken 1991; Deyhle 1995; Douglas 1979; Fitzgerald 1977; Gandara 1994; Ho & Willms 1996; Jones 1976; Jules & Kutnick 1990; Killen 1994; Kraft 1991; Majoribanks 1979; Mickelson 1990; Miller 1999; Mirza 1995; O'Conner 1999; Schwab 1998; Stevenson & Lee 1990; Wright 1987). However, achieving a definition of success, particularly in relation to indigenous and minority peoples, is problematic because of the domination of western research which has previously focused on issues of hereditary intelligence, personality and ethnic constructions. Western notions of success are often defined in terms of academic standards attained, or in terms of outputs: "in...the number of graduates...who leave an institution each year" (Woodhall 1987a:349). The construction of achievement tests, the development of theories based around hereditary intelligence (and the resulting lack of intelligence for people of colour), and the emphasis on the achievement and motivation of the individual, have formed the basis of these western constructions of success in educational research for some time (Anderson 1985; Clifton, Williams & Clancy 1991; Entwistle 1968; Erkut & Mokros 1984; Gorard, Lees & Fevre 1999; Scott-Jones 1995).

Research has explored the multifaceted concept of academic achievement. Such research has examined success, for example, as being contributed to or influenced by family and social environments (Majoribanks 1979; Miller 1970; Nash 1993; Scott-Jones 1995), secondary school attendance (Hughes, Lauder & Strathdee 1996), finances (Abrams & Jernigan 1984; Crockett 1985; Dallas Martin 1985; Forrest 1985), gender and characteristics of the student (Hughes, Lauder & Strathdee 1996; Jones 1976), parental involvement (Ho & Willms 1996), and mentoring (Jacobi 1991; Jones 1989). Western research has also attempted to

define why and how indigenous and minority peoples succeed academically (Lovegrove 1966; Ausubel 1970; Clifton, Williams & Clancy 1991; Fitzgerald 1977; Jules & Kutnick 1990; Mickelson 1990; Mitchell 1988; Schwab 1995, 1996; Williams 1960). While some of these studies provide valuable insights into cultural aspects of achievement, others (in particular Ausubel 1970; Gallimore, Whitehorn Boggs & Jordan 1974; Williams 1960; Lovegrove 1966) have been influenced by theories of cultural superiority/inferiority, and by views of western dominance and minority subordination.

Research by indigenous and minority peoples on the concept of academic achievement and success, however, has often incorporated much broader aspects of culture, such as identity, and the role success plays in relation to the contribution it makes to family and the wider community, rather than to an individual's ability to progress through western-based standards of achievement (Alvord 1997; Bennett 1997; Broughton 1993; Carey 1997; Cordeiro & Carspecken 1993; Deyhle 1995; Douglas 1979; O'Conner 1999). However, indigenous and minority research do not provide the only examinations of these broader aspects of culture. Barrington 1987; C. Barnhardt 1994; R. Barnhardt 1991; Benton 1987; Fitzgerald 1977; Kleinfeld 1979; and Schwab 1995, 1996a, 1996b, 1998; are examples of research conducted by non-indigenous and minority peoples who have worked with, amongst and for indigenous and minority communities, examining cultural aspects and how it relates to higher education participation. In particular, this band of research has identified the subordinate position of indigenous and minority peoples as a result of colonisation and domination, which has contributed to and perpetuated indigenous and minority educational underachievement and failure. Furthermore, this band of research seeks to gain a better understanding of what constitutes indigenous and minority academic achievement, acknowledging the cultural aspects defined by indigenous and minority researchers and communities, as well as looking beyond western frameworks for methodological and theoretical validation and support.

For indigenous and minority peoples, the historical educational situation has been littered with examples of colonial dominance, characterised by policies of

assimilation and controlled provision. Lack of indigenous and minority progress through the western education system has been what Iverson (1978:15) describes as a “consequence of a colonial construction of power and expropriation.” From a research perspective, Williams (1974) declared that White researchers were more interested in self-advancement and often their studies resulted in more harm than good for research subjects. As a result “people of colour are sceptical of research as a determinant of...fates” (Delpit 1988:7).

Western measurements of success have explained participation by minority and indigenous peoples in terms of educational failure. Typically, this educational failure has been couched in terms of the Maori/First Nations/Native Americans/Black/Hispanic¹ problem, where these minority and indigenous groups are placed in a “deficit category in need of ‘change’,” thus maintaining a position of assimilation (Deyhle & Swisher 1997:116). Other indigenous and minority peoples, whose educational underachievement has often been couched as a ‘problem,’ and where research has focused on models of cultural deficiency, cultural deprivation and cultural difference, mirror the Maori experience. This chapter will examine how education has been a ‘problem’ over the years, pointing to both government policies and research to acknowledge that a fundamental issue is the unequal power relationships that exist between the dominant White majority and minority and indigenous peoples (Darnell 1983). As a result of this unequal relationship, Maori and other minority and indigenous peoples have been kept on the periphery of their respective education systems, thus being denied the opportunity to participate equally as citizens in their own countries.

The experience of the Navajo people as a result of colonisation quoted at the beginning of this chapter highlights the devastation affected, an experience that other indigenous peoples, including Maori, have shared. Educational underachievement has effectively established an underclass of uneducated Maori,

¹ The thesis has referred to the experiences of a number of minority and indigenous peoples. The terms ‘Black,’ ‘Hispanic’ and ‘Indian’ have all been problematic in relation to the diverse populations that are represented within these labels, as well as the historical connotations under which such labels were affixed. I have chosen to use the terms most represented in the literature, being ‘Black’, ‘Hispanic’ and ‘First Nations/Native Americans.’

which was highlighted in the Hunn Report of 1960. Despite Maori efforts - through the renaissance of the 1960s and 1970s - to reclaim their existence, their language and cultural practices and knowledge, government policies and objectives have continued to maintain an unequal power relationship, thus inhibiting Maori growth and development equally, as guaranteed under the Treaty of Waitangi. Irwin (1999:69) has described government action “reactive at best,” where there is a clear lack of confidence in the government being able “to ‘lead’ in the area of Maori educational policy.”

Despite this suffering, indigenous and minority peoples have managed to survive persistent attempts to be assimilated and dominated, and have fought to retain and have recognised their cultural identity, cultural practices, and cultural aspirations. Maori are looking for their own solutions, as demonstrated in the Hui Matauranga (Education Summit), called by Tuwharetoa paramount chief, Tumu Te Heuheu, and held in Taupo, New Zealand, February 2001. This is but one example of how indigenous and minority peoples, who have suffered in this way, have displayed traits of successfully adapting to, fighting against and surviving in adverse systems that were established effectively to destroy them.

It is from this position of resistance that I argue that indigenous, minority and Maori people have found a way to succeed in a world that has sought to suppress and assimilate. For Maori, the issue of succeeding academically, according to western standards, has been influenced by their historical experiences. Maori, as Smith (1999) has identified, have difficulty in accepting western notions of success, while simultaneously promoting the benefits such success may be able to bring. The contrary notions that Maori attach to academic success may inhibit their ability to participate effectively and successfully in mainstream institutions, which is compounded by official policies of assimilation and integration, as discussed in Chapter One. In resistance to mainstream restrictions, Maori have established their own education institutions, which are based on Maori philosophies and which ensure the maintenance of a Maori cultural identity (S. Mead 1997). However, what of those Maori students who choose to remain in the

mainstream system? What mechanisms do they adopt to survive academically, and to achieve success?

According to Mason Durie (1998:417), the advancement of Maori in areas such as education, “will not occur without careful and deliberate planning,” where such planning must be sound in order that “progress in one area does not create inequities in another, nor compromise the whole point of the exercise.” Jefferies (1998) believes that this type of planning must be across spheres, encompassing the state, iwi (tribe), hapu (sub-tribe) and whanau (family). In order to further develop a Maori notion or concept of what success means, the chapter draws from the experiences of other minority and indigenous perceptions of success. The core differences highlighted between western notions of measuring academic ‘outputs’ through examination of identified variables and an indigenous and minority approach that is more holistic to issues of academic achievement, becomes more apparent through this approach.

In this chapter, I argue that a Maori notion of success is able to combine academic achievement (through graduation – a western standard), with the maintenance and retention of one’s cultural identity, and thus the maintenance and retention of cultural integrity. I have drawn this notion of Maori success from the successful resistance by Maori, and other indigenous peoples, to government policies of assimilation, as conceptualised by Durie (2001). From this resistance, the concept of academic success therefore becomes a Maori aspiration, where it is transformed into a positive notion of tino rangatiratanga (self-determination). The Tainui Maori Trust Board, which is examined in detail in Chapter Five, has expressed this notion of tino rangatiratanga in its mission statement: “To grow, prosper and survive” (Tainui Maori Trust Board 1997).

This chapter, therefore, seeks to identify key concepts of academic success. This chapter also seeks to identify whether a uniquely Maori definition of success exists, which will be tested against the graduates’ experiences in Chapter Six in order to determine what ‘works’ for Maori academic achievement.

Variables of academic achievement

At the beginning of this chapter, I identified a number of studies that had identified the diverse range of variables, which contribute to academic achievement. From a western perspective, as Killen (1994:199) has observed, “academic success at university is usually described in terms of grade point average (GPA), or in terms of course completion.” Killen (1994:199-200) further identified that teaching strategies, motivation and cultural expectations were among the numerous other factors that might influence student success at university. I was particularly interested in examining variables that appear to have more relevance to the Maori experience of participating in higher education. In particular, studies have determined the role of whanau (family) in terms of supporting Maori students (Barrington 1987; Chapple et al 1997; Fitzgerald 1977; Jones 1976; Mitchell 1988), and the role of mentoring in aiding academic achievement (Jacobi 1991; Pascarella 1980; Gandara 1994; Fitzgerald 1977; Erkut & Mokros 1984). The literature has also underlined the impact finances have on Maori participation (Chapple et al 1997; Davies & Nicholl 1993; Durie 1995). Other studies have also indicated the need for institutions to become more reflective of indigenous and minority concerns and aspirations if they desire greater participation and graduation of indigenous and minority peoples (C. Barnhardt 1994; Kirkness & Barnhardt 1991; Hurtado & Carter 1997; Ogbu 1978; Lowe 1999; Wright 1987). This focus then ensures a base from which examinations of both the University of Waikato and the Tainui Maori Trust Board can occur. I was also interested in gaining a better understanding of issues that affect indigenous, minority and Maori participation in higher education. In particular, research has highlighted issues of access (Miller 1999; Howe 1974; Kwapong 1974; Chan & Wang 1991; Ballard 1973) and equal opportunity and affirmative action or compensatory education (Shuker & Harker 1986; Bates 1980; Ogbu 1978; Tierney 1997). These factors, therefore, have been isolated for further examination in this chapter, in order to place in context the questions posed to the graduates in Chapters Six and Seven.

Family

The role of the family in relation to academic achievement has been studied extensively and from a number of angles (Fitzgerald 1977; Gorard, Rees & Fevre 1999; Ho & Willms 1996; Jones 1976, 1989; Jules & Kutnick 1990; Okagaki & Frensch 1998; Mickelson 1990). Jules & Kutnick (1990:223) have suggested that “familial factors” be considered alongside national and communal factors, all of which in their opinion should be included “in any explanation of academic success.” Mickelson (1990:59) concurs with this suggestion, stating, “an often-neglected but critical factor in the level of achievement may well be the student’s perception of what her or his efforts and accomplishments in school ultimately will bring for the larger society.” However, Mickelson (1990:58) acknowledges the role of the family in academic achievement, describes this relationship as “one of the most enduring findings of social science research.”

Gorard, Rees & Fevre (1999) conducted a study on the role of families regarding patterns of participation in lifelong learning. They found that “families are universally acknowledged or a key determinant of educational performance in primary and secondary schooling and by extrusion, in higher education too” (Gorard, Rees & Fevre 1999:517). With particular attention to higher and post-compulsory education, Gorard, Rees & Fevre (1999:531) advance that while the role and significance of family participation decreases as the child gets older, there is “sufficient evidence” linking the role of families to the “transition from initial to post-compulsory education training.” These findings therefore suggest that the role of the family is one that is supportive of participation in the education system.

Ho & Willms’ (1996) study also examined the role of the family in academic achievement. Focussing on the effects of parental involvement in the achievement of 8th graders, Ho & Willms (1996:137) found that the home environment “particularly in discussing school activities and helping children plan their programs” had the “strongest relationship to academic achievement.” The role of the home environment is also considered by Jones (1976, 1989) and Fitzgerald (1977:42), whose study on the Maori graduate found “most Maori

graduates...drew heavy emphasis on...the influence of parents” which related to their academic achievement. Deyhle (1995) provides another view of the role of the family in academic achievement. From her study of Navajo peoples, Deyhle (1995:408) found that the “successful Navajo is judged on intact extended familial relations, where individual’s jobs and educational successes are used to enhance the family.” In this way, the Navajo family embraces and acknowledges the educational success of the family member, but not if that success has been achieved at the expense of the family relationship.

Another angle on the role of parental support in academic achievement is offered by Stevenson & Lee (1990). The focus of their study compared American, Chinese and Japanese families in an attempt to determine whether cultural or ethnic traits impacted on approaches and attitudes to academic achievement. They found that American parents placed greater emphasis on “innate ability” while Chinese and Japanese parents stressed the importance of “hard work” (Stevenson & Lee 1990:v-vi). In other words, the American attitude aligned achievement with something that one is born with, whereas the Chinese and Japanese parents felt that achievement came with consistent work and practice. However, this emphasis on hard work and the subsequent achievement of students from Asian ethnic backgrounds has inadvertently created a negative scenario, which Chan & Wang (1991) have coined the ‘model minority.’ The familial and parental expectations of Asian ethnic groups, coupled with their subsequent academic achievements have resulted in instances of racism, which Chan & Wang (1991) and Hurtado et al (1998) have found to be associated with western, or White, inability to accommodate examples of other cultures succeeding in western-framed terms.

Okagaki & Frensch (1998) examined Asian-American, Latino and European-American families in relation to parenting beliefs and practices, and achievement across different ethnic groups. While they found that “any single belief may not easily explain differences in child outcomes across ethnic groups,” they also highlighted the different beliefs and behaviours of parents across ethnic groups, which meant that strategies used by one ethnic group to achieve success were not necessarily adaptable to another ethnic group (Okagaki & Frensch 1998:124).

Furthermore, parental expectations also differed in regards to what Okagaki & Frensch (1998:142) describe as a “global constellation of beliefs...regarding multiple aspects of life (eg, the importance of family, principles of child development, education, perspective of work, and their general world view).” In essence, the role of family in relation to academic achievement, as perceived by Okagaki & Frensch is influenced by ethnic background and family perceptions, which are shaped and influenced by ethnicity.

Ogbu & Simons (1998:155) review Ogbu’s earlier research on the issue of voluntary and involuntary minority groupings, positing a “cultural-ecological theory of minority school performance.”² According to Ogbu & Simon (1998), voluntary minorities embrace the ethos of the American way of life, with parents impressing upon their children the desire to achieve high academic standards, and providing the support systems for their children to do so. Thus, the students “share their parents’ and community’s positive attitudes and verbal commitment to school” (Ogbu & Simons 1998:177). On the other hand, Ogbu & Simons (1998:177) advance that involuntary minorities have “ambivalent attitudes” toward education, where “their support for the abstract ideology that education is the key to success in life is contradicted by their concrete experiences with society.” The dichotomy of this point is highlighted by Alvord (1998:214), who relates this experience: “My father and grandmother had been punished for speaking Navajo in school. Navajos were told that, in order to be successful, they would need to forget their language and culture and adopt American ways.” These types of negative educational experiences suffered by parents and grandparents illustrate the ambivalence towards education, as described by Ogbu & Simons (1998), and the difficulties minority families must overcome in order to support and celebrate their children’s academic success. Furthermore, these statements tie in with Okagaki & Frensch’s (1998) findings regarding differences towards achievement among parents across ethnic groups.

² Ogbu’s definition of voluntary and involuntary minority groups can be found in his work conducted in the Stockton community (1971, 1991) and his identification of minority caste groups during his research on cross cultural issues in the American education system (1978).

Another example of the influence of parental perceptions, particularly when examining parental backgrounds and educational experiences, is demonstrated in Gandara's (1994) study. Gandara found that Hispanic parents did not want their children to have to struggle academically, socially and financially, as they had done. Therefore, they supported their children's ambition to pursue higher education. Despite limited financial resources, families find other ways of supporting their children's education, such as "protecting their time to study" (Gandara 1994:17).

While the experiences of involuntary minorities as described by Ogbu & Simons (1998) have resulted in some ambivalence towards educational achievement, other research has also been found which shows how parental educational experiences have contributed to how their children view and are exposed to notions of academic success. Alongside Gandara's (1994) study, which identified parental desire for their children to achieve more than what they themselves were able to is seen in Miller's (1999) study, which reviewed parenting-related human capital differences, as well as education-relevant cultural differences among groups. One key aspect that Miller (1999) found was that the exposure of parents to formal education correlated with parental participation in their children's education. Thus, White parents (who were more likely to be tertiary educated) spent more time helping their children with academic tasks than non-Whites, thus becoming active agents in their children's success. Miller (1999:70) alludes to the process of "family acculturation" as a notion of academic achievement, which, for example, influences Asian-American student approaches to education.

As has been demonstrated in this section, family support in academic achievement is varied and can also be influenced by other variables, such as race, ethnicity, socio-economic background, and past educational experiences. The difference between majority and minority groups is illustrated most graphically in parental experiences of having to endure a hostile education system, and because or in spite of these experiences, parental attitudes and support for their children range from ambivalence to resilience.

Mentoring

Jacobi (1991:505) states that mentoring is “a critical component of effective undergraduate education” as a tool to aid in student retention. In an analysis of the literature on mentoring, Jacobi found that there were a great number of diverse programmes available, and highlighted the problematic issues associated with such diversity in terms of defining what mentoring actually means and what it does. At least 15 core activities associated with mentoring were identified, ranging from advice and guidance, to being a role model, a coach, and a provider of information, to being an advocate for the student being mentored.

The crux of Jacobi’s analysis on mentoring concluded that the problematic issue was the lack of empirical research from which to draw specific conclusions. A number of theoretical models of mentoring were proposed, ranging from involvement in learning, academic and social integration, social support, to developmental support (Jacobi 1991:523-525). Gandara (1994:28) found that varying definitions on mentoring shared a common notion that “the participants’ relationship must be one of superior and subordinate and the subordinate’s career is advanced through this relationship.” This has the possibility of asserting a power/knowledge relationship, particularly when viewed in context with dominant attitudes to minority education.

Pascarella (1980:547) described mentoring relationships between faculty and students, where “students may establish certain boundary conditions in which faculty norms and requirements shape their formal, academic activities, and peers dominate their nonclassroom lives to the virtual exclusion of faculty.” However, Pascarella also highlighted the positive educational outcomes associated with types of informal faculty contact. Pascarella (1980:548) states that despite the numerous variables employed in such contact, the educational outcomes as a result of this contact included “career plans and educational aspirations, satisfaction with college, intellectual and personal development, academic achievement, and college persistence.” This statement was reflected in the findings of Erkut & Mokros’ (1984) study on professors as mentors for students at

university, who concluded that the relationship between student and mentor was primarily academic in nature.

Fitzgerald's (1977) study of the Maori graduate explores the relationship of family members and particularly teachers in mentoring students through their university experiences. Fitzgerald (1977:42) found that "most Maori graduates...drew heavy emphasis on...the influence of parents and teachers, in continuing schooling." Killen's (1994:208) study on lecturer and student perceptions and how they influenced academic success, determined that while both students and lecturers were jointly responsible in their contribution to student success at university, students were often influenced by others because of their tendency to "see themselves operating in an environment that is regulated largely by others." Therefore, it could be argued that while a student/mentor relationship may indeed be primarily academic in nature, the role of mentors, especially mentors who hold academic positions, can be hugely influential of student success.

Pascarella's (1980:556) study also examined the role of peers within the mentoring context, which found that "the informal student-peer culture may be one of the most potent campus influences in shaping academic values." Pascarella (1980:563) observed that one aspect of this type of mentoring allowed students to be a "moderating influence on faculty attempts to socialise students to the intellectual goals of the institution." In her study of Chicano excellence, Gandara (1994:27) defined mentoring as "a process by which a particular individual dramatically affected the subject's orientation to schooling." Gandara found that a large number of the students involved in her study drew on mentors from outside the academy, and included members of students' families, family friends, and people of influence in students' lives (such as priests). Similarly, Jones (1977) also found a variety of people helped to shape and support student experiences and participation at university.

As mentioned, Jacobi's review of the literature on mentoring found that there was insufficient empirical evidence from which to make conclusive comments.

Indeed, this section has shown that mentoring has been described as both academic and non-academic in its nature, is influenced by people from within and outside of the academy, and has varying influences in terms of its contribution to academic achievement. Perhaps what could be concluded from this discussion on mentoring is Jacobi's suggestion, based on Erkut & Mokros' (1984:515) study, "that mentor relationships are by-products rather than causes of high achievement."

Financial issues

The issue of finances and financial assistance for students in higher education has been debated at length in the New Zealand context.³ The debate, which has centred on the extent to which students should have to pay for their tertiary education, has become a characteristic feature of the state of the New Zealand tertiary education system in recent years. In short, this move was as a result of the views of "economic theorists of the libertarian right" which "set the policy agenda for change in the tertiary sector" (Patterson 1996:139). Durie (1995:5) describes the shift to the "goals and language of economic efficiency" having "overtaken social goals." Critics across the education sector have expressed similar sentiments (Irwin 1991, 1999; Marshall 1991; Middleton, Codd & Jones 1990; Smith 1991, 1995).

Government funding for the tertiary education sector was reduced and there was an increased emphasis on the individual to pay for their higher education. Government funding for tertiary institutions was based on a "formula related to equivalent full-time students in various course categories" where "students would be charged fees, and there would be a student loan scheme which would charge sufficient interest to cover the cost of inflation" (Butterworth & Butterworth 1998:164). Student fees were raised in 1991, and continued to rise throughout the 1990s. As Patterson (1996:148) stated, "this significant break from the traditional, virtually free state provision of tertiary education, was to set the path for continuing fees increases."

³ In this section, I pay specific attention to the New Zealand context in relation to finances and higher education.

Part of the argument for greater individual financial accountability in tertiary education arose out of trying to determine (or justify) the benefits back to society that warranted such large contributions to higher education (Woodhall 1987b). Butterworth & Butterworth (1998:239) briefly commented on the introduction of higher fees and student loans, warning that “the increasing level of student indebtedness has become a matter of public concern, and if it continues to rise has the potential to become a major political embarrassment.” Butterworth & Butterworth (1998:239) warned that due to the extent of the reforms, particularly with the introduction of student loans, such arrangements “do not serve well the policy of increasing the skills of New Zealanders because they contain no incentive to complete the qualification the student has enrolled for.” Patterson (1996:161) describes the period as “misguided change, rather than educational reform.”

According to Patterson (1996:147), the introduction of increased student fees “had a decided impact” where student numbers increased, but at a “reduced rate.” However, all of these reforms occurred during a period of rapid growth in the numbers of Maori participating in university education.⁴ How have these policy changes impacted on Maori participating in the tertiary, and specifically, university education system?

In 1996, the Director of the Centre for Maori Studies and Research, at the University of Waikato, commented on the impact of student fees increases and the retention of Maori students on campus (Mahuta 1996). Responding to a request made by the Vice-Chancellor, the Director concluded that increasing student fees were negatively impacting Maori enrolments. This was in contrast to the growth experienced (outlined above), and Davies & Nicholl’s (1993) assertion that fees increases would not necessarily disadvantage Maori, due to their inclusion within targeted categories and possible eligibility for subsidies. However, Durie (1995:2) believes the increase in tertiary education costs have “major repercussions for Maori students with limited access to disposable income.” Hurtado et al

⁴ Butterworth & Butterworth (1998) estimate that the growth of Maori enrolments between 1991 and 1996 was 103 percent.

(1998:288) identified that researchers of American “student financial aid have found that financial aid generally does what it was designed to do: it increases access to higher education by increasing the probability that students will attend college,” although they also found instances where poor racial and ethnic families have been disadvantaged by financial aid policies, “thus reducing equity and college access for them.” The first part of Hurtado et al’s statement reflects Davies & Nicholl’s (1993) thinking. However, Hurtado et al’s findings regarding poor racial/ethnic groups provides evidence that suggests a closer examination of the relationship between financial aid programmes and Maori access to and successful participation in higher education is required.

The introduction of standard government-set tertiary fees in 1990 was changed in 1992, after the national elections, allowing tertiary institutions the power to set their own fees. Stephens & Boston (1994:109) reported that the establishment of a Ministerial Consultative Group in 1993 by the Minister of Education was “to advise government on how the expected growth in the number of tertiary students should be funded.” The Ministerial Consultative Group, which produced the Todd Report and was composed mainly of people known for their “conservative and/or market-liberal views”, was expected to “defend the status quo or seek higher government subsidies” (Stephens & Boston 1994:116). Presenting three options, two of which recommended greater student contribution, the Todd Report was effectively seen as “poor value for money” where “no new empirical data or research findings were provided on important issues which underpin the policy recommendations” (Stephens & Boston 1994:120).

Subsequent to the Todd Report, the government abolished the universal student allowance scheme, which was replaced by targeted allowances. The Student Loan programme was established, where it was envisaged that students would be charged a “positive real interest rate” and would be required to repay loans once their income exceeded “\$13,520 per annum at the rate of 10c in the dollar” (Stephens & Boston 1994:113). The Manaaki Tauira programme was introduced for Maori students, while other scholarships, including those offered by Maori and iwi tribal organisations, were attainable depending on the availability of funds.

Durie (1995:3) saw the introduction by the government of the Manaaki Tauria programme as “positive,” with the support making a difference to “successful student study and retention at universities.” In the first year of establishment, the Manaaki Tauria programme was administered by each institution, a move that Durie felt was effective. The process has since been handled by external agencies, which has seen students “well into debt and associated miseries before financial support was forthcoming” (Durie 1995:3).

According to a report by the Ministry of Education (1997a:29), students decide to participate in tertiary education depending upon the ability to finance this education. For Maori, this ability to obtain funding from student loans and allowances influences such a decision. The Ministry of Education (1997a:29) found that Maori were more likely to receive financial assistance in the form of loans or allowances than non-Maori. What has yet to be calculated, however, is the effect of loans on the future earnings capacity for Maori.

In 1995, the Tainui Maori Trust Board signed the Raupatu Settlement with the New Zealand government. As mentioned in the first chapter, one of the main emphases of the Board since its inception has been promoting the value of education. Since the signing of the Settlement, education was lauded by the Board as being a way for “the tribe to grow, prosper and survive” (Tainui Maori Trust Board 1997:22). Given the increasing constraints placed on Maori to participate in tertiary education as a result of increases in student fees and decreases in eligibility for student allowances, the Board significantly increased its financial contribution to tribal members enrolled in tertiary education, from \$400,000 in 1994 to in excess of \$1 million by 1997. In essence, therefore, the Board attempted to implement a strategy that removed some of the barriers that have existed for Maori wanting to participate in higher education. This thesis examines the extent to which this strategy has succeeded, and the extent to which this strategy has effectively assisted tribal members seeking and succeeding in their pursuit of a university qualification.

The role of finances in New Zealand higher education has been contentious and topical during the decade of the 1990s. Undergoing significant change, student

contribution to their higher education has significantly increased over this period. The context in which these changes were initiated has been described as reflective of 'New Right' philosophies (as described in Chapter One), emphasising greater individual contribution towards their own education. While strategies have been implemented to assist students disadvantaged by the increase in student tuition costs and decreasing student allowances, there has been conflicting information both as to the need and effect of such programmes. As a result, statements pertaining to the effect of finances on academic achievement must be considered largely inconclusive.

Institutional support

The role of the institution in promoting and supporting minority academic success has been examined at length. This examination has largely been framed from the perspective that institutions have failed to acknowledge the different expectations, requirements and needs that minority students require in order to achieve academic success. A number of research studies have examined the systemic issues that impact upon the ability of minority students to successfully participate in education (Barnhardt 1991; Deyhle 1995; Hurtado & Carter 1997; Hurtado et al 1998; Kirkness & Barnhardt 1991; Lowe 1999; Miller 1999; Ogbu 1978; Pena 1997; Wright 1987). Wright (1987:17) considers that an "unsupportive campus environment contributes to a student's lowered satisfaction with college and can result in a premature exit from campus without a degree." By and large, Wright (1987:11) believes the inability of institutions to even acknowledge problems in retaining and graduating minority students is because of the "emphasis on Euro-Western values." As a result, problems of minority academic success become minority issues rather than institutional ones. Kirkness & Barnhardt (1991:2) agree, posing the question: "why do universities continue to perpetuate policies and practices that have historically produced abysmal results for First Nations students, when we have ample research and documentary evidence to indicate the availability of more appropriate and effective alternatives?"

In examining the role of the institution, Miller (1999) has found that a key aspect contributing to minority academic success lies in institutional leadership. Miller

(1999:80) states that in order for strategies with minority academic achievement in mind to succeed, “leadership must come...from senior academic officials as well.” The effectiveness of programmes designed for minority, indigenous and Maori recruitment and retention will be diminished if support ‘from the top’ is not given. ‘From the top’ includes administrative, management and academic staff in positions of responsibility and influence. Miller (1999:81) believes that people within such positions need to “embrace high academic achievement for minorities as a priority objective – one that leads them to make use of the best available strategies in this area.” In a discussion by Hurtado et al (1998:279-280) on the role of leadership in managing racial and ethnic diversity, they reveal that, “higher education leaders and higher education institutions have taken the *laissez-faire* approach that people will (should) work things out.”

The nonchalance of leaders in higher education institutions is evident in minority and indigenous struggles to participate effectively. This nonchalance is seen in institutional responses, which Kirkness & Barnhardt (1991:3) have described as attempts to “intensify pressure on...students to adapt and become integrated into the institution’s social fabric.” Kirkness & Barnhardt (1991:3) suggest that a university is useful:

only to the extent that it respects and builds upon the cultural integrity of the student. Programs and services that are offered must connect with students’ own aspirations and cultural predispositions sufficiently to achieve a comfort level that will make the experience worth enduring.

Pena’s (1997) study on school leadership and cultural difference analysed institutional leadership beliefs and practices to better understand the impact of their expectations and practices on minority urban school students. Pena found that the issue of difference and perceptions of difference underpinned academic achievement of Mexican American students. In particular, Pena (1997:14) felt that educational leaders needed to become “knowledgeable of minority cultural traditions” and “more reflexive in their thinking about culture” where a “fuller understanding of cultural differences may require experiencing them in and out of

the formal educational setting, and perhaps experiencing what it means to be different in a predominantly minority context.”

In order to become more reflexive of minority needs and aspirations, Miller (1999:81) has suggested that institutions “should actively be seeking additional resources to implement these strategies and, where necessary, to develop more effective ones.” Kirkness & Barnhardt (1991:1) suggest that institutions need to care for their minority students by providing a system that:

respects them for who they are, that is *relevant* to their view of the world, that offers *reciprocity* in their relationships with others, and that helps them exercise *responsibility* over their own lives.

Kirkness & Barnhardt (1991) believe that a fundamental error of higher education institutions is their inability to adjust to the specific needs of indigenous students. In particular, they felt that poor retention, high attrition and low achievement were failures on the part of minority students to adjust to the demands of institutional study. Kirkness & Barnhardt suggest that institutions reflect on their own construction and how they operate, in order to become more aware of the needs of minority students, and responsive to their specific requirements.

A report by the American Council on Education (1993:32) also identified the need for institutions to be more responsive to the needs of minority students. The report highlighted the need for “strong campus leadership and faculty support” in ensuring the development and growth of an institutional climate that was supportive of minority student retention. Reporting on the findings of studies of four institutions, it was found that there were common links across these institutions that supported and enhanced minority retention and participation. Most importantly, it was felt that a comprehensive approach in addressing minority student needs included incorporating financial support services, as well as addressing environmental and academic issues (American Council on Education 1993:35).

A large portion of research on the role of institutions in minority academic success point to the climate or the environment of the institution itself (Takara 1991; American Council on Education 1993; Barnhardt 1991; Kirkness & Barnhardt 1991; Deyhle 1995; Mirza 1995; Wright 1987). The inability of the institution to see things from a minority point of view as highlighted earlier by Kirkness & Barnhardt (1991) has been reflected in a number of other studies and is echoed by minority graduates. A collection of narratives of First Nations/Native American graduates by Garrod & Larrimore (1997) relate in detail at having to adjust to an institutional climate that was western in its construction and its philosophy, and that was rather inflexible to adjusting to the needs of its minority student collective. These narratives speak of the need to survive the institutional climate in order to succeed. Takara (1991) also identifies the need to survive the institutional experience that is higher education. Specifically pointing to a climate of racism and faculty inertia, Takara (1991:90) calls for institutions to display a “sincere commitment...to minorities” that will be reflected in its curriculum and the provision of support services, helping to “rectify the sense of anomie” as well as leading to a “more harmonious, nurturing learning environment.”

Due to the continued resistance of mainstream institutions in assisting and supporting minority academic success, indigenous peoples have taken to establishing their own institutions, either in competition or in conjunction with those offered by the dominant, mainstream culture. These indigenous institutions reflect cultural concerns and aspirations, and strive to adopt policies and processes that better reflect the needs of their own peoples. Boyer’s (1997:1) study on the development of First Nations/Native American colleges found that their establishment assisted in the “social renewal” of the First Nations/Native American people, where “they are changing lives and offering real hope for the future.” Schwab (1996b:10), through research conducted among Aboriginal communities, has also examined the role of indigenous institutions in providing better services and outcomes for their own people, concluding, “the achievement of competence in both worlds should be the ultimate aim of Indigenous education.” Similarly, Maori have established Whare Wananga to provide more conducive environments for Maori students at the tertiary level (Mead 1997b).

These efforts by indigenous and minority peoples have challenged western ways of thinking about and constructing higher education.

This section has identified research that has shown how institutional support can impact positively on minority academic achievement. The role of the institution in providing a climate that is conducive to minority student needs and aspirations has been demonstrated in the provision of support services and through strong campus leadership. However, the experiences of minority students are still predominantly affected by the institutional ethos, which in turn is largely constructed along western ideologies. As such, institutions rarely factor minority requirements, and instead expect minority students to adjust to the institutional climate and culture. Indigenous and minority peoples have developed strategies to help survive this climate, to the extent of establishing their own institutions in order to provide an institutional environment that is more in tune with their own cultural aspirations and ideas.

Access

Miller (1999:66) states that access to “formal education changes the way people think and behave – they acquire skills, habits of mind, and information that are important for functioning in the modern world.” Critical to the debate on participation by Maori in the education system is their ability and entitlement to equal access opportunities. In New Zealand, access to higher education for Maori has been hindered by factors such as financial and economic constraints (Ministry of Education 1995:29). The introduction of the Student Loan Scheme was seen by the New Zealand government as an attempt to remove the financial difficulty facing students, thus freeing up access to higher education, although the extent to which this has been achieved has been debated. Gould (1999) believes there is a paradox in the attitudes of people toward university education. This paradox arises in that while demand for tertiary education increases, the willingness of the community to subsidise the cost for such a demand is decreasing. Gould (1999:28) muses that “it is almost as if the middle class – the traditional beneficiaries of tertiary education – were willing to pay through their taxes as long as it was their offspring who benefited but are no longer willing to fund

universities if a wider sector of society is to get in on the act.” For those who have historically been denied such opportunities to access, higher education has been seen as the “route to economic success and as related to achieving political power” (Howe 1974:45). First Nations also share this view of education as being a key to empowerment (Kirkness & Barnhardt 1991:11). If the view of the minority were on access to economic and political success and power, then Gould’s statement would seem to make sense with regard to the unwillingness of the middle-class to contribute further.

According to Kwapong (1974), higher education, through its ability to teach and research, is a promoter of national development. However, Kwapong (1974:116) believes that, for developing countries, the issue of access into higher education is “how to ensure that the selection process is genuinely equitable, fair, efficient and based upon genuine merit, that is, open to all people of talent.” This raises the question of how one balances the desire of ensuring and aiding access to higher education, with the actual selection process that is almost always based on merit. It is a challenge that I think few institutions have managed to adapt to successfully. Durie (1997:12) has suggested a “renegotiation of the terms of access so that being Maori is compatible with other callings.”

In America, studies have found that there is an increasing debate as to the access of Asian American students to the more elite higher education institutions. Chan & Wang (1991:55) have found that since discrimination on racial grounds has been made illegal, Ivy League institutions have “seized upon language and cultural differences as pretexts for exclusion.” Specifically, they found that the issues for exclusion were based on the numbers of non-native speakers of English and the resulting difficulties in having to cater for such students. While the Asian-American groups fight back, it raises the issue as to why such institutions seek to exclude these, and other, minority groups.

According to Chan & Wang (1991:57), the issue is relatively simple - there is not enough room at the top:

Whereas having a small number of Asian-Americans succeed is a confirmation that the American dream still works, seeing “hordes” do so is too frightening. Those who guard the gates into the elite stratum of American society feel that they must keep the doors closed against a “new yellow peril.”

This incidence is not exclusive to the American scene. Several years ago there was great debate about the entrance requirements for the University of Auckland’s Medical School. In particular, the medical school attempted to refine its admission requirements, changing the usually strict adherence to academic achievement to one of a more ‘holistic’ approach. At the time, many argued that this was to protect the ‘old boys’ network, whose sons and daughters were missing out on the highly competitive places to higher-achieving Asian students. Similar to the American experience, the changes were justified as issues of language and an increasing (and sudden) desire to better understand and communicate with the ‘Kiwi’ culture. Instances such as these serve to reinforce statements like Gould’s regarding the self-interest of the White middle-class.

Noel (1985:20) argues that “traditional indicators of quality” such as access and admittance criteria need to be revised to new indicators, such as increasing the competency base of the students, where the emphasis becomes value added education. Quevedo-Garcia’s (1987:61) study of Hispanic students also suggests the need for institutions to broaden their access and admissions criteria (aside from traditional indicators such as grade point averages) “that can be more realistically applied” to the various student populations.

Those who argue against easing access restrictions to higher education, raise issues of ‘dumbing down’ and ‘reverse racism,’ as Ballard (1973:91) has found:

Cutting across all...variations of compensatory education programs was the problem of how much academic leniency was to be granted to specially admitted students. Were retention standards to be altered because such students needed time to repair the gaps in their academic skills, or would not such a policy constitute both “reverse racism” and a dilution of the educational quality of the institution?

The move towards a value added education also sits uncomfortably with the more 'New Right' focus of higher education, where emphasis is placed on individual competition and excellence as indicators influencing access and admission policies. Hurtado et al (1998:283) argues that this type of approach is the result of "the maintenance of old campus policies...that best serve a homogenous population, and attitudes and behaviours that prevent interaction across race and ethnicity." As a result, it is argued that because of the very nature and ethos of some institutions, issues such as access become clouded in issues which preserve the self-interest of a select group, as mentioned earlier by Gould and reinforced here.

Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action and Compensatory Education

The rationale behind the "equal opportunity" concept in higher education is that education is available to "all" – that is, no discrimination on race, gender or ability. The premise for equal opportunity is that the world operates in a fair and just manner, there are no colours – everything is the same. The New Zealand education system purports to be egalitarian, displaying a "continued commitment to the ideal of equality of educational opportunity" (Shuker & Harker 1986:9). Shuker & Harker (1986:4) relate this to the well known statement made by Peter Fraser, the New Zealand Minister of Education in 1939, who stated that the aim of education was to guarantee that "every person" has a right to a "free education of the kind for which he is best fitted." There is some ambiguity in Fraser's statement "for which he is best fitted." Bates (1980:17) refers to these types of ambiguities as "*not* a consensus of opinion on the part of New Zealanders, but rather *apparent* agreement based upon considerable latitude and vagueness of definition and interpretation."

Depending on the literature, the egalitarian status of education and the equal opportunities that arise for all in New Zealand either exists (Shuker & Harker 1986; Butchers 1930; Cumming & Cumming 1978), or does not (Walker 1984; Davies & Nicholl 1993; Smith 1993; Durie 1997). What results are advocacies for equal opportunity on the one hand, and for separate and different requirements to address issues such as proportional representation on the other. What emerges

then, is a system which is neither egalitarian nor can be defined as providing equal opportunity (in whatever way that is defined). Instead, Bates (1980:28) sees a diverse system that tries to reflect the diverse needs of its constituents, as stated:

we need to develop our system into one that is as diverse and differentiated as the students who enter the system, a system that recognises the differing rewards individuals may seek within that system, and one that recognises that the concept of educational opportunity has indeed changed.

Ogbu (1978:1-2) states that the reason for the persistence of inequality existing in the education system has been due to the “liberal elites of the dominant group” failing to realise that some of their basic assumptions upon which their policies are grounded have been “marred by theoretical confusion, barren methodology, politics and a lack of emotional detachment.” Ogbu believes that because the concept of equal opportunity has been very limited in its focus, this has actually worked against the objective itself. Nieves-Squire (1992) agrees with Ogbu in relating the Hispanic women’s experience in higher education being caused more by lack of opportunity to participate as opposed to lack of interest, as has been suggested by social scientists. However, in order to overcome such irregularities, Foster (1987) states that it is simply not just a matter of putting in place an ill-designed policy that serves to patch up the immediate problem. Foster (1987:95) believes that “once patterns of inequality emerge their eradication is less a matter of decades but generations.” Ogbu (1978:5) agrees with this sentiment, believing that redefining the concept of equal opportunity, as discussed, will progress the research toward developing “sound policies and programs” aimed at reducing the “academic retardation” currently being experienced by minority and indigenous groups.

Tierney’s (1997) discussion on the affirmative action policy in America states that there are two ways in which this policy has been viewed. Some view affirmative action as being a “tool” for strengthening social bonds, while others view it as a “weapon” that retards individual liberty (Tierney 1997:166). The policy itself is divided in its support in the American context. While some see it as creating more discrimination, others feel that it is necessary to redress some of the imbalances

that have occurred through historical, political and social events. In the New Zealand context, while no affirmative action policy (in the form it appears and operates in America) exists, the issue of compensatory education and its role in the supposed egalitarian education system that operates here becomes an important focus.

Tierney (1997:166) believes there is no “coherent” theoretical base for the American affirmative action policy. The main thrust of the policy is to target groups of minority populations, including women. The reasoning behind this targeting came about because campuses were “White, male centres of learning” (Tierney 1997:167). The angle of this policy (in the higher education sector) therefore can be viewed as being the tool for the strengthening of social bonds by deconstructing the perceptions of the traditional campus structure alluded to earlier. What has resulted, in the American experience, has been a definitive split between those who support the concept of the socially cohesive tool and those who see the policy as being the weapon that allows for the destruction of individual liberty.

According to Trent (1991:1109-110), these programmes focus primarily on “service delivery” and vary from institution to institution, but based on a combination of “enforced legal mandates and good-faith efforts”; these programmes are viewed as the pathway to eliminating inequality. In essence, the affirmative action policy has raised such opposition because it affects the “very interests of academia” (Ballard 1973:83). Challenging the process of academic operations through the adoption of policies like affirmative action could be viewed as an admission of the failure of the education system, and thus a direct challenge to the system itself, and those who are traditionally involved in the decision making process. One could also view the resistance from certain quarters to policies because they are partly based on a rationale that Tierney has labelled, compensation, correction and diversification.

These labels, in Tierney’s opinion, refer to the ways of addressing the imbalances of society that have occurred historically, presently and will occur in the future.

As a basis from which affirmative action can be examined, it could be argued that this type of policy attempts to definitively envelope all societal ills in an idealistic bid to create a perfect society for the future. In effect, what has happened has been an institutional fear that standards of entry and retention would be diluted or disappear, or that such a policy would create a type of reverse racism, working against the barriers it purports to destroy. Ballard (1973) reported that these compensatory programmes were not constructed to give students (in this case Black) a fair chance at academic success. Instead, Ballard (1973:92) concluded:

the fear of dilution of the academic quality of the institutions was of such intensity that it quickly became evident to Black students and the specially recruited Black faculty that they were unwelcome guests, that the colleges were waiting for them to fail, and that the college would take every step necessary to see that a failure occurred.

In the New Zealand context, compensatory programmes, such as preferred quota systems and special admission programmes have been in place for some time, and not without attracting their fare share of controversy. Central to the argument against the introduction of these types of programmes has been the concern that some students are just not academically able to withstand the requirements demanded. Foster (1987:99) argues that this has been the failing of some educational policy developers in that “tentative research findings were used selectively to justify educational policies that had been decided upon for very different (often political) reasons.” Trent (1991:128) agrees with this failing, stating that there are “clear impediments to the potential successes of student affirmative action programs.”

The nature of compensatory education, through policies like affirmative action, is contentious and challenges the very (traditional) essence of higher education. Efforts to increase the diversity of student populations through the provision of these types of programmes have met with resistance from those who seek to protect their own self-interest and who have yet to incorporate cultural and ethnic diversity into their value system and the value system of the institution. As a

result, the introduction, effectiveness and success of these types of programmes remain questionable.

Barriers to Success – Western Limitations on Indigenous and Minority Academic Achievement

Smith (1995:19) has challenged that the “persistent educational and schooling crisis of underachievement” of Maori was that policy had “almost always been developed by Pakeha administrators” in a context that was based around the “unequal power relations between the dominant Pakeha and Maori subordinate communities.” Furthermore, “simplistic explanations” such as “poor retention rates of Maori into higher levels of schooling” were concealing opportunities to critique the real problems that lie within the state education system itself (Smith 1995:19). Glynn & Bishop (1995:37) agree in that the oversimplification of core issues in Maori education and academic achievement have resulted in an educational research approach that has “run the risk of undermining the capacity of minority...groups... which in turn may have a negative impact on achievement.” As a result, alternative concepts of education and non-western notions of achievement have not readily been recognised within the New Zealand education system.

The New Zealand education system is based on a history of perceiving Maori education as a ‘problem,’ which, combined with the unequal power relationship within which education policies have been developed and implemented, have never really allowed for meaningful Maori participation towards their own self-determination. Darnell (1983) has identified this as a core problem in the development of education systems in countries where dominant control exists. In particular, Darnell (1983:306) states that dominant western society developed education systems under the notion that it was best for indigenous communities “without contribution by indigenous communities in the decision making process.” As a result, autonomy and control become “fundamental issues of conflict” (Darnell 1983:306).

The lack of indigenous contribution, as Darnell describes, has contributed directly to the lack of Maori educational advancement, and has become the focus of Maori research in recent years into the lack of educational achievement, with particular focus on providing a Maori position that seeks self-determination for Maori through education (Smith 1995; Glynn & Bishop 1995; Irwin 1999). Similarly, Deyhle & Swisher (1997:116) argue that the lack of progress in educational research on the “Indian educational problem” was largely because research was “carried out by researchers who often do not have a long-term commitment to the community” and who tend to “buttress the assimilatory model by locating deficiencies in Indian students and families.” In response to the continued problem of First Nation/Native American underachievement, First Nation/Native American researchers have begun the task of examining the issues, “grounded in self-determination and the beliefs of cultural integrity” (Deyhle & Swisher 1997:116).

The practice of assimilation and the development of theories such as cultural difference and deprivation, have all contributed to ensure that western society has maintained its dominant position. Glynn (1998:4) states that the “cumulative effect of these policies has been to require Maori to sacrifice more and more of their language, culture and educational aspirations to the needs and aspirations of the majority culture,” and where “it would seem that participation in mainstream education has come for Maori at a cost of their own language, culture and identity.” The impact of the power imbalances between Maori and their dominant partner was outlined in the previous chapter, in particular how the assimilatory policies ensured the maintenance of Maori in their subordinate position. This chapter will now illustrate how such practices, described by Deyhle & Swisher (1997:117) as a “legacy of deficit thought,” attempted to subvert indigenous and minority peoples. The chapter will then outline how Maori, indigenous and minority peoples have fought back against these dominant prescriptions, rejecting the monocultural domination over concepts and definitions such as success, and highlight how such concepts have been redefined from indigenous, minority and Maori positions.

Theory and Practice of Assimilation

Further to the history of education developed by the dominant partner in order to assimilate Maori into European culture, as discussed in Chapter One, Lee & Lee (1995:96) found that Maori leaders, in the belief that “their tribes would acquire those skills, knowledge, and material goods that had made Britain a ‘superior nation’,” accepted early missionary education efforts and the introduction of Christianity. However, it soon became clear to Maori that missionary education was about introducing European concepts to the exclusion of traditional Maori values. Furthermore, Lee & Lee’s (1995:97) research concluded that a “discernible policy shift had occurred; no longer was the Colonial Office considering a Maori New Zealand in which a space would be created for British settlers but a Settler New Zealand in which a place had to be found for the Maori.” Bishop & Glynn (1999a:16) state that this policy shift also “attempted to replace a pre-existing and complex system, and subsequently attempted to deny or belittle the existence of such a system.” As Simon (1990:67) states, “whereas Maori sought schooling as a means to greater control over their lives, the missionaries and government, in providing such schooling, were concerned to gain greater control over the Maori.” This policy of assimilation, according to Dakin (1973:71), “befitted a race deemed to be declining and destined only for absorption in the general population.” In effect, this policy, in conjunction with the economic and political marginalisation of Maori, meant that Maori became strangers in their own country, to be consumed by the dominant society.

The “demonstrably assimilationist” (Lee & Lee 1995:97) position adopted by the colonial government ensured the rapid disintegration of Maori cultural values and ideas, which were regarded as simplistic and “not worthy of serious concern within the mainstream school curriculum” (Bishop & Glynn 1999a:16). Vercoe (1995:197) describes this approach as one of manipulation, where “knowledge became framed within a content of prescription: what was to be taught, served to legitimate the educational policies developed by succeeding governments.” According to Bishop & Glynn (1999a:16), assimilation was the “official government policy” until 1960.

The effect of this policy has resulted in a ‘dumbing down’ of Maori culture, Maori ideas, and Maori knowledge. The essence of Maori has been repeatedly stripped of its importance and significance within the lives of Maori people, and the results have ensured the maintenance of Maori in inferior positions of power and control, and subsequently ensured that Maori now occupy the lowest rungs of society’s ladder. The long-term effects of this constant degradation of core Maori cultural concepts and the indoctrination of assimilationist policies has resulted in what Reedy (1978:65) has described as Maori parents “unwittingly” passing “on to their children a negative view of Maoriness.”

Dakin (1973:71) states that in 1931, the policy of assimilation in the New Zealand education system was revised and “positive action was taken to encourage the study of Maori arts, history, traditions, social life and games...so that these things might become a source of pride” to Maori children. However, Dakin (1973:73) acknowledges that the “long history of lack of opportunities and encouragement has had unfortunate effects upon the educational achievement of Maori youth.” This was further reinforced during the 1960s, where a whole new range of educational theories focused the blame for such underachievement onto Maori themselves (Smith 1995).

During the 1960s, researchers locked on to theories of “psychological and social deficiencies” in attempts to explain minority academic failure (Gallimore, Whitehorn Boggs & Jordan 1974:19). According to Gallimore et al, (1974:19-20), it was “scientifically fashionable to ‘prove’ that disproportionate numbers of minority youth were retarded, abnormal, self-hating, and the like in order to justify public funding of remedial and compensatory programs.” New Zealand research also abounds with such ‘scientifically fashionable’ topics from this period, for example Beaglehole & Ritchie’s (1958) Rakau study, Lovegrove’s (1966) study on the scholastic achievement differences between Maori and non-Maori, and Ausubel’s (1970) work amongst Maori youth.

Deyhle & Swisher (1997:123) also cite that, during the 1960s, the “term *cultural deprivation* came into vogue to describe the limited experiences of poor or

impoverished children as a cause for poor academic achievement.” Carter & Goodwin (1994:297) found that the emphasis on cultural deprivation as a theory was because of the shift away from what they labelled ‘inferiority’ theory as a result of the “social activism of the 1950s and 1960s.” The emphasis on these theories placed the blame of minority academic underperformance on the minority/indigenous culture, without acknowledging that the system (developed and controlled by the dominant White society) was, in fact, a major contributor to the problem. According to Carter & Goodwin (1994:302), a large number of research projects, which focused on cultural deprivation, based the ‘norm’ on White values, thus reinforcing minority and indigenous subordination:

The cultural deprivation perspective has failed to acknowledge that Blacks, American Indians, Hispanics, and Asians have been historically disenfranchised in the United States and are the victims of an unequal society that has impeded their performance and academic success. Instead, these “low-caste” members have been viewed as products of deficit cultures needing to acculturate to the “American” way to achieve in the nation’s schools.

Previous education research and subsequent policy has determined that minority cultures have been capable of digesting only so much information and being more suited to labour-intensive rather than academic trades (Deyhle & Swisher 1997), and where racial identity has been the “primary determinant of educational aptitude” (Carter & Goodwin 1994:303). For instance, Ballard (1973:13) found that for Blacks, this led to the establishment of inferior schools and colleges, where “the source of funding was White, the faculties were White, the administrators were White” – in fact, everything was White except for the students themselves. Ogbu (1978) concurs with Ballard, citing that some of the reasons for Black failure have been due to assumptions made by usually White social scientists about what education should and should not be. Vercoe (1995:123) describes these types of assumptions, from a New Zealand and Maori perspective, where “the sum total of past paternalistic ‘efforts’ on the part of the government colonised Maori, and created an acceptance of their position so that Maori came to blame themselves for their lack of success.” These sentiments

highlight the effects successive assimilation-based policies have had on Maori; experiences that have been shared by other minority and indigenous peoples.

Ogbu's (1978) examination of minority education also highlights the assumptions and perceptions that frame dominant society's views toward minority and indigenous cultures. Specifically, education researchers and policy makers from the dominant paradigm choose to persist with the 'status quo' of determining what is best for minority and indigenous education. Majoribanks' (1979:13) study analysed the theories of cultural deprivation or relativism, and found that such theories inevitably required "policies of positive discrimination involving a redistribution of education resources in order to redress the perceived educational imbalances." In effect, Majoribanks' findings confirm Ogbu's view of dominant cultures further exacerbating issues through their assertion on the "In effect, Majoribanks' findings confirm Ogbu's (1978:15) view of dominant cultures further exacerbating issues through their concern "with what education ought to be rather than with what it actually is."

Since the 1960s, there has been a growing disquiet amongst minority and indigenous peoples to continue to accept the dominant viewpoint. It has reached the point where, according to Barnhardt (1991:12), minority and indigenous peoples are "taking matters into their own hands." From this perspective, I argue that Maori have joined in this fight against dominant constructs of what Maori education should and should not be, and are beginning to develop their own paths to academic achievement and success. In essence, Maori are resisting against the power position occupied by the dominant 'other,' where concepts and definitions have sought to exclude and marginalise Maori, and are creating their own, based on concepts that reflect Maori tino rangatiratanga (self-determination).

Moving Beyond 'Failure' – Cultural Definitions of Success

Soltis (1989:124) states that education is about the "formation of persons...about developing and contributing to the good life of individuals and society", where

society is perceived as being democratic. However, Bempechat & Drago-Severson (1999:299) have found that “in seeking the roots of cross-cultural differences in academic achievement, cultural psychologists and cultural anthropologists have tended to dichotomise different societies’ socialisation goals.” Maher & Tetreault (1997) go further, acknowledging that rather than being democratic, society is instead dominated by Whiteness. In an academic context, this dominance is:

a necessary part of perceiving how the assumption of Whiteness shapes the construction of classroom knowledge is understanding its centrality to the academy’s practices of intellectual domination, namely, *the imposition of certain ways of constructing the world through the lenses of traditional disciplines* (Maher & Tetreault 1997:325, own emphasis added).

One of the main difficulties for universities in modern times is the emphasis between “academic excellence versus relevance for...society” (Dahlof & Selander 1992:189). Given the dominance of Whiteness, as Maher & Tetreault have attested to, what place does success hold for minority and indigenous peoples within such confined constructs?

Academic success or achievement has been studied extensively. The key question remains, however, as to what is the best way of measuring academic achievement. Certainly studies have focused on specific aspects which impact on student achievement, such as teacher involvement, socio-economic status, attitude and genetic make-up – to name a few. Milner (1972:19) categorises achievement in three ways: motivation: “Do people have a strong desire to do well?” performance: “Do people in fact perform well?” which is influenced by things such as tools and availability of resources; and the social reward system: “Are people differentially rewarded for differential performance?” However, these categories are based on the notion that equality is a “derivative of achievement. Our commitment to achievement is primary, and our commitment to equality is in large measure a result of the former” (Milner 1972:12). If Maher & Tetreault (1997) have already identified that such concepts are defined by the dominant

White society, where then does that place achievement of minorities and indigenous peoples?

According to Ogbu (1978), a key failure in the assessment of achievement by social scientists is that they often neglect the issue of racial difference. This is shown in Woodhall's (1987a:349) assertion that "the simplest way of measuring the output of education is in terms of the number of pupils who are educated in a school, or the number of graduates...who leave an institution each year." Ogbu (1978:2) suggests that social scientists also rarely factor the "most obvious and common-sense aspect of education," that being the role education plays in the adult world. In particular, what purpose does education serve to society, to the communities in which educated individuals live, to the families of the educated, and to the individuals themselves? Foster (1987:93) professes that education is but one "individual variable in the process of social change," thus it is possible that the pendulum could swing either way where minority or indigenous education is concerned.

Indeed, Anderson (1985:49) believes that some students actually fear success because of "additional responsibilities or expectations" or being acculturated into a system that might "result in separation from or conflict with" family and friends. Entwistle (1968:89) states that the issue of success has become a recurrent theme in educational research, with many attempts to "unravel the complex determinants of academic attainment." However, research has yet to find a prescriptive formula on the issue of educational achievement, or on what makes a student successful. Minority and indigenous peoples are taking more control over their self-determination, and to this extent, have investigated – from their perspectives – what aspects have ensured minority and indigenous academic success. In essence, these efforts have filled the gap that Ogbu (1978) identified social scientists had not considered.

Research into the cultural interpretation of academic success and achievement has identified western and non-western concepts. Western notions of achievement typify a culture of individuality and capitalism, while non-western notions,

particularly seen in research from indigenous perspectives, views success in terms of collective benefit and self-determination (Barnhardt 1991; Deyhle 1995; Garrod & Larrimore 1997; Kirkness & Barnhardt 1991; Smith 1999). The role of ethnicity and particularly the maintenance of one's identity while aspiring to academic success has often been cast in terms of a strategy for survival (Ballard 1973; Hooks 1994; Mirza 1995; Takara 1991; Trask 1999; Smith 1999). This section examines the literature from specific ethnic/racial perspectives on the issue of academic achievement. Represented are two minority cultures – the Blacks and Hispanics - on which a considerable amount of research exists, and two indigenous cultural groups – First Nations/Native Americans and Maori – on which there is less extensive literature available that examines the concept of academic achievement and success. The intention of examining the literature from these perspectives is to gain a better insight into what success means, and what strategies are employed to attain success.

Black Notions of Success

According to Ogbu (1991), the basis of academic success for Blacks is drawn from good teaching and a good school environment. More importantly, however, is Ogbu's assertion that the critical factors that enable Blacks to succeed are derived from their own perceptions (both conscious and unconscious), interpretations and ability to respond to changes that occur within the education system. An integral part of this understanding is the need for Blacks to understand their relationships with Whites and, equally importantly to understand their own identity and culture as a Black people. This move towards Blacks defining their own perceptions of what constitutes success is echoed by Ladson-Billings (1990:336), who has found that the search for an "Afrocentric...definition of success has caused African-American scholars to move away from normative measures that are 'stacked' against black people and that are not appropriate for assessing a culture that is non-linear." Furthermore, Ladson-Billings (1990:337) believes that there are "standards of excellence within black culture that many youngsters strive to meet."

Ogbu's study of Stockton Blacks and their perceptions of success within education raises issues that are prevalent within many other cultures, Whites included. Desire for a better future, a better standard of living and good incomes are reasons cited from interviews conducted by Ogbu (1991:279). The challenge is the ability to translate such perceptions into the reality of everyday life, especially when the education system is controlled and manipulated by "middle class Whites, with a view to helping their own children's progress" (Vernon 1987:284).

The perception of what success is, and the reality of achieving such notions of success are often juxtaposed because, despite the fact that all cultures aspire to or have their own notions of success, what remains is the fact that the dominance of White culture prevails, a point alluded to by Ballard's (1973) quote at the beginning of the chapter. A study by Smith & Smith (1992), which investigates the traditional role of Black women transposed into higher education, provides an interesting contrast to the issue of Black success. They argue that the reason Black women have been able to succeed in the field of higher education (especially in the area of administration which is the focus of their study), is not due just to their "various traits, skills and desires to learn what the demands and opportunities of this society require", but is also as a result of a "deeper and more inspiring claim...unstated by the historical world of their female ancestors" (Smith & Smith 1992:25). The implication of this study reveals an ability to retreat into a culture's innermost sanctities and draw strength from such sources in order to cope with the demands and structures of a dominant society.

Smith & Smith's study could be considered a more 'radical' interpretation of Black success, as a large portion of research on Black educational achievement is based around defined, measurable, and usually western constructed variables. For example, Kraft's (1991) examination of Black success identified discipline and social support as being the two key factors. In particular, Kraft's study highlighted the narrow definitions achievement motivation theorists had regarding issues of academic achievement and success. Another example is O'Conner's (1999) study on the inequalities in achievement returns for Blacks, which found that family

background was important for success. Similarly, Floyd (1996) found that Black students who demonstrated resilient traits were more able to overcome barriers to their success. Furthermore, Floyd also identified family and institutional support, particularly in fostering and developing such resilience, as being contributing factors to academic success. Other studies, such as Sherman et al's (1994) examination of assessment and retention of Blacks in higher education, Walden's (1996) focus on Black female college students motivations to achieve, and Rowser's (1997) study on Black perceptions of their own needs in order to attain success, all point to attempts to define Black success, and highlight what O'Conner (1999:153) described as "the limitations of relying on a single social identity, such as race, as a way of understanding the determinants of academic engagement and performance." What then, does success mean for Blacks? How is it, or can it be distinguished from the types of western-influenced studies described above?

Rather than defining a uniquely Black perspective on success, hooks (1994) instead focused on Black strategies to achieve it. hooks frames her position as a way of transgressing western definitions of how and who can achieve success. Mirza (1995) also prefers to focus on strategies that enable Blacks to achieve academically. Mirza's (1995:147) study on Black women's achievement identified that they "strategically used every means at their disposal in the educational system...to achieve some measure of mobility in their world of limited opportunities." In order to do this, Black students literally kept their heads down and did the work, which Mirza (1995:152) states as being the Black agenda, "a strategy for survival and a way to progress."

Adopting strategies, and working through and around western systems, appear to demonstrate how Blacks have managed to succeed academically. However, the retention of Black identity has been a consistent factor, despite what may seem as merging into western society. This is characterised in Ballard's (1973) study on Black education in White America. As with hooks (1994) and Mirza (1995), Ballard (1973:57) found, "despite the psychic and social traumas suffered by the token Blacks in...white colleges, few were 'whitewashed' intellectually." As with

the quote at the beginning of this chapter, Ballard found that rather than being consumed by the White educational system, Blacks had instead become more aware of the inequalities suffered by their counterparts.

Acknowledging the dominance of the western education system, hooks, Mirza, Ballard and others have described how Blacks have adopted strategies to succeed. These strategies were adopted despite the assumption by western institutions that Blacks could not achieve, and in spite of western efforts to hinder Black success. In essence then, the Black notion of success reinforces Ogbu's statement earlier in this section that Blacks are able to derive their own perceptions of success, based upon their identity as Black people, and their relationship with Whites.

Hispanic Notions of Success

Gandara's (1994:2) study on the anomalies between academic success and low income Mexican Americans (Chicanos) was based on the knowledge that Hispanics were the "least educated major population group in the United States." Based on this knowledge, Gandara was interested in understanding why some Chicanos achieved where others did not. One concluding factor highlighted the power or influence of 'family stories', from which students were given examples of Chicano success. In particular, Gandara (1994:35) determined that these stories, which highlighted ancestral or family exploits and achievements in a variety of contexts and settings, might positively influence and motivate Chicano children to succeed:

Parents told stories of wealth, prestige, position, to their children to keep alive their hopes for a better future. If one has always been poor and sees nothing but poverty in one's environs, it may be easy to conclude that this is one's destiny. But, if one lives with stories about former exploits, about ancestors who owned their own lands and controlled their own lives, it may be easier to imagine a similar destiny. At the very least, one's family history shows that one is capable of a better life.

In contrast, Cordeiro & Carspecken's (1993:284) study on Hispanic achievement found that success was "framed in dominant cultural terms with an emphasis on

materialism and the status quo occupational hierarchy.” Their examination of 20 Hispanic achievers revealed that these students perceived and aspired to success, as framed from the “Whites” perspective, a perspective to which these students felt “Hispanics ought to aspire” (Cordeiro & Carspecken 1993:284). However, while seeming to embrace western concepts attributed to success and how it could be attained, it was found that the students were eager to succeed in order to “show Whites and nonachieving Hispanics that someone of Mexican heritage was capable of making it” (Cordeiro & Carspecken 1993:284). Hurtado & Carter’s (1997:324) study queries how students succeed given the often ignorant and inhospitable educational environment they are in; whether students perceive themselves to be on the fringes of mainstream culture while at university; and whether such perceptions affect their academic success. They contend that Latino success is affected by their perception of “belonging” in their educational environment, where “feeling at ‘home’ in the campus community is associated with maintaining interactions both within and outside the college community” (Hurtado & Carter 1997:338).

Quevedo-Garcia’s (1987) study concentrates on the institution’s ability to facilitate student success, pointing specifically to admission policies and emphasis on academic grades and tests as areas that need to be worked on. In particular, Quevedo-Garcia (1987:61) believes that further research into the needs of Hispanic student populations may result in more “realistically” applicable policies and programmes that aid in their academic success.

All of these research studies have a common thread linking them: the desire to achieve western-designed and assessed concepts of success. While acknowledging the peculiarities that Hispanic students bring to the higher education equation, there is no one way which isolates Hispanic notions of success. Instead, it appears that Hispanic peoples draw from their culture, as mentioned by Gandara, strategies and stories of success and achievement for inspiration and motivation. There also appears to be a determination by Hispanics, shown in Cordeiro & Carspecken’s study to achieve White status, to disprove negative stereotyping of their own culture by others and how others perceive them. At this point, therefore,

while the achievement of western-prescribed notions of success are aspired to by Hispanics, as demonstrated in the studies cited, they are done so in conjunction with a desire to draw from cultural sources and to prove themselves against stereotypical imagery.

First Nations/Native American Notions of Success

Within the First Nations/Native American group of peoples are a number of distinct cultural groups, which include Alaska Natives, Hawaiians and Indians from America and Canada. The common thread linking them all together has been their categorisation as the ‘problem’ and reason for their educational failure in a system that attempted annihilation through assimilation. Despite these experiences, First Nations/Native American peoples have still managed to carve themselves a place in the higher education system. Garrod & Larrimore (1997) provide a collection of narratives based on First Nations/Native American graduates’ experiences of life at Dartmouth, an Ivy League university in America. Many of these successful graduates cited difficulties in being accepted by mainstream society; some experienced racist encounters, and others struggled to overcome cultural misunderstandings between themselves and faculty members during the course of their studies. This collection of narratives also highlights one account of a student who struggles to find his identity as a First Nations/Native American person, and the complex issues associated with achieving in a western dominated society.

The issues identified in this collection of narratives include the ability to be accepted as a member of society, where acceptance includes acceptance of cultural differences, different perceptions of life issues, and how culture and its identity influences decisions made and approaches to life generally. These are reinforced by Wright (1998), whose study on the Squamish Nation of British Columbia reflect many of the experiences cited in Garrod & Larrimore’s (1997) collection. Wright found that First Nations/Native American peoples were disadvantaged in their educational experiences because of the limited understandings of institutions and faculty. Wright (1998:85) felt that these institutions viewed “the lack of success as First Nations students as an

acculturation issue”, where programmes designed to adjust students, rather than modifying them to student needs proved generally unsuccessful.

Wright’s study found that the Squamish Nation leaders attempted to work through this situation, acknowledging that their tribal members succeeded better if they were able to maintain links with their culture, through the establishment of tribal colleges. Rather than confining their educational advancement in the tribal college setting alone, tribal leaders then moved to approach tertiary institutions, developing relationships with those that “would accept a First Nations perspective” (Wright 1998:85). In other words, these tribal leaders worked to find institutions that were prepared to change their dominant philosophy towards education, incorporate a more First Nations/Native American -reflective approach, and thus work with the tribe to encourage First Nations/Native American academic success.

This study reflects attempts by Barnhardt (1991), and Kirkness & Barnhardt (1991) to find ways to alter institutional opinion to the ‘problem’ of providing successful educational opportunities for First Nations/Native American peoples. Identifying the obstacles to educational advancement as being located in institutional segregation and ignorance to adapting to First Nations/Native American needs, both these studies posited the need for cultural identity and integrity to be maintained while also being able to participate in an environment that was more in tune with their specific needs. Barnhardt (1994) follows through this line of thinking in her study of Alaska Native graduates. Barnhardt found that in order for Alaska Native graduates to survive life ‘on the other side,’ they had to be able to maintain their cultural identity.

This theme of cultural identity and maintaining links to the culture is also evident in Deyhle’s (1995) study on the Navajo resistance to cultural stereotyping. Deyhle found that the Navajo concept of success was only the benefits education could bring to the family and wider community, and not by sacrificing the essence of ‘being Navajo.’ This is reaffirmed in a later study by Deyhle & Swisher (1997), which examined the literature on education and First Nations/Native American

peoples. They (1997:136) found a positive correlation between native language and culture and school success, which challenged the dominant theory that posited otherwise.

Maori Notions of Success

As indicated earlier on in the chapter, there is little information about Maori academic achievement. Much of what has been written have been studies by Pakeha (Beaglehole & Ritchie 1958; Lovegrove 1966; Ausubel 1970), many of whose findings have since been disputed. In 1967, Fitzgerald (1977:80-81) conducted a two-year study of the Maori graduate in order to determine the “acculturative pattern arising from culture contact between Maori and European.” While the main objective of the study was to examine the social position of Maori graduates, Fitzgerald’s study provides an opportunity to examine the issues affecting Maori graduates in the 1960s. Of particular interest in Fitzgerald’s study is the concept of identity, an issue that is raised in Chapters Five and Six, and examined in further detail in Chapters Seven and Eight.

A study of Maori students who achieved high marks in School Certificate Maths and English was undertaken in 1987. Mitchell (1988:115) produced the report for the Department of Education, and concluded, “the findings tend to reinforce observations made already about Maori achievement in the education system.” The earlier observations referred to included Beaglehole & Ritchie’s Rakau study and Ausubel’s study on Maori youth, thus providing a few more clues as to Maori notions of success.

The Ngarimu VC and 28th Maori Battalion Memorial Scholarships were established in 1943 to commemorate the bravery of Lieutenant Te Moananui-a-Kiwa Ngarimu and other members of the 28th Maori Battalion who had lost their lives in World War Two. Throughout its history, members of the Board which administered the scholarships, had expressed the need for some type of analysis of past scholarship recipients in the hope that “successful Ngarimu scholars could be a source of inspiration to other young Maoris” (Barrington 1987:5). As a result, an analysis was conducted, and a report produced.

Barrington (1987), who was contracted to produce the report, identified a number of factors (such as family support) that contributed to the success of these Ngarimu scholars. The scholars also related that upon receipt of the scholarship, a “feeling of obligation, to the Board, or to the Maori people” had been “an important motivating factor in subsequent academic success” (Barrington 1987:119). The Ngarimu Board commissioned a further report in 1993. Broughton (1993) interviewed a number of scholarship recipients (past and present) as to their views on the scholarship and its impact on their education. Findings were similar to those of Barrington.

The most problematic issue of defining a Maori notion of success is the lack of empirical research on which to base a definition. The studies cited above encountered factors contributing to academic success, such as financial support, family and parental support, cultural identity – similar to those cited in other research studies examined earlier in this chapter. Perhaps the one defining factor between Maori and non-Maori has been the cultural identification, and to an extent the limitations this identification has placed on the advancement of Maori. Those of other minority and indigenous cultures have echoed this experience. Cultural notions and values obviously play important roles in defining how Maori interpret and approach the world. Chapple et als’ (1997:66) study on Maori participation in tertiary education suggests that Maori may have an “inadequate understanding...of the benefits of education,” although “changes over the last two decades have led to an increasing acceptance among Maori that there are benefits.” Smith (1999) disputes this, pointing instead to the dichotomy of obtaining a western education (which stands for individualism and competitiveness, and in some cases, loss of Maori identity), and maintenance of Maori identity, culture and knowledge.

Current thinking on Maori success acknowledges the dichotomy that Smith refers to above. However, instead of separating the attainment of western education and maintenance of cultural identity, there is an increasing call to incorporate both aspects into a concept of Maori academic success. Durie’s (2001:4) framework for Maori educational advancement posits that such advancement must incorporate

two key goals: the need for Maori to “actively participate as citizens of the world” while also “enabling Maori to live as Maori.” Durie (2001:4) explains this position:

To the extent that the purpose of education is to prepare people for participation in society, it needs to be remembered that preparation for participation in Maori society is also required...Being Maori is a Maori reality. Education should be as much about that reality as it is about literacy and numeracy.

...education is equally about preparing people to actively participate as citizens of the world. There is a wide Maori expectation that education should open doors to technology, to the economy, to the arts and sciences, to understanding others, and to making a contribution to a greater good. This does not contradict the goal of being able to live as Maori; it simply recognises that Maori children will live in a variety of situations and should be able to move from one to the other with relative ease.

In essence, this is Durie’s construct of Maori academic success. It advocates the ability of Maori to be able to move freely and comfortably between two worlds, without compromising a Maori identity or the need to participate in a global context. It also combines the kaupapa Maori philosophy expressed by Smith (1999) that allows Maori researchers to move between two traditions. Further, Durie’s notion of academic advancement reflects the words of Potatau Te Wherowhero, the first Maori king, who expressed the need for cultures to work together, while still maintaining their own cultural identity and integrity, thus achieving tino rangatiratanga.

From this examination, a Maori notion of academic success is formed, based on Durie’s (2001) notion of educational advancement and incorporating a kaupapa Maori philosophy. The next chapter draws more specifically on the words of Potatau, and his son Tawhiao (the second Maori king), to expand on Durie’s framework in developing a specifically and uniquely tribal notion of academic achievement and success.

Comment

Perhaps the most consistent theme throughout the examinations of Black, Hispanic, First Nations/Native American and Maori notions of success is the need to develop or adopt strategies to achieve academic success without compromising one's cultural identity or integrity. Research has recognised that strategies to survive the experience of higher education are necessary if the indigenous/minority student aspires to success, according to western norms. None of the cultural examples cited wished to shy away from western definitions of success, such as upward mobility, greater employment expectations, and better socio-economic circumstances; but neither do these people wish to sacrifice their ethnic, racial and cultural identities in order to achieve success. Whereas earlier examples of Black/Hispanic/ First Nations/Native American/Maori experiences of higher education refer to being assimilated or absorbed into the dominant culture, more recent experiences, particularly with the establishment of institutions like First Nations/Native American tribal colleges and Maori Whare Wananga, have seen these peoples turn to themselves to provide the opportunities western education appears reluctant to provide. In essence, therefore, minority and indigenous peoples have adapted strategies for survival, resisting against being subsumed into the dominant culture, while still aspiring to success – which incorporates western notions of attainment, and non-western notions of cultural retention and recognition of identity.

For Maori in particular, the development of an educational advancement framework (Durie 2001) has assumed the incorporation of two cultural positions on academic, giving Maori the ability to attain success without sacrificing their identity or becoming assimilated into the dominant culture. This assumption is based on the notion that Maori formulate their own criteria for success, provide their own benchmarks (which are not necessarily western-based), and have the right to participate – not only at a national level, but as global citizens, or 'citizens of the world.' In this way, Durie advocates that Maori move beyond the narrow prescriptions of academic achievement provided by the dominant 'other,' and forge their own path towards Maori educational advancement and success.

Chapter Summary

This chapter set out to explore the definitions - western and indigenous and minority - associated with academic achievement and success. As demonstrated at the beginning of this chapter, western definitions revolve around measurable tangibles, such as tests and grade point averages. Indeed, Fowler & Fowler (1964:1288) reinforce this, defining success as the “accomplishment of end aimed at, attainment of wealth or fame or position.”

In determining how one becomes successful, research has focused on identifying a number of variables that contribute to success. These included family, parental support, mentoring, and the role of institutions, which, because of their relevance to the Maori experience at university, were examined in closer detail in this chapter. Western research has also been interested in determining what contributes to minority and indigenous success, although early examinations were influenced by social theories and concepts such as racial inferiority, hereditary intelligence (which was judged inferior to western cultures), and based on tests that were western in construction and had little application or relevance to different cultural and ethnic groups.

The education experience for Maori, as with other indigenous and minority groups, has been characterised by policies of assimilation and a perception of cultural superiority. As a result, Maori, indigenous and minority peoples have struggled to overcome exclusion, and negative stereotyping in order to achieve academic success. Despite the limitations imposed by the dominant western culture, Maori, indigenous and minority peoples have devised strategies to survive the hostility that is characteristic of the higher education experience. The examples given in this chapter show how research is beginning to explore the means by which these groups survive and succeed, with an increase in research undertaken from indigenous and minority perspectives. What has been revealed is that minority and indigenous perceptions of academic achievement and success have been coloured by the experiences of colonisation and assimilation. The consistent theme from Maori, indigenous and minority peoples' experiences of

success is to incorporate a number of 'survival' strategies, which allow students to achieve success, as defined by western standards, while also maintaining a sense of cultural identity and integrity. Research towards this has suggested that the adoption of these types of strategies ensures that minority and indigenous peoples are thus more able to straddle the two, often conflicting worlds. However, indigenous and minority peoples are also establishing their own institutions in what could be described as efforts to pressure western institutions to deal with the 'dilemma' of catering for the specific needs of their populations. The establishment of these institutions is also to ensure that students from minority and indigenous backgrounds are able to learn in environments that are more culturally in line with their thinking and philosophy, and redefining success from their cultural perspectives.

This chapter set out to achieve an understanding of the complexities that surround attempts at defining 'success' and 'academic achievement.' The results are clear distinctions between western notions of attainment and advancement, and minority and indigenous peoples' struggles to achieve this attainment without compromising cultural identity and integrity. For Maori, Durie (2001) has suggested that western academic attainment and the maintenance of Maori culture and identity are integral to Maori educational advancement and success. The thesis will attempt to determine whether this suggestion by Durie was the experience of the Tainui graduates during their time at the University of Waikato.

This thesis now turns to understanding and doing research, outlining some of the complexities and dilemmas faced by Maori in what is still a western-dominated tradition. The following chapter explores in greater detail the notions of kaupapa Maori research, and more specifically highlights the unique and at times demanding attributes of tribal research and how one negotiates a space within these divergent paradigms.