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## How does a Māori leadership model fit within current leadership contexts in early childhood education in New Zealand and what are the implications to implementing a rangatiratanga model in mainstream early childhood education?

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*To describe the tikanga concept of rangatiratanga and its place in mainstream early childhood education (ECE) in Aotearoa/New Zealand and investigate what implications there might be for kaiako implementing a bicultural leadership model in mainstream education.*

### Traditional roles of a rangatira

Traditionally a rangatira was the chief and figurehead for an iwi/hapū. Their role was one of mana and prestige but essentially one of responsibility for the well-being and protection of their people within the iwi. The chief utilised their leadership skills to ensure their people thrived and benefited. Decisions were made by chiefs and the people of that iwi worked towards iwi/hāpu goals as a collective (kotahitanga). The Māori way of life valued groups - whānau, iwi and hapū. The chief was responsible for his iwi, but they were only as strong as the collective strengths of each individual in that rōpū. Tamati (2011) notes *everyone's skills, abilities and contributions are integral to achieving the collective aspiration* (p.70). Therefore, for Māori, while leadership roles were obvious, the importance of working together as an iwi were equally as, if not even more important.

Rangatiratanga is a complex, multi-faceted and context related concept. Rangatiratanga is defined as Māori sovereignty, self-determination, and positive Māori development. As a value it is about mana, and of leadership personified. In the context of Māoridom, rangatiratanga is the concept of leading a rōpū to achieve their collective aspirations in a way that acknowledges Māori knowledge and values.

### Characteristics of a rangatira

Rangatira should utilise the kaupapa of te ao Māori - the Māori world - Māori ways of knowing, being and doing. This includes utilising te reo (the language and dialects), tikanga (the processes and practices), marae (the community focal point) wāahi tapu (sites of importance) and access to whānau, hapū and iwi in all they do. Māori autonomy is supported when Māori beliefs, values and aspirations are acknowledged.

Te Momo (2011) describes seven characteristics of rangatira: *aroha* - to care for and manaaki the people, *tino rangatiratanga* - sovereignty or the right to govern one's own affairs, *mana wahine* - female in roles of power, *tikanga kore* - being able to adapt tikanga to the context without losing the essence of its meaning, *pono/tikanga* - to be true and correct (integrity) in one's actions. *Pakanga* - challenge or debate is the final characteristic. Te Momo (2011) also discusses the necessity to have a strong sense of identity and purpose (kaupapa or vision) and to set high standards for oneself and followers.

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The Ako Aotearoa project *Building Kaupapa Maori into Early Childhood Education* (Williams, Broadley & Te-Aho, 2012) describes rangatira in early childhood education as showing humility, leadership by example, generosity, altruism, diplomacy, and knowledge of benefit to the learning community. From an early childhood perspective, a rangatira acknowledges the skills of kaiako, tamariki and whānau and respects their individual rangatira potential.

**Tikanga concepts that link to rangatiratanga**

*Whakawhānaungatanga* - the building of relationships, is at the heart of rangatiratanga. Without individuals to follow and support the decisions of the rangatira, there is no rōpū. Royal Tangaere (1997) notes individuals, relationships and learning are interconnected to everyone else. In order to be a rangatira, kaiako must gain respect from their colleagues, tamariki and whānau.

*Whakamana / empowerment* blankets the sharing of responsibilities. Kaiako, tamariki and whānau are valued for their individual skills and expertise. This results in increased agency, collaboration and shared decision making within the learning community.

For kaiako, this provides opportunities to be professionally challenged and shifting power to include the wider community, key points noted by Clarkin-Phillips (2009). These all link strongly to the concept of whakamana (empowerment) and contribution within the early learning environment.

*Ako* - The concept of ako describes a teaching and learning relationship where the educator and student learn alongside one another. It is grounded in the principle of reciprocity. Tamiti (2011) notes that ako can be seen to remove the issue of inequitable power relationships from the teaching and learning equation which can be a challenge in implementing a bicultural leadership model.

The Ministry of Education (2004) notes *settings that encourage children to set and assess their own goals are rich sites for learning* (p. 2). When children are valued as rangatira in their own right they are empowered to take control and lead their own learning. This approach is intended to foster more in-depth, meaningful learning for tamariki and kaiako.

*Mana Wahine* - Tomlins-Jahnke (1997) states that mana wahine encompasses an identity, philosophy and value system based on whakapapa and the origins of Te Ao Māori - the Māori world.

*Papatūānuku* (the earth mother) represents the foundation of all life. All things are born from her and nurtured by her including humankind. Māori wahine hold high status for the vital role they play in providing life and nurturing future generations. They were naturally revered in historical Māori culture as the creators of life and guardians of the spirit world. They were viewed as autonomous and capable - empowered.

This is especially important in ECE with the large female populace and many in roles of respect and 'power'. It is important that female kaiako feel empowered and that their rangatira potential is respected and nurtured. When this occurs, kaiako will feel more inclined to show leadership and advocate for tamariki, whānau and the early childhood sector, challenging not just personal practice but education policy.

Mana wahine can also link to acknowledging the leadership potential of whānau wahine and what they bring to the ECE setting- to respect the knowledge and aspirations they share about their tamariki, whānau and view of the world.

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## Mainstream views on leadership

### *Historical*

Notions of leadership in mainstream early childhood education have traditionally been hierarchical. Perhaps due to the fact that traditional European perspectives have viewed leadership as a solitary practice, generally linked to those in management positions, practiced in isolation and based on one individual leading the way and holding the power. As noted by Lochie (2010), administration and management is not leadership.

Interestingly enough, the founding of educational movements such as kindergarten, daycare, playcentre and Kōhanga Reo are prime examples of distributed leadership. These communities worked together to create learning environments that met the individual educational requirements of their community. For example Kōhanga Reo was founded from a need for education that promoted te reo and tikanga Māori in a context that utilised a Māori world view and Māori pedagogical methods. The shared team ethos that most early childhood teams have always practiced on a daily basis, is also a good example of shared leadership. Individual teachers are able to share responsibilities based on strengths and areas of interest to ensure team objectives are met.

### *Current contexts*

In contrast, more recent research, highlights the benefits of shared/distributed leadership in mainstream early education. Shared/distributed leadership highlights the team ethos that is prevalent in many early childhood contexts whether they be teacher-led or whānau-led. It focuses on sharing responsibilities across the team, valuing individual's knowledge and contributions within the learning community, increased agency, collaboration and shared decision making and shifting the power to include the community.

Shared/distributed leadership recognises that everyone has their own strengths and interests and that encouraging these affords greater agency and motivation (Clarkin-Phillips, 2009). A leader cannot meet educational outcomes for children in isolation therefore it makes sense that individuals are given opportunities to contribute and work collegially to achieve learning community educational goals.

*Tangata ako ana i te kaenga te turanga ki te marae, tau ana*

*A person nurtured in the community contributes strongly to society.*

## Four responsibilities - Te kōpae piripono

Te Kōpae Piripono is a centre of innovation (COI) located in the Taranaki region that worked closely with whānau to establish the four responsibilities model which empowers whānau to be an active part of their tamariki's learning. The four responsibilities are a great example of whānau rangatiratanga. I have detailed how this model can be reflected on by kaiako as individuals.

*Having Responsibility* involves individual kaiako holding a role of respect and trust to further tamariki's knowledge for the future. They are responsible for the well-being and development of those within the learning community.

*Being responsible* means being professional, transparent, honest and working to advance the goal of quality ECE. Kaiako should uphold the Māori values and aspirations of the learning community and teaching profession.

*Taking responsibility* encompasses the concept of patenga; having courage, taking up challenges, being an advocate for tamariki and working in consultation with whānau Māori.

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*Sharing responsibility* links to Māori autonomy - fostering ownership and control within a Māori context.

### Implications for praxis

Jenkin (2011) discusses four stages of bicultural development:

*Māori-Superseded (by multiculturalism) where the place of Māori is rated similar to all other cultures. Māori reliant, where the bicultural aspect of the curriculum is left to one or two who have strengths in this area. Māori friendly - te reo and tikanga Māori is evident through the centre and curriculum but control remains with pakeha. Māori co-construction - Māori are team mates with kaiako in decision making and contributing to the learning community (p.51).*

Most literature that discusses implementing a bicultural leadership model highlight power and control issues, lack of shared kaupapa, lack of knowledge and/or relationships with whānau/hapū/iwi Māori as key considerations in mainstream ECE environments.

When centre leaders value the unique rangatira of each individual within the learning community - tamariki, kaiako, whānau the individuals feel invested in the kaupapa of the centre. The leader's role is to respect and direct the players' contributions. Power sharing leads to increased participation by all stakeholders at a deeper more meaningful level.

Through increased participation, a shared kaupapa can be established and all individuals - kaiako, tamariki, whānau, hapū, iwi, can contribute to achieving the goals of the learning community. Leaders can utilise the strengths of the team and ensure all stakeholders are committed and 'paddling the waka in the same direction'. Additionally, within the teaching team, effective leadership and teamwork contribute to increased self-esteem, high job satisfaction and staff morale, reduced stress and a decreased likelihood of staff burnout (Schiller, 1987).

Shifting the power to include the wider learning community ensures individuals are valued and collaborate towards a shared vision/goal (kotahitanga), the early learning community moves forward together in their learning aspirations. Whakawhānaungatanga (relationships) with the tamariki and Māori whānau and community must be built and strengthened with respect for one another and true power sharing to further enhance leadership opportunities and value the role that tamariki and whānau can play. Jenkins (2011) notes leaders who show courage, commitment and collaboration move forward.

When looking to implement a bicultural leadership model, it is important to reflect on the concept of Tino Rangatiratanga or self-determination. From a learning community perspective, the principle of self-determination/Tino Rangatiratanga becomes evident when we question where power and control lies. Bishop (1996) elaborates with ownership and control being within a Māori context. This creates Māori autonomy.

Kaiako have identified lack of knowledge relating to te ao Māori as a barrier to implementing rangatiratanga in their practice and daily centre life. Professional development can assist kaiako in their own learning journey about tikanga concepts such as rangatiratanga and te ao Māori. Centre leaders can support this through setting aside funding in their Professional Learning & Development budgets specifically aimed at improving outcomes for Māori learners and their whānau.

When kaiako and a centre build strong, respectful relationships with Māori whānau, especially those who are tangata whenua, their knowledge of te ao Māori will expand in a meaningful and relevant context. Additionally, individual aspirations of whānau and local iwi become a valued part of the centre kaupapa and tamarikis learning. It pays to be thoughtful about how iwi are approached. Kanohi ki te kanohi (face to face) is the preferred method of communication

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for Māori. Kaiako and tamariki can offer services to local iwi - i.e. help for a hui. This way reciprocity is practiced.

*Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi engari he toa takitini*

*I come not with my own strengths but bring with me the gifts, talents and strengths of my family, tribe and ancestors.*

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the field of leadership in mainstream early childhood education has come a long way from traditional solitary notions of leadership. The current context of shared/distributed leadership aligns well with the concept of rangatiratanga. The main challenges to implementing bicultural leadership are power sharing, shared kaupapa/vision, lack of knowledge/confidence in te ao Māori and relationships with Māori whānau/hapū/iwi. Whakawhānaungatanga (relationships and respect are the key to building relationships with whānau Māori. When mainstream educational institutes consider true co-construction with Māori whanau and communities then the rangatira of Māori is upheld. The sharing of knowledge becomes two-way and the challenges discussed become obsolete.

*He waka eke noa*

*A canoe which we are all in with no exception.*

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### Glossary

Ako - To teach and learn

Kaiako - Teacher

Kaupapa - Topic/matter for discussion, plan, purpose, theme, subject

Kotahitanga - Unity, togetherness, collective action.

Mana - Prestige, authority, control, status, spiritual power, influence.

Marae - the community focal point, meeting place for iwi.

Patenga - Challenge

Rangatira - High ranking, chiefly, noble, esteemed.

Rōpū - Group

Tamariki - Children

Tangata Whenua - Local people, hosts, indigenous people.

Te Ao Māori - Māori world view - including Te reo, Tikanga, Waahi Tapu and Marae.

Te Reo - Māori language and dialects.

Tikanga - Māori processes and practices.

Tino Rangatiratanga - Māori self-determination, sovereignty, autonomy

Waahi Tapu - Māori sites of importance.

Waka - Māori canoe

Whakamana - Empowerment

Whānau - Family

Whakawhānaungatanga - process of establishing relationships, relating well to others.

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