

The eight qualities of successful intelligence in gifted Māori students.

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Abstract

This article describes the eight qualities of successful intelligence demonstrated by gifted Māori students who attended schools in one tribal area (Te Arawa) in Rotorua, New Zealand. The article will illustrate the ways, throughout history, that Te Arawa have conceptualised, and successfully utilised, their successful intelligence in the service of themselves, their whānau (family) and their hapu and iwi (sub-tribe and tribal communities). Firstly, this article explains the long history of giftedness among Te Arawa peoples by identifying eight iconic Te Arawa figures that characterise the eight qualities of successful intelligence. Secondly, the article uses data from the Ka Awatea project to illustrate the ways Māori continue to value and enact these qualities of successful intelligence in contemporary times (Macfarlane, Webber, Cookson-Cox & McRae, 2014). In this article the eight qualities of successful intelligence are conceptualised from the perspective of Māori students, Māori whānau and teachers/school principals from eight secondary schools in the Rotorua area.

Introduction

Research on giftedness in the New Zealand context has long stipulated that Māori values, knowledge and perspectives must be embodied in all aspects of education for gifted Māori students if they are to thrive (Bevan-Brown, 2009; Ministry of Education, 2001; Riley & Moltzen, 2010). Additionally, there is agreement that Māori should be able to achieve success 'as Māori' and teaching practices should be responsive to the cultural identities of Māori students (Ministry of Education, 2013). This article uses Māori perspectives of giftedness and refers to Sternberg's (1997, 2005) theory of successful intelligence to explain the findings of the Ka Awatea project, which identified eight of the personal, academic and cultural qualities of successful Māori secondary students. The Ka Awatea project developed a measure, model and definition of Māori giftedness that was tribally specific (Macfarlane, Webber, Cookson-Cox & McRae, 2014). It uncovered the individual, family, school and community conditions that enabled gifted Te Arawa students and students being educated in Te Arawa schools, to develop the qualities of successful intelligence and unleash their potential.

According to Sternberg's (1997, 2005) theory, successful intelligence is the use of an integrated set of abilities needed to attain success in life, however an individual defines it, within his or her sociocultural context. Sternberg's theory of successful intelligence is substantially broader than many conventional theories of intelligence (e.g., Carroll, 1993; Jensen, 1998). Sternberg situates intelligence in terms of defining

it as the ability to achieve one's goals in life, within one's sociocultural context. According to Sternberg's definition, successful intelligence is: 1) the ability to achieve one's goals in life, given one's sociocultural context; 2) by capitalising on strengths and correcting or compensating for weaknesses; 3) in order to adapt to, shape, and select environments; and, 4) through a combination of analytical, creative, and practical abilities (Sternberg, 2005). In line with Sternberg's theory of successful intelligence, it is argued in this article that gifted Māori students are successfully intelligent by virtue of their ability to adapt to, shape and interact with their environments in ways that are academically fruitful, socially acceptable and culturally grounded.

In this article, a Māori, or more specifically, Te Arawa, worldview is used to examine the connection between cultural identity and the perceived characteristics of success among a selection of gifted Māori secondary school students from Rotorua, New Zealand. In a time when "Māori success as Māori" (Ministry of Education, 2013, p.5) is the catch phrase of educational practice and policy, this article seeks to understand the role that various academic, social, interpersonal and cultural influences have on educational achievement as they foster and demand different understandings and enactments of successful intelligence among Māori students. The article takes a sociocultural perspective on questions of giftedness, cultural identity and successful intelligence. That is, it articulates giftedness as always situated in, and mediated by, social contexts, cultural settings and social group memberships.

Adopting this approach supports the author's perspective that cultural identity and giftedness are relational and enacted, rather than stable constructs that are inherent within the individual (Webber, 2011). The word 'enacted' is used to signal that cultural identity and giftedness are often conscious and deliberate acts that enable gifted Māori students to connect with and relate to others in their social and cultural worlds (such as peers, teachers and whānau), in different contexts (such as at school, the marae, community and/or the home) and in particular time periods (in times past and/or in contemporary times). Consequently, cultural identity and giftedness are more than just stories we tell about self, because they are also enacted, lived out in real time, in real communities, with and alongside others. Therefore, successful intelligence impacts, and is impacted by, others who occupy the same spaces and places.

Kia mau ki te kupu o tōu mātua – Do not neglect the teachings of your ancestors.

Māori society has always had well-established approaches to education and learning that ensured the transmission of considerable gifts, knowledge and skills to its members (Calman, 2013). Information was passed on through extensive use of waiata (songs), whakataukī (proverbs, aphorisms), pūrākau (stories) and whakapapa (genealogy). This meant that specialized knowledge and skills were passed on, and the prevailing morals and expectations of each iwi transmitted to younger generations.

As a hierarchical society Māori developed elite learning institutions for those iwi members with chiefly lineage. Established away from the kāinga (home) this formal learning process itself was considered tapu (sacred). However other members of the hapū and iwi were also educated in topics both specialised and practical in nature. Gifted students chosen to participate in intensive learning curricula were judiciously assessed and their gifts, talents and strengths identified. Matched to an area of expertise, these gifted and talented members of the tribe were openly recognised and valued (Calman, 2013; Makereti, 1938).

While such traditional approaches to education meant that an elite few were immersed in learning sacred knowledge, it is evident that Māori utilised the power and efficacy of the collective (Penniman, 1986). Māori communities valued the strength inherent in the acquisition and sharing of knowledge. Gifted students who were not of an ariki (noble, chiefly) line were also able to access other areas of teaching and learning. This strength-based approach recognised the multiple gains that accrued from a knowledgeable collective (Macfarlane, Webber, Cookson-Cox & McRae, 2014).

Research design and methods

Drawing from a mixed methods kaupapa Māori educational project in one tribal region in New Zealand, this article explains the qualitative interview/focus group and survey findings of the Ka Awatea project. This project examined the ways gifted Māori students, their whānau, their teachers and other community members perceived successful intelligence within academic, cultural and social contexts and how these enactments linked to the academic engagement, persistence and achievement of gifted Māori students. Guiding research questions for the analysis of the data included (1) What are the gifted characteristics of the eight Te Arawa tribal icons? (2) How is successful intelligence enacted by gifted Māori students in contemporary times?

Participants and data source

To answer our research questions the main methods of data collection were:

- student, teacher, principal and parent questionnaires
- student, teacher and whānau semi-structured interviews and
- focus group discussions.

It was thought that the need to get the views of senior Te Arawa people (pākeke and tuākana) was important, so a set of questions was prepared and conversational interviews were carried out with these two groups of participants. An outline of the study participants can be seen in Table 1 (taken from Macfarlane, Webber, Cookson-Cox & McRae, 2014).

Table 1. Study Participants

Participants	Questionnaire	Individual	Focus	Total
	<i>n</i>	Interviews	Groups	
Students	66	5	61	132
Teachers	38	10	32	80
Principal/DP	5	7	1	13
Parents/Whānau	29	2	17	48
Pākeke	-	5	-	5
Tuākana	-	5	-	5
Total	138	35	110	283

All of the gifted Māori students who completed the survey were Years 11-13 students (aged 15-18 years) who were given consent from their parents/caregivers to participate and who themselves agreed to participate. All participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and any information they provided would be confidential. The entire survey took about 25 minutes to complete and most interviews and/or focus group discussions took between 30 – 90 minutes. Most of the data were collected within an eight-month period between mid 2012 to early 2013.

The gifted Māori students were nominated by their school principals using a relatively basic criterion; they were identified as gifted senior students preferably, but not necessarily, of Te Arawa tribal affiliation. Principals, teachers and whanau members responded to the survey, the one-to-one interview or both. Another (later) phase to the study was introduced – a validation phase that sought the views of senior iwi members (pākeke), as well as a selection of Te Arawa affiliated emerging leaders (tuākana) who were making their respective marks in contemporary social and economic communities. Pākeke and tuākana were selected on account of their relative status in the local community as well as their reputations for having a sound level of understanding and respect for the education sector.

These added dimensions to the research activities culminated in the complementarity-design thrust. Such validation from senior tribal people also offered insights that were useful because as a rule their thoughts were founded on wisdom and a deep knowledge of tribal history. Two qualitative data analysis techniques were used for the purposes of the project - Thematic Analysis and Grounded Theory. By combining multiple participants, theories, methods, empirical materials and analysis approaches the intention was to overcome the weakness or intrinsic biases and the problems that arise from single method, single observer and single theory studies (Jaeger, 1997).

Throughout the Ka Awatea project the key task of the researchers was twofold: 1) to examine traditional Te Arawa conceptions of giftedness, and 2) to identify how gifted

Māori students in contemporary times manage their academic, cultural and social worlds in ways that enable them to thrive and demonstrate their successful intelligence.

Traditional Te Arawa conceptions of giftedness: Footprints of the past to inform the present

Te Arawa people are the confederation of tribes that occupy the Rotorua Lakes district and part of the central Bay of Plenty coastline. It is said in poetic terms that the bow of the Te Arawa waka rests at Maketū and the stern at Tongariro, meaning that the descendants of that waka may be found all over that area. A key ancestor, Rangitihi, is regarded as the great progenitor of the tribe, and it is he who is the source of the famous metaphor: 'Ngā pūmanawa e waru o Te Arawa' - a metaphorical reference to eight beating hearts; the number of children he had. As it has been argued in the past, in Māoridom a true understanding of the present can only be gained through consideration of the past (Bevan-Brown, 2011; Ihimaera, 1993). So, let us take the eight beating hearts metaphor and transpose these into the qualities demonstrated by the same number of tribal leaders. Recounting the past shows that personal, cultural and educational success can be derived from a combination of qualities including: identity, diligence, relationships, innovation, wellbeing, scholarship, humility and values.

Tamatekapua – Identity

The renowned commander of the Te Arawa waka, Tamatekapua, had strength of character, strength of personality and a tendency to take risks – all of which won him the admiration of his people. Tamatekapua was born in Hawaiki some years prior to the great migration to New Zealand. He has been described as courageous and astute and was said to have a strong sense of determination. The wharenui (meeting house) at Te Papaouru marae is named after Tamatekapua, and so his identity continues to be a beacon for future generations.

Reverend Frederick Bennett – Diligence

In 1928 Reverend Bennett was consecrated as an Anglican bishop of Aotearoa, the first Māori bishop in New Zealand's history. His work, which had a strong focus on establishing educational opportunities, was complex and beset with difficulties, calling for talent, infinite patience and an ungrudging sacrifice of time. Reverend Bennett's was renowned for his loyalty, constant faith, catholicity of outlook and quiet, unruffled calm.

Te Ao Kapurangi – Relationships

Te Ao Kapurangi, a woman of mana, descended from Tamatekapua of the Te Arawa waka and from Hoturoa of the Tainui waka. In 1818 Te Ao Kapurangi was captured by Hauraki, the Ngāpuhi leader, and taken to the Bay of Islands where she became one of his wives. Te Ao Kapurangi became involved in Ngāpuhi warfare and the many

accounts of her heroic deeds are testament to her mana, fortitude and courage. One of the most famous of these deeds recites her authoritative actions in saving her kinsfolk from Ngāpuhi attack on Mokoia Island in 1822. At the request of Te Ao Kapurangi, the illustrious Ngāpuhi leader Hongi Hika decreed that his warriors would spare only those who passed between Te Ao Kapurangi's thighs. As soon as she had landed on the island she hurried to a meeting house and stood on the roof astride the ridgepole, calling for her people to save themselves. They crammed into the house and Ngāpuhi allowed them to enter it and respected it as a place of refuge. This is the origin of the saying, well known to Te Arawa and used when many crowd together in a house: "Anō ko te whare whawhao a Te Ao Kapurangi" (It is like the crowded house of Te Ao Kapurangi).

Ihenga – Innovation

Because of his extensive travels and discoveries, the great Ihenga, grandson of Tamatekapua, is said to have had an outstanding, enquiring mind as well as an impressive physical stature. Like an adroit scholar he probed and exploited, he drew conclusions and made associations. An ever curious and determined explorer, Ihenga encountered the unknown and made many discoveries regardless of his own fears, uncertainties and troubles.

Dorothy 'Bubbles' Huhana Mihinui – Wellbeing

Dorothy 'Bubbles' Huhana Mihinui was renowned for her tenacity in promoting better options for Māori in life-course matters, especially concerning the health, education and wellbeing of rangatahi (youth). She was involved for many years with the Māori Women's Health League and did not hesitate to take strong messages to local and central government that reducing health and education inequalities for Māori was a priority.

Maggie Papakura (Makereti) – Scholarship

A contemporary of internationally renowned theorists, Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotski, Makereti recorded the knowledge passed on to her in her youth about te ao Māori and the Māori ways of life. There is no doubt that the adroit researcher Makereti possessed innate scholarship traits and a commitment to excellence.

Dr Hiko Hohepa – Humility

This quality was the hallmark of Dr Hiko Hohepa. A former kaumātua (wise senior person), Hiko-o-te-Rangi Hohepa embodied the meaning of humility in every sense. Dr Hiko Hohepa had a gentle nature, was committed to the affairs of the tribe and was extremely knowledgeable, especially on matters to do with whakapapa (genealogy).

Wihapi Winiata – Values

There are a number of core values that are considered central to te ao Māori including the principles of whānaungatanga (relationships, kinships), manaakitanga (generosity, hospitality), kotahitanga (unity), rangatiratanga (autonomy, sovereignty), and wairuatanga (spirituality). Wihapi Winiata, or 'Koro Hapi' as he was affectionately known, was regarded by many as a paramount chief of Te Arawa. He was often

described as a humble person who gave his heart to everyone. Koro Hapi was steeped in whakapapa and was a dynamic orator. He is remembered for his manifestation of the values that Māori hold dear – manaakitanga, whānaungatanga, rangatiratanga, kotahitanga and wairuatanga.

When we look to the past and recount some of the deeds of gifted Te Arawa icons and/or tūpuna (ancestors), we can see that they are exemplars for gifted Māori students who are engaged in the pursuit of educational achievement in today's world. They can be considered tribal champions – gifted ancestors who possessed specific gifted qualities that enabled them to work in service of their tribe. Application of gifted qualities through their leadership enabled them to make outstanding contributions to the society of their era, and their feats can, it is argued, continue to guide the pathways to success of gifted Māori in contemporary times (Macfarlane, Webber, Cookson-Cox & McRae, 2014). Like Macfarlane (2006), I believe that the collective wisdom of exceptional tūpuna, should be seen as the quintessence of Māori educational potential. When gifted Māori students have a deep knowledge of tribal role models from the past, their legacy can be an inspiration and their qualities celebrated.

Gifted and Māori: The eight qualities of successful intelligence

Overall, the Ka Awatea project was designed to investigate the influential factors that contribute to gifted Māori students succeeding at school. The project included questions about Māori identity, the importance of relationships and core Māori values. There were also questions about diligence and commitment, innovation and creativity and the value of education. Finally the participants were asked about the influence of wellbeing and humility to their overall educational success. 'Ngā Pūmanawa e Waru' or eight distinct characteristics of successful intelligence emerged from the data (depicted graphically in Figure 1 below).

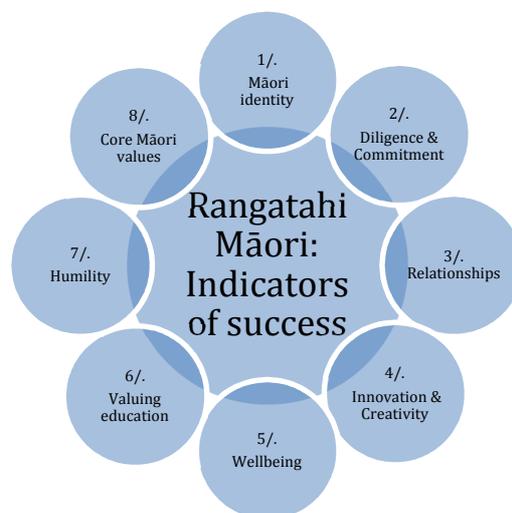


Figure 1. Ngā Pūmanawa e Waru

The following discussion will describe these qualities in more detail and consider the ways gifted Māori students continue to value and enact these qualities of successful intelligence in contemporary times. Many of the quotes for this section of the article have been taken directly from the original Ka Awatea document with permission from all of the original authors of the report (Macfarlane, Webber, Cookson-Cox & McRae, 2014).

Characteristic One: Māori identity

Like Tamatekapua, successfully intelligent gifted Māori students have a positive sense of Māori identity. They have a belief in and knowledge of their own capacity and abilities; a sense of certainty about who they are and who they are not; a strong sense of purpose; and a connectedness to others who share the similar core identity attributes. This has a positive impact on their resiliency to negative stereotypes, self-concept, cultural efficacy and sense of connection to land and place.

The student, teacher and whānau responses to this qualitative section of the survey expressed the central roles that language, culture, pride and belonging play in shaping Māori identity. The responses suggest that Māori culture and identity significantly influence the ways successful Māori students think and behave. These understandings led the students to think about the elements that inform their cultural identity and their personal place in te ao Māori. For these students the enhanced sense of connection to a rich cultural heritage was deeply empowering. For whānau and teachers the key goal seemed to be helping students understand the centrality and importance of their Māori identity in the school context.

Overwhelmingly, the majority of student responses to the question about the importance of Māori identity were associated with the concept of belonging. Knowing who you are and where you come from is one of the elements of being Māori that gives gifted Māori students security. Many of the gifted Māori students felt that their connection to their families and tribes, their whakapapa, was the thread of the very fabric that held them together. Additionally, Māori identity, from the gifted Māori students' perspective, had little to do with striving for individual success and more to do with establishing connections with others, exploring cultural practices that bind them to others, and understanding the roles they play in their community. This perspective of the world appears to be the basis for a strong sense of self.

Analysis of the whānau data indicated one key theme: the parents' hopes and aspirations that their gifted children participate in te ao Māori with confidence. The aspirations of whānau for their gifted children to be able to participate in te ao Māori as well as be successful at school were clearly articulated in the data. The whānau respondents stated that they wanted their gifted children to be successful 'as Māori' as well as in academic pursuits. One parent summed this up by recording three clear aspirations he had in terms of his gifted son's identity as Māori:

- A sound knowledge and understanding of whakapapa foundations and tribal connections – in order to fully understand 'nō hea ia', where he is from and what that means.

- An ability to actively develop and sustain meaningful inter-relationships with whānaunga – in order to foster ‘nā wai ia’, who he is a part of and the mutual relationships /responsibilities therein.
- To be able to fully express himself in te reo Māori me ōna tikanga (Māori language and customs) – that he may be able to fully convey the depth and breadth of ‘ko wai ia’ – who he is and wishes to become.

Analysis of the teacher responses resulted in the emergence of two key themes: Mana and Whakapapa/Connectedness. Mana is a human attribute that emphasises concepts like prestige, presence, influence, capability and power. Mana may also be described as charisma, an indefinable ‘X-factor’ that some people possess which influences and inspires others (Winitana, 2008). Mana can be achieved through whakapapa and/or recognition of qualities like leadership, manaakitanga (hospitality) or māhaki (humility).

Many of the teachers who completed this survey felt that it was important that “our tamariki are proud to be Māori and embrace Māori culture and values”. One teacher commented that, “When Māori students are encouraged to embrace their culture, they feel proud and gain strength and confidence in themselves” which “positively impacts their learning”. Another teacher stated that, “If they are ‘culturally strong’ they tend to hold their heads up high and act with pride in their own interests and the interests of others”. Developing a sense of mana enables students “to feel positive about the future, their cultural identity and their connectedness to others” (Macfarlane, Webber, Cookson-Cox and McRae, 2014, pp.64-65).

Knowledge of whakapapa and one’s cultural connectedness are essential ingredients in the educational success of Māori students. Positive cultural identity can shape Māori students’ dispositions, attitudes, engagement and connectedness to others. It can also influence their connectedness to school (Webber, 2012). The majority of the teachers who completed the survey commented on how important it was to affirm gifted Māori students’ identities by acknowledging “their whakapapa and connectedness to the whenua”. Another teacher stated that she made explicit efforts to “learn about their ancestry, whānau, iwi, culture, reo and tikanga” because “that is what my students identify and connect with. It shapes who they are in the community, where they come from and is linked to their self-esteem”.

Characteristic Two: Diligence and commitment

Like Reverend Frederick Bennett, successfully intelligent Māori students are hardworking and have an internal locus of control. They are persistent in their learning and understand the commitment and a sacrifice of time and effort needed to achieve their goals. They have an ability to overcome difficulties; and an unwavering confidence, which is often balanced with sense of composure. This enables them to be more disciplined, self-motivated, attentive and focused in their endeavors.

Service to whānau, iwi and Māori were key motivators regarding school success and academic achievement for the gifted Māori students in this study. Students

commented how important it was to be successful at school because “As Māori we must remember that we can achieve just as much, if not more, than anyone else. Think about how you can give back to your Māori community from your success”. Other students stated that students needed to “Remember that you represent your Māori culture – do so with pride.” These responses demonstrate that many of these gifted Māori students had a clear motivation for doing well at school – the collective benefits to others as well as themselves. One student explained the notion of collective benefit clearly: “A major motivation for me were my parents and whānau. I want to make them proud of the strengths I have. I must get a good education – whai ngā tapuwae o ngā tūpuna (following in the footsteps of the ancestors)”.

Motivation is a person’s inner drive/focus to behave or act in a certain manner. The gifted Māori students had clear ideas about how to be focused, motivated and driven at school. The key areas of advice related to “setting goals to stay on track”, “trying to find friends that like school because the right group of friends really helps” and “believing in yourself and what you want to be”. One gifted Māori student offered three pieces of advice to her peers, “Be dedicated – put your all into everything you do. Be determined – strive to achieve your goals. Be disciplined – discipline yourself to stay focused on tasks”.

What was most evident in the whānau data was the strength of whānau relationships, and the time and energy whānau members put into supporting and conversing with their gifted children about their academic progress and overall wellbeing in the home context. A number of whānau members expressed how crucial it was to set up supportive home environments to promote academic achievement. One parent stated that it was imperative to “maintain regular communication on all things and ensure they feel comfortable discussing things with me. Having this relationship is important if I expect them to share with me what is happening at school.” Another parent talked about the five key pieces of advice he gives his child:

1. Kia āta tau – be calm and settled
2. Kia āta whakarongo – be attentive and take heed
3. Kia āta tirohia – be observant
4. Kia āta whakaarohia – think it out / think it through
5. Mahia kā tika – work through things in a considered way

Many parents reminded their children that “their success is the whānau’s success”; emphasising that they should strive for success at school for the benefit of others in their family. Many of the gifted students in this study were advised to “do their best and be a positive role model for their siblings and cousins” and/or to “remember that your grandmother would want you to do well”. Other whānau set up routines and habits in the home regarding study timetables and homework schedules. One whānau member stated “We have morning homework two hour sessions together every morning between 5.45 - 7.45am. Self discipline and commitment are highly valued in our home”.

In identifying what student behaviors facilitate success at school, the teachers stressed the importance of “buddying up with other students who want to succeed”, “accepting help and seeking a mentor” and “getting your whānau to come to school evenings with you – this will put you and them on the radar of the teacher”. One teacher further advised students that although they “may not see the importance of something today, they should always prepare for tomorrow. Be resilient, have faith in yourself, choose the right pathway and surround yourself with good friends”.

Characteristic Three: Relationships

Like Te Ao Kapurangi, successfully intelligent Māori students know how to nurture strong and supportive relationships. They have an ability to sustain relationships that are premised on a balance of assertiveness and warmth because this provides sustenance for their inner person. This characteristic enables them to be encouraging of others, willing to learn from others, willing to mentor others and aware of own his/her own strengths and weaknesses.

The majority of students felt the support of their whānau and teachers was integral to their success at school. The students perceived that their whānau were actively engaged in their learning, recognising that education is not only the school’s responsibility but continues into the home. The student data illustrates that whānau were taking responsibility for creating an emotionally supportive and positive home environment, where whānau spent quality time with each other and encouraged students to strive to do their best at school. One gifted Māori student commented, “My parents and family are always encouraging me to do my best and this is mainly through guidance and pointing me in the right direction. They have instilled in me the work ethic to be successful in life.” Other students stated, “My mother and father have worked hard for me my whole life. The best way to repay them is to be successful at school and life” and “My Nan used to tell me that because I am the oldest moko (grandchild) I have to set the standard high”. Gifted Māori students who are nurtured in this type of atmosphere seem to be more likely to step competently into other contexts such as school. They are affirmed in the knowledge that they are valued as whānau members and through their education and learning can contribute positively to their whānau, communities and society.

Many of the whānau articulated very specific strategies for supporting their gifted children and rewarding their successes. One whānau member stated that they regularly “Go through school reports and discuss strategies for improving on existing success. For example, if they are having difficulty with social-dynamics in the classroom or with a particular teacher or with a type of learning/teaching style...we work out how to overcome it together”. Another whānau member reported that he talked regularly to his son about the work he had coming up. The focus of their learning conversations centered on the following questions and responses:

- E mārama pai ana koe ki ōu whaingā – do you fully understand what is needed for this undertaking?
Ka pai. Tēnā, whakamārama mai kia kite mehemea ka taea ahau te awhina. – Good. Outline what you need to do so that I can see where I can help.

- Ka taea e koe, mahia te mahi – you can do it, just do it.
- Ka taea e koe, kaua e mate wheke - you can do it, don't give in.
- Ia rā, ia ata hoki ka kīa atu e au ki a ia - “kia pai tō ra , kia tika ō mahi” - Every day and each morning I say to him - “have a good day and do your best”.

Positivity, setting aside time to “help with homework”, “track progress” and ensuring that their gifted children “have the right equipment/materials” helped gifted Māori students to stay focused at school. It was also evident that “being involved”, “present” and “available for advice” is vital to strong parent-child relationships. One parent stated:

“We have a loving, nurturing environment with good food, good people and lots of laughter. We all celebrate each other's little successes and encourage excellence. We believe that everyone is good at something and we try to make it happen for each of the children.”

The teacher respondents illustrated many ways that they built strong relationships with their gifted Māori students and their families. The data show that successful student/teacher and whānau/teacher partnerships are collaborative, mutually respectful and responsive to whānau needs. The teachers articulated a range of strategies to engage with the gifted Māori students and their whānau including “meeting kanohi ki te kanohi – face-to-face”, “walking my talk”, “making whakapapa links” and using “respect”, “honesty and humour”.

Many teachers also reinforced the importance of personal and/or cultural connections and acknowledging the student by “talking about their whānau and their affiliations to the rohe (area), iwi and people that I know”. A number of teachers also emphasised the importance of “acknowledging their whakapapa and whenua connections” and “relating to students through something they care about – their family or mahi (work)”. These teachers worked hard to acknowledge and affirm the child's Māori identity, their whānau connections and their hapū and iwi ties. Many of these teachers went further by using te reo Māori where possible. They created an environment where students could connect culturally with people, places and the past so that their culture was visible and validated in the classroom and school context. The data clearly illustrate that relationships with students, their whānau and the wider community were more than an “add-on” for the majority of the teachers who were participants in this project - they were fundamental to their pedagogy.

Characteristic Four: Innovation and creativity

Like Ihenga, successfully intelligent Māori students are curious and innovative. They have enquiring minds that probe, draw conclusions and make associations; and an exploratory orientation that they can exploit in social, cultural and academic activities. These characteristics enable them to be courageous in their learning, competitive, curious and creative.

The students felt that their schools encouraged them “to participate in a range of different activities” and provided opportunities for them “to be in bands, kapa haka, kayaking, tramping, surfing and stage challenges” and to “take outdoor trips such as

Navy College and Spirit of Adventure”. Moreover, a number of the students commented that they might not have had opportunities to participate in such activities under normal circumstances because they were usually “not very confident”, “shy” and/or “normally never had the courage to try new things”. However the gifted Māori students concluded that these new experiences “boosted their confidence”, “motivated creativeness” and encouraged them to take risks in their learning and “push new boundaries”.

Two gifted Māori students commented that they enjoyed opportunities to be innovative at school and had completed activities like “creating a suicide prevention tool for youth” and “rebuilding a car”. In addition, the gifted Māori students enjoyed creative learning activities that involved learning about Māori cultural activities and the innovative skills of their ancestors. These students also enjoyed being “given the chance to lead and be a role model” by expressing their creativity through kapa haka.

There were two key ways that parents helped their gifted children to be innovative and creative: by helping them with their homework whilst encouraging them “to bounce ideas off people to gather input and ideas...think outside the square...[and] be confident, try ideas and offer alternatives”; and by ensuring that they took up all opportunities to step outside their usual comfort zone to get involved in new activities. Whānau members recognised that students needed support, reassurance and guidance to foster innovation and creativity. One whānau member said, “I let him know that imagination and the courage to have a go is the key to success”, whilst another said “I encourage participation in a range of activities that will harness his creativity”. Other vital qualities mentioned by the whānau respondents involved students “taking advantage of all opportunities”, that is “getting them to try multiple activities to be able to have multiple experiences to draw on in the future”, “looking at, and talking to, other family members who are successful to gain insight” and “doing things with them and giving them experiences to open their mind”. Another whānau respondent shared the specific questions they asked their gifted child when helping them with their homework tasks:

1. He aha wētahi atu mea he orite ana, e rerekē ana ki taua mea? Outline things that share similarities and differences with this?
2. He aha wētahi atu hua ka puta i te mea orite? Given the same inputs what are some potentially different outcomes?
3. Ma ēhea ara-a-mahi rerekē ka tae atu koe ki te hua orite? What are different ways and means to reach the same goal/outcome?

One whānau member explained that they supported their child to be innovative and creative “by enjoying and celebrating her creative achievements so far. We discuss different ways to research topics and analyse concepts. We play games together that are fun but get their creativity going. We have painted/drawn/coloured in/redecorated since they were babies”. It seems that many of these whānau members know the value of getting involved with their gifted children; “giving them the space to try new things and make their own decisions” and when things do not go as expected “turning it into a positive learning experience. We say, ‘You can’t win if you don’t have a go’”.

Teachers also played an important role in encouraging gifted Māori students to use their creativity and take a keener interest in innovation. The teachers stated that gifted Māori students need two key ingredients – opportunities to grow their knowledge and a willingness to be creative. The teachers believed that students needed opportunities to observe and analyse, to correctly identify a real problem, like how to “align commercial enterprise with a Māori theme”, and how to arrive at a feasible solution where they “are able to change, alter and incorporate their own ideas”. Therefore the teachers identified the opportunities they provided which drew on “ICT, business studies, projects and/or ventures in the community” and “allowed students to bring themselves into the projects”. Some teachers argued that engaging in creativity enabled gifted Māori students to see beyond the usual and conventional, and “challenge themselves to create authentic problems”. The teachers encouraged creativity by compelling gifted Māori students to work outside the tried and tested. The teachers therefore indicated that their role was to guide their gifted Māori students in the knowledge-seeking process and create the right environment and culture for creativity to thrive.

A key way that they did this was to connect classroom learning to “Māori role models to illustrate creativity, uniqueness and the value of Māori identity”. They also told them “real stories of innovation and creativity from Māori pūrākau and pakiwaitara (stories and legends)” and related innovation, creativity and learning to “how our tūpuna (ancestors) were, i.e., adapting to new environments, discovering new foods, medicines, resource use, etc”. The teachers in this study clearly felt that there was a vital link between students’ learning to be creative and innovative and the students’ Māori culture, ancestry and real life experiences.

Success lies not in how much a person knows but how they use the information to constantly innovate and come up with new ideas. Learning, creativity and innovation are increasingly being recognised as the skills that separate students who are prepared for increasingly complex life and work environments in the 21st century, from those who are not. A focus on creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration is essential to prepare gifted Māori students for the future.

Characteristic Five: Wellbeing

Like Dorothy ‘Bubbles’ Mihinui, successfully intelligent Māori students are cognisant of the importance of looking after their wellbeing. They pay attention to their physical, spiritual and mental health needs so that they can flourish academically at school. Successfully intelligent Māori students are self-motivated to seek a balance in their lives ensuring that they are fit, healthy and resourceful.

The student responses illustrate three key ways that they maintain their overall wellbeing:

1. Cultural Identity Maintenance;
2. Physical Activity; and
3. Supportive Friendships.

Cultural identity is important for gifted Māori students' sense of self and how they relate to others. The students' responses show that maintaining a strong cultural identity contributed to their overall wellbeing. A number of students discussed the importance of "keeping in touch with my Māori past and culture by being around whānau, marae, village and mātua [parents]", "Māori church" and "going back to my marae". Identifying with their culture helped these gifted Māori students feel like they belonged and gave them a sense of security and "hauora" (health).

Involvement in physical activity and organised sports played an important role for gifted Māori students feeling "ready to learn". The student responses show that through involvement in sports and physical activity they learned to understand, appreciate and move their bodies and find an "energy outlet". One student stated: "I am involved in a lot of teams and train a lot to keep myself healthy and have a sense of belonging...I also eat healthily". Other students made reference to "training in the gym", "ka mahi hākinakina" (playing sports), "staying active" and "keeping fit" as key aspects of looking after themselves and their wellbeing. It is evident that the students used physical activity to relate positively to others, stay focused at school and to maintain good health.

The third aspect of the gifted Māori students' wellbeing stemmed from the emotional support they felt that they received from their friends at school. Emotional wellbeing has many aspects but most important is positive self-concept. According to the responses from the students in this study a positive sense of self-concept stemmed from strong friendships and whānau relationships, "finding like-minded friends" and being "open to talking about my feelings with my mates". One student stressed that "just being around people with positive attitudes really seems to help" and another student stated that they "had good relationships with friends that I trust...and I can talk to them about anything to do with my emotional wellbeing". It is clearly important that "friends and family are supportive" and students have "someone to talk to about issues/problems so that they don't all bottled up inside".

The whānau respondents were resolute about supporting their gifted children's overall wellbeing. One of the key ways they did this was "leading by example" and creating and maintaining healthy and positive home environments. Whānau members used a range of strategies to ensure home environments were emotionally safe and responsive to students' changing needs. One whānau respondent detailed three ways that he supported his children:

1. Hei akiaki ki te whakaatu mai, kōrero mai hoki āna whakaaro hiahia hoki – I encourage them to express their thoughts and desires and discuss any issues they may have.
2. Ka haere i tana taha ki ngā parakatihi, ki ngā kēmu hoki. Pērā i te whutupaoro, poitkohu, ringa pā hoki. Ka whakangungu anō hoki ki te kāinga – I assist and support their sporting endeavours; such as Rugby, Basketball and Touch. I follow up on their practices and games with additional work at home.
3. Kia tupu te nohotahi me te piritahi ki te taha o ōna tūpuna – I foster and encourage their relationship with their grandparents and therefore their connections to hāpu and iwi.

Another whānau member also suggested three ways in which they helped their gifted Māori children to maintain their wellbeing:

1. I advise my children to play at least one sport, eat healthy, focus on their inner beauty, have respect for themselves and for others and the environment.
2. I spend quality time with them, hanging out, listening to them and being there for them.
3. We spend time with the wider whānau, including Nan and Koro, Aunties, Uncles and Cousins.

It is evident that these whānau “prioritise time together” and model the values they want to see in their children. These whānau “encourage good healthy debate where everyone’s opinion counts” and “mix with people who lead good lives”. They also let their children know when they were proud of them and “do things with and for them” regularly.

The teachers’ responses showed two distinct ways that they supported gifted Māori students to maintain their wellbeing: 1) by acknowledging their Māori identity and demonstrating to them that “being Māori matters”; and 2) by being a strong listener and trusted confidante. A number of teachers stressed the belief that they must “create a safe cultural environment” so that the students “get involved and feel good about themselves”. Therefore, the teachers used a number of different strategies to “value them as a person and recognise where they are from”.

The teachers also identified ways that they built trusting pastoral relationships with gifted Māori students. One teacher stated that they “let them know that I am here to help and if I don’t have a solution I will find someone who does”. This teacher also “discusses how they feel, respects their issues and frustrations and treats them respectfully” and importantly “gives them space and acceptance on bad days”. Other advice included “looking beyond their faces to see if they are ok”, “listening to them, being present and challenging them to take responsibility” and “walking the talk”. Another teacher referred to the importance of being a “touchstone teacher”; one who is non-judgmental and a good listener.

Characteristic Six: Valuing education

Like Makereti, successfully intelligent Māori students see themselves as scholars. They have a natural curiosity and inner-drive, an aptitude for learning and a commitment to excellence. Successfully intelligent Māori students are driven, purposeful and aspirational.

Most of the students acknowledged the constant and consistent support they received from their whānau who pushed them to stay focused at school and supported their success. In return most of the students wanted to return home after university and travel to make their whānau proud and “give them a good life”. The notion of reciprocating the support of their families was a major theme in the student data. Students made comments about being “able to give my family what they need”, “being successful for myself and my family” and being “a good role model to your

younger whānau and others”. One gifted Māori student in particular stated “I come from a whānau that has worked hard and have become successful by having a determined attitude. We like to do well as a whānau and they are my motivation to do well.” Another student said “My family value education and I feel I should make them proud. My parents have provided for me my whole life. I want to be able to do the same for my family one day”.

It is evident that the students wanted their whānau to share in their pride and this was an anchor that sustained them in moments of discouragement. Many of the students mentioned how important it was to them that their parents were proud of them. Making their “whānau proud”, a university education, “seeing the world” and then eventually returning to Rotorua “to give back to whānau, hapū and iwi” are motivating and sustaining forces for gifted Māori students persisting at school.

Finally, fear of academic under-achievement, and its associated ramifications, was a stimulus for some of the gifted Māori students to persist at school. A number of the students mentioned that they did not want “to live on the dole”, “get stuck in this town”, “be a bum”, “fail in life” or “be another negative Māori statistic”. Another student openly stated, “The majority of my family are unsuccessful and after seeing them I decided I wanted to do better”. It was evident that many of these gifted Māori students wanted to avoid the shame of academic under-achievement and instead saw educational success as a source of pride and an “investment in the future”. Many of the respondents stated that they valued education because if you succeeded “you can go anywhere you want to go”, “be proud of who you are and what you do” and “feel good about yourself”.

The whānau members recognised that getting a good education is one of the best things their gifted children could do to ensure they led fulfilling and prosperous lives. A number of the whānau members also acknowledged that their gifted children’s success had multiple benefits for the wider whānau, hapū and iwi. One parent in particular cited two key reasons why education was important to his whānau:

1. Hai ara-mo-tinana, hai tikitiki-mo-mahunga, hai wairua-no-atua – To paraphrase Apirana Ngata’s whakataukī “a full and broad education provides further opportunities for them to support themselves physically, culturally and spiritually.”
2. As stated by Kepa Ehau “whāia te mātauranga hai whītiki te iwi kia toa ai –Seek ye from the fountain of knowledge so the people may thrive and prosper”. Good educational outcomes are not purely an individual pursuit; they reflect positively upon the people, are a means to advance tribal wellbeing and therefore bring the broader cultural and social goals to fruition.

Many whānau respondents expressed the sentiment that they wanted their children “to realise their potential and have no limits to achieving what they want in life” and that helping their children to value education “is the most important job we have as parents after teaching them to be kind, loving and respectful”.

Many of the teachers emphasised how crucial it is to form high expectations about their students' chances for academic success and then interact with gifted Māori students on the basis of those expectations. Teachers stated that they “promoted success,” “had high expectations and belief in students” and “expected Māori students to achieve greatness”. One teacher told his/her gifted Māori students that they were “the architects of their own destiny, regardless of their whānau or school expectations. They hold the personal power and should use it positively”.

Another teacher also spoke of a gifted Māori student who had come to live with the teacher (as a result of a whānau breakdown). The teacher referred to this student as “a phoenix rising from the flames” and stated that despite her/his difficult life circumstances the student would be successful because “she had the determination” and the teachers at the school “believed in the student’s potential” and “went above and beyond to help them realise their potential”.

The teachers also considered it important that gifted Māori students were successful in multiple ways and across multiple contexts. Teachers stated that they considered it important for gifted Māori students to “be leaders in their whānau, their community and Aotearoa”. Such leadership involved “leading by example and being role models to other Māori students,” “being humble”, “thanking those who have helped them” and “celebrating their successes with their peers, whānau and communities”. One teacher stated: “Ko ōku tūmanako mō ngā tauira Māori, kia eke e rātou ngā taumata o te ao Māori me te ao Pākehā nei tīpare mo ō rātou māhunga” (My hopes for the Māori students are that they reach the highest levels of the Māori world and the Pākehā world and wear their successes like a woven headband around their heads).

Characteristic Seven: Humility

Like Dr Hiko Hohepa, successfully intelligent Māori students possess humility. Humility is a positive personal characteristic; it is a quality that is often a cultural point of difference because it is about service to others, generosity of spirit and putting others before the self. Successfully intelligent Māori students can accept criticism, work in service to others and are good team players.

The students defined humility as a positive personal quality that primarily involved “not being cocky about how good you are and sharing the credit when due”. Humility was also explained as “not regarding ourselves as more important than other people” and including those who have achieved less than we have “remembering that their needs are as important as ours”. Integral to the gifted Māori students’ understandings of humility were the notions of caring about the feelings of others around them; “being proud but not arrogant or ignorant” and “helping people who need it and never giving up on them”. Quotes that illustrate the positivity and aroha-ki-tangata (empathy) these students held for others include: “Doing well means not bragging, and encouraging and helping other students you know are struggling” and humility “means recognising that you are not the sole contributor to your success...many people have helped you along the way”. According to the gifted Māori student respondents, humility is comprised of: giving due credit to others for our successes; receiving correction, compliments and feedback graciously; and thinking and speaking about the good qualities and skills of other people.

The whānau members also perceived humility to be a positive concept, identifying ways that they encouraged their gifted children to find the right balance between humility and self-promotion, including encouraging their children to have self-pride, whilst modeling and emphasising the values of respect and compassion for others. Many whānau members established home contexts where the families could celebrate the students' achievements while encouraging their gifted children to "always congratulate everyone else on their effort too". One whānau member stated that the following tenets are "central to teachings about humility":

1. He iti anō tāku iti. Ko koe hai mua ko au hai muri – Place others' needs before your own.
2. Noho whakaiti, tū whakanui – Your humility will be noted and promoted by others.
3. Ka pai whakahīhī, ka kino whakahāwea – Pride in oneself is good but not to the detriment of others.

The whānau data illustrate that the whānau/child interactions about humility encourage the qualities of "integrity, responsibility, kindness, compassion, respect, honesty and courage". The balance of "celebrating success" whilst "acknowledging the feats of others" was seen to nurture the students' personal and social identities, self-worth, confidence and pride. It was also seen as very important that the students were "appreciative of all the people who helped them to succeed".

Many of the whānau members discussed humility as "something they role modelled themselves" by always "acknowledging the humble behaviour of others" and using "story-telling to illustrate people who are successful and humble, and people who are successful and full of themselves". Other advice offered to children included: "do not get a big head as one can fall from grace due to arrogance or overconfidence", "let others blow your trumpet" and "always do good to others and goodness will always be returned in a million ways". The concept of humility, as explained by the whānau in this study, is primarily concerned with encouraging intrinsic self-worth, modesty and respect in their children. Overwhelmingly, the quality of humility is perceived as a positive personal characteristic integral to success.

The teacher data emphasised the whakataukī (proverb) 'Kāore te kumara e kōrero mō tōna reka' – this is a traditional Māori proverb that states the kumara never speaks of its own sweetness. This proverb encourages all students to demonstrate humility and "accept praise with dignity and pride". The teachers emphasised that "being humble is a fine and honourable attribute" because "success is only achieved with the support and encouragement of parents, teachers, whānau and other people". The teachers believed in the "importance of explicitly teaching students about "whakahīhī (pride) and whakamā (shame) and when it is appropriate to show either". They also mentioned the vital function of making links to role models from the students' whānau, iwi and communities that illustrated humility. A number of the teachers discussed the need for teachers to speak to the humble qualities "of Māori tūpuna"

and for students “to stay grounded and never forget their roots and the sacrifices that their ancestors made”.

Characteristic Eight: Core Māori values

Like Koro Wihapi Winiata, successfully intelligent Māori students enact a range of core Māori values in their interactions with others. They are able to synthesise the most meaningful qualities in wider Māori culture, and more specifically those values valued by their iwi, most often portrayed by way of aroha (love), manaaki (care) and wairua (spirituality).

Being Māori was also characterised by the gifted Māori students as “knowing about your culture”, “speaking Māori”, “upholding Māori values”, “staying true to who you are”, “knowing your heritage” and “caring for the land”. The Māori students felt that their Māori identity was important because it represented their family and helped them to understand who they were. Even the two gifted Māori students who did “not feel as Māori” as the other students commented on how they would like to learn more “about my own iwi” and “Māori values and history” because they “hadn’t yet experienced this for myself. I hope I can someday”.

The whānau members used a wide range of approaches to help their children feel a sense of belonging to their iwi and gain the cultural ‘tools’ that enabled them to walk with ease in the Māori world. Some parents had even travelled back from Australia and other places so that their children could be schooled in Māori-medium early childhood centers and schools. They also involved their children in “iwi wānanga” (intensive tribal higher learning), kapa haka and other marae events so that the children were “well attached to their marae, whānau and hapū”. Other parents committed to helping their children “connect with their Te Arawa whānau and learn all about their whakapapa” by enrolling in te reo Māori classes themselves. One parent outlined a number of things he does to tautoko his children’s Māori identity and cultural development:

1. Whakaako i tōna pepeha me wētahi waiata, kōrero tuku iho hoki nō Te Arawa - Teaching and disseminating to them their pepeha, waiata and Te Arawa-based knowledge appropriate to their age and receptiveness.
2. Ka haere tahi te kāinga nei ki wētahi hui i ōna marae - Attending and participating in relevant gatherings at marae.
3. Ka haere ia ki tētahi Kura Kaupapa Māori ki roto i Te Arawa. Mā te kāinga nei hei tāpiri wētahi āhua “Arawatanga” ki wētahi mea tūmatawhanui – Attendance at a local Kura Kaupapa and supplementing broader curriculum and content with Te Arawa knowledge-based examples.

Wider whānau were seen to play an important role in the development of iwi-specific knowledge and identity. Many of the whānau respondents referred to “taking them to the pā all the time”, maintaining “close and constant contact with whānau, marae and hapū” and “surrounding them with wise, kind elders, aunts, uncles who share their knowledge with him”. Many of the whānau respondents emphasised that “identity is important” and a number of the parents echoed the sentiment that “Te

Arawatanga (Te Arawa specific knowledge and history) is promoted over anything else”.

Many of the teacher respondents emphasised the importance of gifted Māori students succeeding ‘as Māori’ so that they can achieve “academically while still having strong cultural ties and values”. One teacher asserted that academic success should come “without losing your culture or having to forfeit who you really are” because “students want to be counted as Māori”. A number of the teachers also referred to their hopes that their gifted Māori students would eventually “move easily and comfortably between the world of Te Arawa and the Pākeha world” so that they might “recognise, be able to use the community expertise, and be Te Arawa” in all of their future endeavours. It was clear that the teachers hoped that the students might “achieve academically, leave kura (school) with qualifications and then be able to give back to the hapū later on”. The teachers envisaged the students “contributing to society in general whilst bringing with them a Te Arawa flavour”. It was seen as important that “students retain and practise their Te Arawatanga with confidence, competence and humility” and that they “reflect the best of Te Arawa practices (manaakitanga, kapa haka etc.)”. One teacher believed that there was potential in “tailoring a Te Arawa curriculum to be specific to our iwi”, concluding that “there are numerous possibilities if we have the courage to do it”.

Conclusion

By linking back to the past and recounting some of the deeds of gifted Te Arawa icons and/or tūpuna (ancestors), we can see that by way of their respective and collective qualities, they offer guiding examples to those engaged in the pursuit of academic achievement and success in the modern world. The icons’ qualities are: identity; diligence; relationships; innovation; wellbeing; scholarship; humility; and values. This cluster of qualities are metaphorically the eight beating hearts of those Te Arawa leaders of former times - Ngā Pūmanawa e Waru - selected for this study from different eras of tribal history. They point not only to how these leading figures made outstanding contributions to the social fabric of their time, but also how they continue to guide Māori students who seek educational success today.

Gifted Māori students must be encouraged to value their culture and see it as a meaningful and relevant part of their academic achievement and success. Bevan-Brown (1993, 2009) has long stated that those children whose Māoritanga has been tapped into and developed, appeared to “bloom” and Rymarczyk Hyde (2001) has also explained how connectedness to one’s culture can increase self-esteem and confidence, resulting in gifted Māori students being more likely to develop their potential. To achieve this, home socialisation strategies and teaching and learning approaches need to be culturally appropriate, culturally affirming and the focus should be on a localized curriculum that is meaningful and relevant to students’ lived realities. This would support the development of strong cultural identity and subsequently the improved self-concept with regard to being Māori and gifted.

The findings of the Ka Awatea project show that Māori student success 'as Māori' is contingent upon the gifted Māori student developing, understanding and utilising contextually-grounded qualities of successful intelligence. Māori student success is also reliant on the school understanding, and drawing upon, pedagogically, the values, local histories, traditions and aspirations of gifted Māori students, their whānau and the wider community. The study illustrated why we must take into account the contexts in which successful intelligence is socialised and nurtured. A gifted Māori student's ability and drive to achieve success 'as Māori' will always be influenced the places, people and distinctive contexts in which they are raised.

Gifted Māori students and their whānau have clear ideas of what contributes to, and constitutes their successful intelligence. From their perspectives, cultural identity and intelligence are inextricably interlinked. The successfully intelligent gifted Māori students in this study used eight qualities of successful intelligence to connect with and relate to others in their social and cultural worlds, across and within different contexts. They were successfully intelligent by virtue of their ability to adapt to, shape and interact in, and across, home, school and community contexts in ways that were academically rewarding, socially valued and culturally grounded.

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