

EMPOWERMENT THROUGH THE ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR LEARNING  
CHALLENGES, PRIORITIES AND SOME WIDER ISSUES

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THE ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR LEARNING: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN  
AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND AND CHALLENGES IN THE 90'S

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## 1. TOWARDS A TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION

Dehumanization is a concrete expression of alienation and domination; humanistic education is a utopian project of the dominated and oppressed... both require action from men and women to maintain or modify their respective realities. We emphasize this to overcome idealist illusions and pipe dreams of an eventual humanistic education for mankind without the necessary transformation of an oppressed and unjust world. Such a dream actually serves the interests of the advantaged and readily exposes an ideology that concretizes the welfare syndrome by urging the oppressed to wait patiently for those sunnier days, delayed for now, but soon to appear. (Freire 1985, p.113)

### Empowerment through APL: Introduction

There is nothing new about the recognition of prior learning. What is new is the concerted effort to move it from the periphery towards the center, thus turning it into a mainstream route for gaining nationally recognised qualifications. This has important implications for the empowerment of learners, particularly those who have been disadvantaged by the traditional qualifications system.

Who are the disadvantaged? How did they end up in this oppressed state? In a supposedly 'free' market economy and given the present education system in most parts of the world, what are the chances that the oppressed can liberate themselves, and as Paulo Freire suggests, their oppressors? Who are the oppressors? Are not teachers as much in need of liberation as their students? How can the assessment and formal recognition of prior learning transform the respective realities of teacher and taught to their mutual benefit? These are some of the questions raised in this study.

Older students returning to higher education, women, minority language and ethnic groups (migrant and indigenous) have

caught the attention of adult education and prior learning assessment experts all over the world because of their education and training needs that are still waiting to be addressed. In New Zealand, we are really just beginning to do something about the problems of marginalisation and a few institutions are moving faster than others. However, the first step has been taken by many of them in publicly acknowledging the urgency of the situation for women and for Maori people. Our most immediate problem is that of narrowing the gap between rhetoric and practice.

Joan Metge (1983) points out that Maori children raised by adults operating on Maori premises are disadvantaged in the school system, their strengths not recognised, because they are not expected. Developed under different circumstances, the Maori way of education appears to have lost its currency and effectiveness, having been adversely affected by the social and economic changes of the last five decades. As a result, the whole country suffers, it is not only the Maori who suffer; if we are to remain an undivided country, the Maori's loss is everybody's loss. The Maori way contains insights (e.g., the view of education as of life that emphasises "wholeness and interconnectedness") which could benefit us all. How should we solve the problem? Metge suggests that the whole society changes -- the Maori should not have to make all the accommodations. Those in the majority culture have a responsibility to change the dominant system to accommodate and hopefully learn from the Maori way.

How can the historically excluded catch up with the rest of society? In a talk that Professor P. Graham (1992) of Harvard University gave recently in Wellington she advocated the expenditure of more resources on the educationally disadvantaged. This is the only way, she maintains, that the latter can be enabled to catch up with those who have not suffered similar deprivation. The criterion to be used in choosing the means to address the education imbalance, therefore, is not how much money can be saved quickly but what is most effective in empowering those who have already suffered. To be sure, it will take more than the accreditation of prior learning to redress the injustice done to these people and their children; but APL is a step in that direction. Even if all that APL can do is to change some of our entrenched attitudes about assessment and what skills and knowledge should be recognized towards a formal qualification much will have been achieved.

In the accreditation of prior learning, assessment becomes an integral part of the learning process and the learners themselves take a major responsibility for evaluating and furthering their learning. In requiring learners to be

reflective, APL makes them aware of the power that they could have over their own knowledge and skills so that these could be used to full advantage. The question is, how can learners be enabled to have a more active part in their own education when they have been made to believe that they are powerless? Change can be a slow and painstaking process, sometimes it seems like an impossible dream. But Freire's work among the peasants of Latin America inspires hope: it is a possible dream.

Freire (1985) introduces a new dimension to radical educational theory and practice without going so far as to propose the abolition of schools. Instead of despairing over the injustice of an existing system, he shows how people themselves can actually transform their own lives. He does this by linking the process of struggle to the particularities of people's lives. As Giroux (1985) explains, Freire's idea of education is fashioned in more than critique and Orwellian pessimism; it is a discourse that makes hope realisable.

#### Assessment and Accreditation

Just what is meant by the accreditation of prior learning? One way to clarify something is to state clearly what it is not. APL does not grant credit for past experience. Credit towards a formal qualification is granted not for the experience but for what the learner has achieved as a result of it. The accreditation of prior learning focuses on the outcomes of learning -- the skills, knowledge and insights that the learner has acquired. Such learning may be gained formally (e.g., through courses at a university or polytechnic college) or informally through travel, independent study, paid employment, home-making activities, or through involvement in voluntary and other community organizations.

There are established procedures for transferring credit for coursework from one tertiary institution to another. But getting credit for prior experiential learning towards a tertiary qualification is not so straightforward, except in some countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, France and Sweden where the accreditation of prior learning has come of age or is fast getting to that stage.

On both sides of the Atlantic, the sudden influx of older students into institutions of higher learning has induced a rapid change in attitude about the knowledge and skills that these new kinds of learners bring with them. Budget cuts have also helped to bring about this change as tertiary institutions found that they have to deliver more for a smaller investment of resources. The accreditation of prior learning means that

students no longer have to cover old ground and the prospect of a shortened course can be quite attractive to an adult student with a wealth of prior experiential learning, disadvantaged in the past or not.

Jessup (1991, p.139) defines the accreditation of prior learning (APL) as the process of

certificating competence on the basis of evidence from past achievements, often supplemented by current assessments. Sometimes used in a wider sense to include counselling, helping people to recognise the significance of their experience as a prelude to assessment and accreditation, and providing guidance and action planning following such accreditation (also referred to as 'accreditation of prior achievement')

Assessment is used to refer to the process of collecting, organizing and presenting evidence of the learning and of making judgments of an individual's competence, knowledge and skills against established criteria. Does the learner really have the learning outcomes claimed? As S. Simosko (1991, p.99) points out, the accreditation of prior learning falls or stands on the validity, reliability and fairness of the assessment process.

It is therefore crucial for institutions that plan to acknowledge the prior experiential learning of their students to make adequate provision for staff development. All those involved in APL should know what their role is in the process and feel confident that they have the knowledge and skills to do their job properly.

Who are involved in the accreditation of prior learning?

It is helpful to conceptualize the accreditation of prior learning in terms of three major parties or roles. First, there is the learner whose role is to make the claim to having assessable prior learning. Second, there is the counsellor or mentor whose main role is to provide the learner with guidance and assistance while preparing for assessment. Third, there is the assessor or panel of assessors whose main role it is to evaluate the evidence for the learning claimed and to make the recommendation for crediting. All three parties should know not only what their respective responsibilities are and the best way to carry them out, but also the reasons why APL is being done and for whom it is being done.

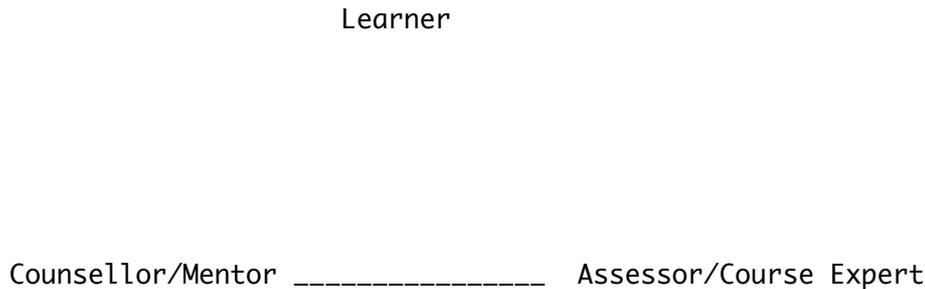


Figure 1. The APL Triangle

## 2. CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES IN APL

### Staff development

It is vital for the success of APL to provide adequate education and training in counselling, evaluation and curriculum development. In fact, it is highly desirable to educate the whole staff, not just those who are directly involved in APL (as mentors or counsellors, course experts and assessors) but also those who can be of support in less direct ways. Curriculum development is a continuous process and is an area to which all faculty members could and should contribute.

A curriculum should be sensitive to the needs of students of all ages and from different backgrounds. It should be open enough to allow for change when students bring new kinds of learning. This can be done, as can be seen from the example set by the College of Public and Community Service at the University of Massachusetts in Boston. The college creates new learning opportunities for each student who enrolls and revises the curriculum and the student manual every year to make them more accommodating! The college has been so successful in its programme that it has managed to attract a large number of students who have been disadvantaged in the past. The University of Massachusetts as a whole has been influenced by this success of the college. CPSC enjoys high credibility outside the college.

A good and innovative APL system does not work in a social and academic vacuum. It certainly cannot operate under siege conditions. The whole institution has to be committed to its success. In this way, APL can become a creative force in the transformation not only of students but also of their teachers and the institution itself.

At the center of a successful APL system are reflective students and a core of competent and dedicated staff to make it work. Mentors and counsellors should be gentle and firm at the same time; they should be supportive but they should also know when to withdraw into the background to make more room for the APL candidates to spread out their own wings. Course experts and assessors should learn about the principles of good practice in assessment and adhere to them. Unless this is done, APL cannot deliver what it promises. To enable all three parties to do APL properly, administrators of programmes and institutions should provide a supportive atmosphere. It would be a mistake to impose counselling and assessment on staff members who are already fully committed to other duties.

Underlying the accreditation of knowledge and skills acquired through experience are the assumptions that (a) people learn by living and doing; (b) the outcomes of experiential learning can be related to those achieved through formal learning; (c) these outcomes are measurable, and (d) they can be credited towards a formal qualification, just like classroom-based learning.

Why assess prior learning? It is wasteful for both students and education and training provider not to assess what has been previously achieved. It will be in the interest of universities and other tertiary institutions to have a policy in place that would enable staff to develop a more responsive attitude towards students with different kinds of learning experiences. Many of them have achieved learning that they can demonstrate to be comparable in quality with that acquired by students who do the required coursework in these institutions. To ignore this is not the way to build a society of highly motivated life-long learners and a creative citizenry. It is demotivating and disempowering for learners not to be given recognition for what they have already achieved. It undermines their capacity to learn how to learn.

The acknowledgement of prior learning is a matter of social justice. Anyone with a little sociological imagination knows that it is difficult for those who have been forced into silence to change the situation for themselves. Educators and researchers have a responsibility to use their knowledge and skills to close the chasm between institutions of higher learning and those who have been failed by the formal education system.

APL researchers and practitioners are strategically placed to become facilitators in the empowerment of the historically disadvantaged. They just have to exercise their sociological imagination and expand their expertise, particularly in

responding to different kinds of experiential learning. It is their job to listen to the voices of those who have been silenced, and indeed even of those who have not been oppressed but have not realised how much more they can contribute to society if they had the means to express themselves. In the course of assessing and recognising the prior learning of the disadvantaged and others who have uncertificated learning, APL experts can help them to develop the confidence to use their hard-earned knowledge, skills and insights to transform their reality.

### Achieving unity between action and reflection

We do have to make sure that when we educate and train people we are clear about our standards and criteria and find alternative ways of getting our students to achieve competency and to aim for excellence. Teachers have to be careful not to lock their students into a particular way of doing things and a particular way of looking at the world. In the process of turning students into experts in one field or another, teachers should not forget to point out that there may exist different ways -- all equally valid ways -- of achieving the same ends. Otherwise students would not be able to develop the flexibility they need in order to see whereelse that mental discipline and technical expertise they have acquired can be applied and to whose advantage or disadvantage.

Education is not merely a struggle of power relations. It is not simply a struggle for recognition so that the balance of power can be overturned for the sole benefit of the oppressed. It is also a struggle for meaning (Freire 1985). APL can assist in the rebuilding of communities through the development of more reflective learners who can understand one another more deeply, having discovered more reasons to explain their differences and why they are as they are.

Self-reflection is the key to better assessment and self-directed development. Underpinning APL is a philosophy of education that views learning not so much a cumulative as a constructive and a transformative process which enables learners to have greater control of the means to change their own lives. It is not enough for people to aim for the mastery of any specific type of knowledge or set of skills. They need to learn how to learn, that is, how to become reflective learners, so that they can adapt to change.

In humanistic terms, knowledge involves a constant unity between action and reflection upon reality. Like our presence in the world, our consciousness transforms

knowledge, acting on and thinking about what enables us to reach the stage of reflection. This is precisely why we must take our presence in the world as the focus of our critical analysis. By returning to our previous experiences, we grasp the knowledge of those experiences. (Freire 1985, pp.100-105)

#### Credentialism vs. enhancement

While the recognition of prior learning can have empowering implications for those who have been excluded from the education system, it can also be misused, and not always with bad intentions either. It can indeed be misused unwittingly by well-meaning educators who might think they are being helpful to the disadvantaged by power-speeding them through a credentialing programme. It is not enough to have good intentions. Without proper staff-development, APL practitioners can have the best intentions and still end up doing the wrong thing for the very students they want to help. Or they can become quite efficient at doing things for the wrong reasons.

Morris Keeton (1992, p.21) gives this timely reminder to adult education specialists and APL practitioners who tend to take good assessment for granted

better assessment is a key to the accomplishment of the needed transformation of college environments and to improvements in their efficiency. The assessment work is an indispensable tool for carrying out the research needed to guide and evaluate the changes being made...trying to downplay assessment for credentialing is like trying to return from the industrial era to a pre-industrial one. Credentials are simply information about human qualifications. The perceived overemphasis upon credentials is probably best seen as a warranted reaction to the poor quality of current credentials and to the common emphasis upon the wrong kinds of credentials: upon credentials based on time served, rather than upon learning and competence achieved; upon credentials rated in a pecking order of prestige, rather than in a hierarchy of difficulty and sophistication of achievement and development.

There is probably nothing that can undermine the self-confidence of learners more than to undervalue their own informed and honest appraisal of what they need to do in order to enhance their prior learning. It has to be an informed evaluation, however; those who have practised APL are well aware of the tendency of disadvantaged learners to undervalue their learning. However, undue speed in the granting of credentials will only

provide the cheapest option without many of the advantages that sound assessment as a prelude to the recognition of prior learning can give to students. A quick option may be cheap for the decision makers and perhaps the provider but is it the best for the learner and society?

Nothing can be more disempowering than to give learners only a semblance of what they have been deprived of in the past. It is like giving them devalued currency which cannot really help them to make up for what has been denied them. There is ample evidence from overseas experience in the accreditation of prior learning to demonstrate that the danger of credentialism is never far away. It is, therefore, very wise to avoid putting too much emphasis on recognition (Keeton 1992). The granting of formal recognition is part and parcel of a wider movement aimed at increasing the ability of learners to take responsibility for their own knowledge and skills and of improving and extending them whenever the opportunity can be made available. If one were to look for a single word to describe the aim of the assessment of prior learning, enhancement should take priority; however, enhancement and formal recognition are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

The value of research and reflection should not be underestimated; any effort spent on these activities is bound to help actors to understand the meaning of their action. What is three to six months spent on the development of a good portfolio, for instance, seen in the context of years or generations of deprivation? People need time to create and adapt to new realities.

The choice to be literate

A common difficulty in the assessment of prior learning is one of communication. Many of those who have acquired their learning outside the classroom are not used to reading and writing in the same way that learners who have gone through the traditional route are, and therefore, do need assistance. Obviously, a certain level of reading and writing skills is essential for pursuing certain tertiary qualifications. Learners who have not had the opportunity to develop adequate literacy skills in the past must be assisted to acquire them. At least the choice should be made available to all disadvantaged learners to improve their literacy as a prelude to being admitted into a programme of study that requires a high level of reading and writing skills.

It is tempting for education and training providers to make the choice for the historically excluded; in their eagerness to

change an unjust situation, they may be inclined to grant credit for prior learning without really listening to their clients' voices and their desire to be empowered through the use of words. Many of them would like to have their literacy skills enhanced, realising that without the means to express what they know and can do, their empowerment is not complete and they would not be able to catch up with those luckier members of society who are not slowed down with the handicap. As APL practitioners we should not let the system that put them in that situation off the hook too easily. More resources should be provided for enhancing the literacy skills of silenced learners.

### Redefining success to include community values

Cynthia Johnson (1992, p.19), professor in the department of Educational Psychology and Administration at the California State University Long Beach, raises some questions that those who want to offer APL services may well ask themselves:

Who comes to our campuses, and who succeeds? And we have to question the difference between training and education. Too many adults want to power boat their way through to get that degree and get out and get the job, and they are not getting educated in terms of our institutional mission statements, lifelong learning and all the values and ideas in which we believe.

In New Zealand, one might well ask: in view of the country's commitment to biculturalism, to what extent are Maori concerns reflected in the practice of education and training providers?

When formal learning is based on a narrowly defined curriculum i.e., it does not incorporate important community values, and when institution-based learning is elevated above knowledge, skills, attitudes and values gained outside the formal education system, those students who succeed according to the system and earn badges of higher education would be losers from the point of view of the community they come from. They would be in danger of finding themselves estranged from their heritage language and culture and the unique histories of their people. This is too high a price to pay for success. The challenge is for educators to define success in such a way that it will not drive a wedge between successful learners and their people. There is a university programme in Canada that has succeeded in anchoring graduates in social work in the communities with which they identify simply by involving First Nation elders and other local people in curriculum development (Alcoze and Mawhiney 1988).

In New Zealand, the concern that individuals have often

become isolated from their tribe and family when they moved up the educational and socio-economic ladder has prompted many Maori leaders to have a second look at the existing qualifications system. They have seen how an assimilative school system has created such problems as language loss among those who have 'succeeded' in the system. For those who have been 'failed' by the system, there have been the problems of unemployment, anomie and sometimes even more terrible consequences. Maori elders wanted to get the young out of this bind, hence, the founding of the *kihanga reo* (language nest) movement in 1982.

The *kihanga reo* is a community-based pre-school which uses only Maori as the language of instruction. In the *kihanga reo*, grandparent and *mokopuna* (grandchild), *kaiako* (teacher) and *akonga* (pupil) work together in pursuit of knowledge and skills, with the older and more experienced members of the *whÉnau* (the extended family) leading the way and taking collective responsibility for bringing up the young so that they can grow up feeling at home in two worlds. There should not be any need for young Maori people to become strangers in the world of their ancestors while they take their places in the modern world. APL values the learning that goes on in the *whÉnau* and links it with the learning that is fostered by institutions.

In seeking to bridge the gap between learning in the classroom and learning in the workplace and throughout life, APL enables the disadvantaged to embark on higher education and further training by building on what they have learned from past experience. Both teachers and students will benefit from APL, although to start with it will be a challenge for them. It is not easy for students to assume responsibility for their learning if they are used to being spoonfed with facts that they are expected to regurgitate at assessment time (cf. Freire and Shor 1987). It is not easy for the authoritarian teacher either who must learn to yield and relinquish control. Both have to change drastically. Reflective students require reflective and secure teachers who know where they are coming from and can therefore guide them towards that kind of success that does not alienate them from their own culture.

One of the greatest challenges to APL practitioners, and all educational researchers for that matter, concerns the relationship between those achievements earned in the more traditional way through the formal education system and the kind of learning that people gain from life and the workplace. We need to do more research in this area if we are to help break the cycle of failure for the educationally disenfranchised (cf. Gartner 1976, p.44). In searching for possible solutions to this very difficult problem, we have to involve the community that these students come from. Our own lack of knowledge about the

different communities that make up our society and the cultural background of the students who are failed by the dominant system keeps us from being more helpful to learners. Who succeeds and who fails, these are two sides of the same coin; our knowledge and understanding of the different dimensions of success and failure leave a lot to be desired.

### Cross-cultural partnerships

The assessment of prior learning in a wide range of cultural contexts should uncover other alternatives to existing procedures for evaluating and certificating what people already know and can do. This is a worldwide movement to which every individual and culture should be enabled to contribute in the most constructive way possible and where we can all learn from one another in banishing educational disadvantage wherever it occurs in whatever form. An open mind going hand in hand with the readiness to modify practice as we grow in mutual respect and understanding are the best allies we can have as we face the challenges of the 90's. An innovation cannot be rejected in New Zealand just because it was pioneered elsewhere. At the same time, sharing our experiences here with other countries could also enable them to make further advances in solving similar problems.

In the United States, the assessment of prior learning received a big push in the 1970s with the founding of the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL). This organization continues to serve individuals, organizations and institutions not just in the US but also across the Atlantic and now its membership extends out further to people like ourselves. Towards the end of 1991, M. Keeton and B. Sheckley asked members of CAEL and the National Society for Internships and Experiential Education (NSIEE) to comment on priorities for the 1990s. The responses have significant implications for New Zealand.

In their study, Keeton and Sheckley asked how the next decade be could be turned into one that makes better use of the potential of experiential learning (Keeton 1992, p.21). Among the priorities identified by those who took part in the study were those of improving and expanding the range of learning environments, making further progress with the assessment of learning, and increasing not only the numbers but also the variety of users of experiential learning.

One of the recommendations that emerged from the Keeton-Sheckley survey was the building of cross-cultural partnerships and communities of learning -- an essential infrastructure, the researchers rightly claim, for the emerging global society. There is widespread awareness of the problems that occur when no

provision is made for learners coming from different cultural backgrounds with different experiences, histories and world view.

Keeton (op, cit.) emphasizes the urgency of listening to the learners' own view of the priorities and of working with them to meet the needs they have identified:

To make a better upcoming decade than ever before for experiential learning will not be a matter of focusing upon the wants and needs of professionals in experiential learning. Rather, it will be a matter of showing how such learning is indispensable to the fullest achievement of society's highest priority requirements.

It will be a matter of giving priority to the needs most painfully and urgently felt by the clients of higher education and of enlisting their cooperation in efforts to meet those needs more effectively.

Keeton (op. cit) stresses the importance of welcoming new populations to campus but he cautions against assimilating people of diverse cultures, learning interests and ethnic backgrounds into the business-as-usual climate and culture. He says that for diversity to have positive effects:

The campus cultures themselves will need to change if they are to be truly enhanced by this infusion of people with different perspectives, values and histories.

This means doing more research on learning in different cultures and within each culture. What kinds of educational innovations have been found to work best in different contexts? As we become a more global economic community, different countries and cultures have to reflect on their uniqueness and see where this can be harnessed to make a world that also knows how to derive strength from diversity (Toffler, 1981; cf. Benton et al., 1991). New Zealand and Australia can make a unique contribution to the worldwide search for creative ways of helping disadvantaged minorities to help themselves now that they themselves see how higher education and further training might improve their life chances.

How do we make the most of diversity? How do we relate to the learning experiences of those who are different from us? The more we understand about different kinds of learning and learners the more we realize how much more we have to learn. Education and training providers can not hope to connect to the

learning experience of different groups unless they welcome these as partners in learning. We must open the gates of our institutions wider so that the historically excluded can come in without having to leave behind them, like some useless excess baggage, their language and culture and whatever else they have that might help them along in life-long learning. Our willingness to give full credit for their prior learning will enable them to start at long last from a much stronger base.

### 3. THE RESEARCH PROJECTS

The involvement of Te Wéhanga Kaupapa MÉori (TWKM) of NZCER in APL started at the request of the Maori Caucus of the NZ Council for Education and Training in the Social Services (NCCETS). This project culminated in the publication in 1990 of two books: Kahukura: The Possible Dream and Recognition of Prior Learning: From Hegemony to Symphony. A year later, Te Kohanga Reo (TKR) National Trust entered into a research partnership with TWKM to consider the possibility of empowering people in the kihanga reo movement through the accreditation of prior learning. This enabled TWKM to educate in the course of the project three Maori researchers who learned about the accreditation of prior learning experientially. The research team, including myself, learned from doing. The TWKM-TKR APL project has been going since November 1991 and we are now at the end of Phase I.

For people who get involved in the kihanga reo, there are three kinds of qualifications they might be concerned about. The first of these includes skills and knowledge that each whÉnau considers important for the successful completion of the tasks within their own particular kihanga, given their unique environment, local history, etc. The second qualification is that gained through the Tino Rangatiratanga Whakapakari (Strengthening Self-determination) Teacher Training Course that the TKR National Trust promotes and which includes the knowledge and skills that are essential for ensuring both the achievement of the kihanga purpose, goals and objectives and the continuation of government funding. The third includes those skills and knowledge that might not be essential or sufficient for the operation of the kihanga but which might be useful towards earning some other nationally recognised qualification e.g., an Early Childhood Education diploma, a Maori Early

Childhood Education diploma, or a degree or a certificate in the social services.

Accordingly, there are three different categories of benchmarks that may be used when assessing the prior experiential learning of people who are currently or have been previously engaged as teachers in the kihanga reo. First, there are those learning outcomes that the workplace requires for competent performance (e.g., a particular group in the Tuhoe region may require of a kaiako the ability to speak the Tuhoe variant of Maori and a certain level of expertise in local history so a person from another part of the country has more knowledge and insights to gain before being accepted into the kihanga reo even if they have knowledge and skills under the second and third categories). Secondly, there are those learning outcomes set by a national body that serves as a kind of industry board (e.g., the New Zealand Council for Education and Training in the Social Services or Te Kohanga Reo National Trust Board). Thirdly, there are those learning outcomes expected of students who go through institution-based courses and programmes to obtain a nationally recognised qualification.

The TKR National Trust wants to make sure that kihanga reo kaiako have the necessary qualifications to do their work. To ensure that the appropriate knowledge and skills are gained by them it has negotiated with the NZ Qualifications Authority the approval of a national training programme that defines these, how they are to be earned and also how they are acknowledged. The Tino Rangatiratanga Whakapakari training programme is meant to strengthen all those who work in the kihanga reo, but for now, it is concentrating on the development of knowledge and skills that are vital for the kaiako. This kaiako training programme consists of ten learning units, each with a corresponding learning outcome. It was these learning outcomes that we used as the benchmarks for assessing the prior learning of the people included in the first phase of our research.

Our methodology and some of our findings

The focus of the research has been to find the most appropriate way of assessing knowledge and skills of particular importance to a given group of people. In the accreditation of prior learning, the assessment method is chosen to suit the learner and the kind of skills and knowledge to be evaluated. Obviously, the first step for the research team was to discover what kind of learners we were to design the assessment for. Then we had to know what kinds of skills and knowledge they brought to the kihanga reo and also what they acquired as a result of their involvement in the movement. This meant visiting a number of kihanga reo, talking to

the people there, weeks of listening and observing, and recording on video and audio cassettes, then months of transcription, discussion and analysis of our findings followed by more structured interviews.

Our intention was to design methods of assessment that brought out the relevant prior learning of the people we interviewed and demonstrated their knowledge, skills and insights to best advantage. For Phase I of the project we decided to focus on the kaiako because the National Kohanga Reo Trust had already developed an education and training programme for them -- the Tino Rangatiratanga Whakapakari Kaiako Course and had actually obtained NZQA approval for it.

It became obvious after six kihanga reo were visited that we were dealing with a very diverse group of kaiako. At one end of the continuum was the largely self-taught person, with barely enough second language knowledge of Maori to communicate with the children without having to resort to English. At the other end was the fluent, native or second language speaker who was also steeped in Maori culture, having been exposed from early childhood to fluent speakers of the language and in close contact with the kaumātua (elders). In between these two extremes were a large number of kaiako who had varying proportions of the knowledge and skills that are considered vital for the operation of a kihanga reo.

Of course, we realized that fluency in Maori and knowledge of Maori ways did not automatically make a person a good kaiako. Also needed were pedagogical and management skills. In interviewing the kaiako, we looked for all these skills and more, using the learning outcomes outlined in the Tino Rangatiratanga Whakapakari programme as our guide.

We developed an application form that also served as an interview guide to help us draw out the knowledge and skills that the kaiako we included in our study brought to their job. Although the research team could see many advantages of the composite portfolio for people involved in the kihanga reo we looked at every approach and method (including those developed by Sally Davis, Melinda O' Connor and other colleagues at Broadmeadows College) to find the most suitable way of addressing the problems confronting TKR kaiako.

What, for instance, would be a good alternative for those who are not used to writing much? We experimented with different types of interviewing methods and techniques. We came to the conclusion that one good alternative to the portfolio approach is a taped group interview using whēnau support. We tried this method out with two of the kaiako in the study with

very good results.

The taped interview was carried out by three researchers all of whom were knowledgeable about the accreditation of prior learning but with two of them taking on other roles than being APL experts. One of these also acted as a mentor and assisted with the interview and filling of the APL application form; the other interviewer hardly asked a question, her role was really more of an expert on kihanga-based experiential learning. In one of the interviews she was also the main source of whÉnau support. Because of her tremendous fund of knowledge about the kihanga reo and her special relationship with the candidate as well as some personal qualities, she could not help but slip into the role of a facilitator. An interview team like this is in an ideal position to run discovery workshops for groups of APL candidates with similar knowledge and skills. The following steps summarize quickly the procedures used by the research team.

Step 1. Dissemination of Information. Prior to the group interview, the research team visited the kihanga and had a meeting with the kihanga whÉnau in which the senior researcher and consultant to the project explained to the whÉnau what the accreditation of prior learning was all about. There was plenty of opportunity for discussion and debate as to the advantages of APL for whÉnau development.

Step 2. Preliminary Visit. The next stage of the research consisted of a visit to the kihanga, to demonstrate to the whÉnau how we were going to collect the data through interviews and also record our observations with audio and video recorders. An informal conversation about the purpose of the project and what kind of information we needed was very useful in preparing the kihanga staff and children for their own involvement in the research.

Step 3. Recording Session. The third stage was accomplished with minimum input from the the research team. The idea was to capture a typical day at the kihanga reo on an audiotape and/or a videotape with the researchers staying in the background as much as possible so as not to introduce any unnecessary distraction. One aim was really to give the researchers a feel and an understanding of "what made the kihanga reo tick" as one of our informants put it, in preparation for the assessment of the kaiako's on-the-job performance. The research team found the videotaped material of tremendous help in understanding the context in which the prior knowledge and skills of kaiako were used and extended in a whÉnau learning environment. The videotape may be included later in the portfolio as a source of direct evidence of what the kaiako knows and actually applies in the day-to-day running of the kihanga reo.

Step 4. Kaiako/whÉnau Interview. The group interview focussing on a willing kaiako took place after the third stage, after the researchers had an opportunity to look at the results of the first three visits. The procedures described here seem very straightforward, there were times, however, when certain crucial adaptations had to be made. For example, it is somewhat unnatural for people who normally work as a whÉnau to be asked to talk about their personal contribution to an activity that they themselves see as a cooperative venture. In the Maori world the ideal pattern is for the actor to take the back seat while someone else describes and evaluates his or her involvement in a group activity. An interviewer has to be sensitive to the informant's own view of the activity and not do violence to the cooperative nature of the phenomenon being studied while isolating the individual member's contribution.

In the kihanga reo movement, both kaiako and her charges, the mokopuna (grandchildren) are supported by the whÉnau, the local group that has brought them together and seen by all members as the collective learning unit. Collective learning within the kihanga and collective responsibility for whatever goes on in the kihanga reo is something that members are all expected to endorse, reinforce and legitimise through their own involvement. One can tease out the knowledge and skills of any one kaiako but it would be wrong to present these as though there were no other important actors in the situation because there usually is a group behind the scenes that is sharing the responsibility of keeping things going. It is very important for the researcher to refrain from making arbitrary decisions in isolating what each individual member of the whÉnau did in the kihanga until the patterns emerge not just from the interview but from observations on the job and other forms of evidence. In our research we checked the validity and reliability of our findings by triangulation, using different forms of evidence from an in-depth study of a few cases.

The skills involved in managing a whÉnau activity are actually quite different from those required by a similar activity where the actors are not related and have been chosen primarily because of certain achieved qualifications. A person who is not familiar with the way a whÉnau operates would not find it so easy to cope with the management of a kihanga reo.

The interview guide: its genesis

An APL application form was designed to create a focus for semi-structured interviews with the aim of eliciting assessable knowledge and skills. After trialing the application form with

two members of the research team, it was decided that it would not be easy for the kaiako included in our study to answer by themselves. So we concluded that it would be best to use it in an interview situation.

The application form when finalized will also be the interview guide. It is meant to be used only with people who have done some reading about the APL process or who have taken part in a discovery workshop. If used without the help of an interviewer or a panel of interviewers, the applicant should assume the responsibility for undertaking self-directed study of the APL process. For many of the people we have included in the project, however, attending a self-discovery workshop would have been a good option.

Self-Discovery workshops: reflecting on learning and evaluating its relevance to course outcomes

The self-discovery workshop would certainly be a much cheaper approach than a series of one-to-one and group interviews, and, possibly a more interesting way for many people involved in the kihanga reo (who will be included in Phase II of the project) to reflect on their learning and provide one another with moral support. It is our intention, therefore, to propose to the TKR National Trust Board that a working party be set up to study the feasibility of a discovery workshop in which APL will be discussed with candidates for assessment. Also, candidates will be given an opportunity to brainstorm on their prior learning as a group. It is also crucial to have the Tino Rangatiratanga Whakapakari Training Programme explained to them so that they have a clear understanding of the learning outcomes to be used as benchmarks for the assessment of their knowledge and skills.

Thus from the point of view of the learners themselves, the self-discovery workshop is quite suitable. It is specially recommended for shy learners who can then be enabled to maximize the benefit of linking up with a group of people with similar learning experiences and therefore strategically placed to be very supportive. For people who are used to learning in a whÉnau environment, it is a much more natural and interesting context in which to discuss and reflect on their prior experiential learning. It is also efficient provided that the group has a good leader to start with; in later sessions, as the learners themselves get more confident, they can break up into smaller leaderless discussion and writing groups. They will find this a good way to build self-confidence as they critique their learning in a very supportive social environment.

Similarities in experiential learning are a good starting

point for a group discussion but, in fact, differences in learning experiences and outcomes can provide a focus for the most stimulating discussion and debate. So a discovery workshop can provide a much needed opportunity for different kinds of learners to learn to network so that they can share and exchange relevant information and discover where they can complement one another's strengths. While cutting down on the time spent giving one-to-one support to learners, the discovery workshop has built-in mechanisms for carrying out this function better, using to full advantage the strength of the whÉnau.

#### 4. QUALITY ASSURANCE

Assessment will become more important with the acceptance by tertiary institutions of the idea of the accreditation of prior learning. Learners will have an increasingly more significant role in assessing not only what they know and understand but also their vocational skills. Assessment is to be seen as an integral part of the process of learning rather than merely as the means of evaluating it (Jessup 1991, p.46). In his book, *Assessing Learning*, Urban Whitaker (1989, p.2) explained that he deliberately avoided using the title 'Assessing Experiential Learning' because "the rules of assessment are essentially the same for all types of learning." He stressed the inseparability of learning and assessment:

To learn is to acquire knowledge or skill. To assess is to identify the level of knowledge or skill that has been acquired. Acquiring learning and assessing learning are interdependent processes.

Most educational researchers would agree with Whitaker that assessment, done creatively, leads to further learning.

#### Safeguarding standards

For the recognition of prior learning to be truly empowering, it must be done in such a way that standards are not compromised. The removal of barriers to success does not automatically mean that the requirements for degrees and certificates can now be diminished. Instead of bringing standards down, researchers and practitioners should continue to explore more effective ways of enabling learners to discover not only their strengths but also where gaps are in their prior and current learning. This means the provision of adequate guidance; the amount of support needed can vary a great deal from one learner or group of learners to another. With some learners, one-to-one support may be necessary

for the enhancement of their past achievements.

### The importance of good documentation

If credit is granted without proper documentation and verification of claimed learning outcomes, none other than the learner will suffer more educational disadvantage. As a result, some education and training programmes or the whole APL movement would become suspect. The principle to remember is to give credit only where the learning is of a demonstrably high level; whatever the outcome of the assessment should be properly recorded. More research is needed to clarify the different levels of knowledge, understanding and vocational competence that learners can be expected to demonstrate.

The learners themselves should be given an opportunity to make a positive contribution to the clarification of their knowledge, skills and unique insights. An adequate description of these is indispensable to the development of a highly motivated life-long learner. This is only step 1. The next step is to help learners who are not given to reflection to see the wider ramifications of their learning. Then specific links have to be established between this learning and what various institutions of higher learning and vocational programmes expect of those who choose to go through the programme. The learners themselves, in going through the accreditation process, can keep a record of the progress they make. In order to make this possible assessors should give a prompt and positive feedback at every stage of the assessment. Even when credit is not awarded, the student should have gained something from the process.

### Principles, Standards and Criteria

It is worth raising this point once more: how do we know what we know and can do well? This question cannot be answered satisfactorily without a great deal of reflection on the learner's part. In the final analysis, it is the learners themselves who should have ultimate control of their knowledge and skills. Whanau members who are in the kihanga reo movement will hasten to add that the individual learner is also a member of a larger group and so the development of the individual is inevitably linked to family, tribal and community development.

In a wider sense, educational innovation of any kind, is also tied up with a whole range of other issues. More broadly, how do we define knowledge? What makes an educated person? Just what might be considered tertiary level learning? What makes a good teacher? How do we know that the people we teach or whose

knowledge and skills we want to evaluate have attained a sufficient level of adequacy in their learning, and for what purpose? How is professional or vocational competence to be defined? What skills can be transferred from one situation to another? How can we make sure that as learners throughout life we can evaluate our own learning and continue to build on previous achievement? These are but some of the questions that one should ponder about in going over the principles used to ensure best practice and in determining the standards and criteria against which to evaluate prior learning. If one is not mindful of the important issues that the assessment of prior learning raises, one is likely to be misguided into putting too much emphasis on the mechanics of the process of recognizing prior learning and any consideration of the how without regard to the what and the why of the certification process is bound to distort the significance of the results.

In this paper, I have continually stressed that to put quality aside supposedly to expedite assistance to those who have been disadvantaged by the traditional qualification system is to court disaster; nothing can be more disempowering than to give the disadvantaged only a semblance of what they have been deprived of in the past. It is like giving them a devalued currency which can not really help them to acquire what has previously been denied them.

So what constitutes good practice in the assessment, not only of prior learning, but in any kind of learning for credit? The treatment of this topic in this paper has been brief because it is a subject that many researchers and practitioners in the assessment and recognition of prior learning (e.g., Jessup, 1991; Whitaker 1989; Simosko 1991, just to name a few) have dealt with rather extensively; there really is no excuse for many of our misconceptions about assessment to continue unchecked.

#### Criteria for assessment

The assessment of prior learning is complex, as is any other form of assessment; however, there is no need for it to be unnecessarily complicated as well. The criteria used are not different from those used for assessing other kinds of learning. The criteria that have been covered in the literature on the assessment of prior learning are as follows:

- (1) authenticity - the learner really did what is claimed;
- (2) directness - the focus of learning was sharp rather than diffused;

(3) breadth - the learning was not isolated from wider considerations;

(4) quality - the right balance of theory and practice has been achieved for the particular learning outcomes and competency claimed;

(5) transferability - skills and knowledge demonstrated for one particular learning outcome are applicable to other areas;

(6) currency - the learner had kept up-to-date with recent developments;

(7) validity - the evidence presented relates to the standards and the learning outcomes claimed.

To illustrate how to apply some of these criteria, take for example a learner who claims to have competency in early childhood education and seeks a tertiary level qualification. Now teaching young children is a complex process. Candidates whose learning is being evaluated should not expect to get their experience (which they might like to describe perhaps in terms the number of years spent at a kihanga reo) credited towards a nationally recognized qualification unless they can establish the relationship between the outcomes of such experience to an established body of knowledge, say, about child development and child psychology. Thus, for example, candidates should not expect to receive tertiary credit for merely following narrowly prescribed procedures or copying observed routines in the kihanga reo.

Those kaiako who put in a claim for tertiary level learning should be able to relate to abstract theory not only their concrete kihanga teaching experience but also what can be transferred from the kihanga reo situation to other early childhood teaching experiences, distilling from these and other comparable situations those general principles that could help them to make meaning from their isolated experiences. The situation would be entirely different if all that the learner wants is a qualification that would enable her to transfer from one kihanga to another. The learning has to match the educational and career goal.

### Learner participation

There are many similarities between the assessment of prior learning and the more traditional type of assessment, however, the question may be raised. What then is different about APL? Already, it has been shown that it focusses on outcomes since

course experts and assessors have no control of what is learned and have no input in how and where the learning is acquired. What else is different about the assessment of prior learning?

It is an open assessment process that both assessor and learner fully understand and which they can both have an active role in planning and administering. Jessup (1991:135-136) provides a succinct summary of the process, expressing a hope that many Maori can relate to:

Assessment is being brought into the real world and demystified within the new model of education and training.

It is his hope that rote memorizing of facts soon to be forgotten for examination will become obsolete.

We shall not need to play those games in the future -- games which few enjoy and where the majority finish up losers. Assessment will be open ... What is assessed and the standards of performance required are open to both the assessor and the candidate alike. Learners will be able to make judgements about their own performance which will have implications for their own learning. Self-assessment will become an important component in learning. It will also often contribute to and initiate assessment by tutors and supervisors.

Jessup goes further than many writers on the assessment of prior learning. He discusses APL and the relationship between assessment and learning in the context of a more comprehensive plan to assist learners -- a national framework of qualifications.

Assessment will be continuous, normally integrated with the process of learning. There will be a much more harmonious relationship between learning, formative assessment, and summative assessment (providing evidence of achievement) in which both learners and tutors participate as required.

A definite advantage to the demystification of assessment is that it becomes less threatening and comes as a natural part of the learning. As Jessup (op cit) notes:

a primary aim ... is to open access to learning to far more people. The new approach encourages learning in a wide range of locations and by different methods. By recognising the skills and knowledge people already have, it will raise their confidence and give them a flying start in any new programme they embark upon. The targets for learning will be more relevant and relate more to the needs of individuals.

What is 'academic' will cease to be some esoteric knowledge that one shelves away after receiving a diploma or certificate. Jessup hopes that boredom and failure will also cease. There is a "clear understanding by learners of what they are expected to learn (as set out in statements of attainment or competence) and the performance level by which they will be assessed, will give them a degree of control over the process which has not been a feature of traditional programmes"(Ibid,p.137).

It is important that students applying to have their learning assessed and certificated know exactly why the process is being undertaken, what kinds of learning outcomes are being evaluated, and what standards and criteria of assessment are going to be used.

Learner participation in both design and administration of the assessment process is desirable as a means of enhancing personal development, particularly the sharpening of self-directed learning skills. The opportunity for learner participation in the process is maximized in sponsored learning programs where learning objectives are specified in advance. (Whitaker 1989, p.44)

In the present atmosphere in New Zealand, with the New Zealand Qualifications Authority currently searching for a way of smoothing the transition between school and university and between these and vocational and professional training, the possibility of relating learning outcomes regardless of where, when and how they were gained is a timely innovation.

In the project that we are doing in partnership with the various kīhanga whānau we envisage the compilation of learners' composite portfolios to enable kaiako, and later, other people who assist in the kīhanga reo to take fuller responsibility for monitoring their own learning. Continuous assessment led by the learners themselves are going to be the means by which kaiako and other members of the kīhanga whānau can monitor their own progress. This should enable them to review their career regularly and make whatever adaptations are required by a change in their plans and thus help them to adjust to the ever-changing demands of the modern world in which they have to practice their chosen profession or vocation and bring up their children.

There is growing awareness in the Maori community of how haste can lead to more waste. They are right in thinking that too much emphasis on credentialism is disempowering, that devalued degrees are a liability rather than an asset for them. They are rightly concerned that unless APL is done with rigour, it will be seen by serious educators as a frill and will never become one of the mainstream routes for obtaining the recognised

qualifications that they need to empower themselves and their children. The members of the Maori Caucus of the NZ Council for Education and Training in the Social Services realize only too well that the quickest way to have their people marginalised again is to give them certificates and diplomas that will have currency only in the Maori world. The qualifications earned have to be able to stand the most thorough scrutiny and should be recognised for what they are anywhere in the world.

## 5. TOWARDS A MORE RESPONSIVE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS SYSTEM

Finally, I would like to draw together some of the main issues I have covered and show how they are linked to some of the other issues raised elsewhere in the symposium. While it is good for us to learn from our colleagues here in Australia and elsewhere we do not want to gloss over the problems and challenges unique to our country. One of the reasons TWKM was asked to undertake research for the Maori Caucus of NZCETSS and then go into a research partnership with Te Kohanga Reo National Trust was to discover a creative response to some of these problems and challenges that will be of benefit to Maori people. We realize that we in New Zealand have to do our own homework; we can not learn everything we need to know to solve our problems simply by studying what happens elsewhere. But in another sense we are all in the same canoe struggling with similar problems so we are interested in what our colleagues in Australia have learned in coming to grips with the problems of the disadvantaged -- the women, the migrant groups, and particularly the indigenous groups.

In seeing the variety of prior knowledge and skills that we need to assess in our effort to help the disadvantaged to help themselves, we can not but feel the immensity of the task that lies before us. There are still huge gaps in our knowledge and understanding of the wider issues involved. What do we do with new learning outcomes that are not covered by the programmes, courses and other institution-based offerings? We agree with our American colleagues, a great deal more outcomes research should be done. Also needed is a clearer definition of the problems requiring research. The clearer we are about the questions we ask, the closer we are to the possible answers, the more certain we are, too, of the boundaries of our knowledge and understanding. What is truly unique? What have we learned from our research in New Zealand that applies only to our particular situation and what can we share with others. What can different disadvantaged groups share with one another? What insights and newly found strengths can they share with the advantaged? The

disadvantaged are not always on the receiving end, despite appearances to the contrary.

In New Zealand, a great deal of effort is going into the development of a national qualifications framework. Care needs to be taken that standards are not compromised in the process of change. A good monitoring system is needed to ensure that consistently valid results are obtained each time assessment is done and no learner is led into a blind alley. More research needs to be done on all fronts to find ways of ensuring that no particular cultural group or individual learners get systematically excluded from the benefits of educational reform.

We can not escape from the responsibility of finding better ways of helping learners to avoid unnecessary failure. Assessment and learning as we have seen are two interactive processes. Students who understand what assessment is all about, what learning outcomes are being assessed and by what standards and criteria their learning is assessed are less likely to fail or be led into a deadend; they are also better motivated to keep on learning. Helping every student to succeed from the very beginning is the best and ultimately the only effective insurance against the disenfranchisement of individuals and groups in our national qualifications system.

Because students who are admitted into APL programmes are given the assistance they require to prepare themselves to succeed one can say that APL is a form of assessment without failure. What happens, of course, is that students do not get assessed until they are ready for it. Their participation in the planning and administration of assessment is another good insurance against failure.

A more sensitive curriculum is another enabling factor because it helps students to link what they have mastered with what they still need to learn. APL helps them to find their way from the known to the unknown. Having been given a good start through the recognition of their prior experiential learning they can work with confidence that they will succeed because they are able to proceed from a position of security and strength. Discovering people's strengths is not so easy when teachers are given a narrowly based curriculum to start with and assessment is completely provider-controlled. The student needs to be given a more active role in the assessment; there should be no choice about this when the learners come from an entirely different background to that of the 'mainstream' student.

The NZ Qualifications Authority proposes to revolutionise the system by developing a new framework that opens new avenues for gaining nationally recognized qualifications transferring the

control of, and, of course, the responsibility for learning to the learners themselves and their community. This should work well with adult learners who are willing to assume more responsibility for their own education and training and for enhancing what knowledge and skills they already have.

What are the implications of the framework for Maori? These are summarized by NZQA as follows (QA News November 1991, p.4):

The Framework provides opportunities for Maori people to establish learning places, administer courses and develop their own qualifications. It will also provide Maori learners with options that were not available and recognized in the past.

The education reforms enable Maori to establish Private Training Establishments and WÉnanga. Qualifications within the Framework will recognize Maori knowledge and skills. Maori will be able to design and offer Maori qualifications and other courses leading to nationally recognised qualifications.

Where it is not possible for Maori groups to establish the infrastructure they need immediately, perhaps one of the options they can explore is working in partnership with tertiary institutions that would agree to help them design and offer Maori qualifications.

Whatever the option taken, there is a need to ensure that Maori learners will be given support to make choices that have not been available to them in the past and will be enabled to achieve their education goals to the highest standards. So that the mistakes of the past are not repeated, Maori people have to take the lead themselves and decide what they want. By doing so, they will no longer have to put up with a system in which they have not had adequate input in the formative stages, and which therefore they find hard to live with.

In short, Maori people cannot afford to sit back and simply wait for those `sunnier days, soon to come'. They have to do what many a kīhanga kaiako has done, gather the mokopuna and where it has been possible, also gather the young parents, and enable both to strengthen and be strengthened by the kuia and kaumÉtua. If the kīhanga reo we have worked with in our research is anything to go by, hope lives on in the Maori world; for as long as the energetic, the knowledgeable and the wise can work harmoniously together, they have little to worry about. APL will help them consolidate the knowledge and skills that still remain despite generations of cultural assimilation and inclusion. From what we have seen in those kīhanga reo we visited, it is possible to

revitalise Maori language and culture.

Those young unemployed parents who are learning the Maori language along with their children will indeed have a better chance to see themselves out of the welfare syndrome than their contemporaries who have chosen not to get involved. Through their direct involvement in the learning of their children they are not only changing their reality, they are also helping to pave the way for their children to have a much more rewarding life. Perhaps the full impact of what they are doing will not be seen until the next generation of kihanga reo children become parents themselves but they are making a dream possible, nevertheless. One can see a new dawn in fact as one watches them progress by the day -- a small step at a time, but every day they come closer to having a better understanding of who they are, what they can do for themselves as well as for their children and grandchildren. This is what Paulo Freire means by 'knowing' and 'making history'.

## GLOSSARY

Kaiako: used in this paper to refer to the person who does the teaching on a regular basis.

kihanga: literally, the term means nest; in the phrase kihanga reo, "language nest", it means a community-based centre where children learn to speak Maori by being immersed in a Maori-language pre-school programme.

Kaumátua: respected older man, also used in the plural form -- kaumÉtua as a collective term for elders of both sexes.

Kuia: respected older woman.

Mokopuna: grandchild, in the context of the kihanga it means all the children involved in the programmes.

whÉnau: the term whÉnau means extended family but is used here to refer to the group of people that regularly contributes directly or indirectly to the operation of a kihanga reo.

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