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Is a cultural and theoretical programme for at-risk Māori rangatahi (youth) useful in the context of resilience and wellbeing?

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Abstract

This article discusses findings of a two-year study that explored the impact of a Māori cultural leadership programme delivered into schools for *Māori rangatahi* (youth) to assist them with their wellbeing and resilience. The rangatahi selected for the programme had lived experiences of drugs and alcohol, truancy, depressive symptoms, suicidal thoughts, anxieties, and violence.

Mana Rangatahi (cultural leadership programme) was based on the cultural values of *whanaungatanga* (relationship building), *manaakitanga* (support), *tikanga* and *kawa* (cultural practices), and *tino rangatiratanga* (self-determination).

The methods utilised in the study involved pre-and-post-surveys of rangatahi attendees to the Mana Rangatahi programme. Followed by a triangulation of data from the two years participant focus groups, and teacher surveys.

The findings of the study indicate Māori cultural programmes in schools' impact positively on the wellbeing and resilience for students.

Keywords: rangatahi, youth (youth) cultural programmes, resilience, wellbeing.

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Introduction

In *Aotearoa*, New Zealand, there is evidence of improvements to some aspects of Adolescent Health and Wellbeing (AHRG, 2012; Ministry of Health, 2013). However, further investment and supports are required to address the range of matters in relation to depression, bullying and

parents worrying about food to feed the family (AHRG, 2012).

Background

The problem the study was to address, was to help *rangatahi* (youth) living with truancy, suicidal ideation, deliberate self-harm, substance use and mental health issues.

Specific interest for this research arose from the requests of secondary school teachers working in Colleges to a Kaupapa Māori Tamariki and Rangatahi Mental Health service requesting help with providing a solution for at-risk rangatahi Māori. The teachers identified issues of drugs and alcohol, physical violence against other students - and in some cases teachers, - truancy, lack of motivation for academic study and low morale. Teachers' opinions included that "unless students were supported with a programme to address these issues, they would not be able to complete their school year". Teachers had collaborated across colleges and identified a cohort of students who they thought were at risk. The Kaupapa Māori Tamariki and Rangatahi Mental Health team, made up of registered nurses, counsellors and social workers met, discussed the request, and then developed a group programme based on the identified need.

A ten-week programme *Mana Rangatahi,* was formed. Based on Māori cultural values, beliefs, and concepts. The cultural leadership programme was to help this identified group of Māori students, and to do so by linking them to their ancestral culture within an educational setting, accompanied by coping skills, learning to address behavioural and social issues. Māori cultural values were a foundation of the programme with lessons of *whanaungatanga* (relationship building), *manaakitanga* (support), *tikanga* and *kawa* (cultural practices), and *tino rangatiratanga* (self-determination). Initiated first by setting the *kawenata* (covenant or agreement) between facilitators and students.

Students were invited to contribute to the kawenata by identifying their values or their school values, which then formed the agreement of how students and facilitators would work together. In developing the programme, a *kuia* (female elder) became a mentor and advisor whose philosophy included believing that these young people had potential to be 'tomorrow's leaders rather than a group of students with problems or issues. This critical concept drove the foundation for a strengths-based focus.

Anecdotal feedback received by the teachers after the completion of the programmes at three secondary schools was that students had made significant behavioural changes. Common themes of changes included increased school attendance, reduction of conflict and no longer fighting at school, on occasion these graduates of the programme were seen to prevent fighting amongst their peers, in addition to not taking drugs into school. According to Colquhoun & Dockery, (2012:3), people achieve better life outcomes if they maintain a stronger affinity with their traditional culture. It was after these anecdotal findings, that the author sought funding for formal evaluation and research of the Mana Rangatahi programme.

This article presents the evaluation insights from students who participated in the study and Mana Rangatahi programme over two years.

Existing Literature

When an indigenous young person's culture features strongly in a programme, indigenous youth will thrive (Selby & Barnes, 2013; Colquhoun & Dockery, 2012; Ministry of Health, 2015). National evidence recommends Kaupapa Māori and culturally responsive programmes as being successful in building resilience for Māori. Evidence internationally (Patel et al., 2007) and nationally (Baxter, 2008; Ministry of Health, 2018; Health and Disability Commission, 2018) demonstrate more is needed to occur as most youth mental health needs are unmet, especially amongst indigenous youth.

The Christchurch Health and Development Study (CHDS) which followed 1265 children born in mid-1977 gathered data on the cohort from birth to adolescence and adulthood in a widely expansive range of studies on health, mental health, and social issues. There are many studies on drugs and alcohol, drugs, and violence among others, to health and wellbeing. The Adolescent Health Research Group (AHRG, AHRG, 2012) have made significant contribution to research in Aotearoa with three

significant surveys including 8,500 adolescents in 2001, 2007 and 2012 about the correlation of health, food, home situations, issues of mental health, physical and emotional health, culture and ethnicity to health and wellbeing. Williams et al.'s (2018) expound from their studies of Māori students in mainstream schools that strong cultural identity is synonymous with good health and wellbeing and that their findings 'suggest that public health programmes and services that genuinely seek to address equity for Māori youth, will ensure cultural programming and policies are culturally and developmentally specific, as core components of any mental health and suicide prevention strategy'.

Gaps in the Literature

Further research is needed to elicit the learnings from cultural programmes for rangatahi and how these are measured when supporting the wellbeing of rangatahi. Though, emerging intelligence suggests youth mental health programmes will make a positive difference for Māori youth (Ministry of Social Development, 2001; Ministry of Justice 1999; Te Puni Kōkiri 2001) there is a lack of consistent programmes and services, that are targeted for rangatahi with a range of mental and social issues.

Mana Rangatahi Programme

The Mana Rangatahi programme consists of 10 modules, which takes an hour to deliver, starting with *karakia* (prayer), *waiata* (song) and ice-breaker games, *wānanga* (traditional delivery) content for each module and questionnaires. The programme is delivered to Māori youth (13 to 17 years) however, the content can be adapted to suit non-Māori students. The programme curriculum is designed to include a facilitator(s) from any *iwi* (tribe) who can use the programme and adapt the lesson plans to suit localised cultural values, tribal histories, and places of identity. The programme does not require rangatahi to have prior knowledge of their cultural identity. The modules consist of whanaungatanga (learning about identity, pepeha and identity markers), *marae* (ancestral house), *hapū* (subtribe) and iwi. Manaakitanga (to help students reflect and to consider others, while drawing on ancestral learnings). Tikanga and kawa play an important part by encouraging rangatahi to learn and do the right thing according to the protocols and processes set at home, school, and community. Tino rangatiratanga (self-determination) enables students to recognise their existing leadership skills and set goals for further development. When culture and language is an integral part of a curriculum and when students are aware of their potential, they are more likely to set goals and achieve (Ministry of Education, 2014). Five remaining wānanga focussed on social issues and covered topics based on student identified need and included communication, problem-solving, addiction, anger, and violence, whānau ora and goal setting. The last wānanga includes a celebration where all students receive an attendance certificate and time together to debrief about the whole programme, ending with a *hākari* or feast in celebration of their completion and achievements.

The ten-week programme suited the school terms. Timing of delivery of the programme was important to consider and to ensure planning in with other curriculum activities in schools.

Methods

The ten-week programme, Mana Rangatahi was utilised for the core material in the study. Although the programme had been adapted during its implementation, cultural values remained the same and cultural content was integral to all aspects of the programme.

When we decided to formally evaluate Mana Rangatahi, we sought 20 students from the Colleges who had completed the programme. This included providing information packs to the Colleges which included, consent forms, pre and post surveys, and information about focus groups.

Data for this research was collected from four cultural wānanga, as well as data from a focus group and teacher questionnaires. Qualitative data was collected in the form of pre-and-post-questionnaires handed out to all participants at the beginning and end of each wānanga. Participants were reminded that they did not have to participate, did not have to answer any question they did not want to, and could withdraw from all or part of the research at any time. Each questionnaire consisted of 12 questions, with responses to a 5-point Likert

scale. Questions related to culture, wellbeing, and resilience in the context of the cultural values taught during the wānanga, and for each of the four lessons of previously named cultural values. Additionally, data-gathering tools included a health questionnaire, focus group and teacher questionnaire. Data from the questionnaires was entered into excel spreadsheets which were then analysed and summarised.

The Sample of Participants

In the first year of the study, 34 students were informed about the research and twenty college students made up of 19 Māori and one non-Māori, signed up and gave consent to be a part of the research and go through the programme. Out of the 20 students, 14 attended the programme most days. The group was made up of Year 12 students, a mix of 16 and 17 years of age, and an even mix of male and female. There were no other identified genders within the group. Not all students identified themselves by their iwi, but those who did were of Ngāti Ranginui, Te Whānau ā Apanui, Tūhoe and Ngāti Maniapoto descent. Student participant health problems of the group included being overweight, use of drugs and alcohol, depressive symptoms, violence, physically hitting others and witnessing of adult violence. The students were not disruptive during class and participated well in discussions, group work and presentations. Students consented to photos being taken during wānanga especially during certification

The second-year participants numbered 15 made up of mainly Māori and there was an average attendance of between eight and 12 students most days. There were four Tongan students and one Samoan student and one non-Māori in the second year of study. Iwi identification was to Ngaiterangi, and no other iwi identified. This group of students were mainly disruptive with short attention spans. Often facilitators had to stop verbal abuse between students or students hitting themselves. Facilitators delivering the programme as well as lead and assistant researchers were all experienced in facilitating and there was an experienced social worker to help work with any clinical or cultural issues that may have arisen.

Only a few year-two participants agreed for their photos to be taken although they would take selfies or photos during class.

Explaining how the Materials Were Prepared

Meetings were set up with colleges in year one of the study. A pamphlet describing the Mana Rangatahi programme was developed and handed out alongside the information packs to help explain the study. Several meetings were held with appropriate school personnel before the programme and research was taken up. Questionnaires were developed with a team of staff, however, because the first part of the process of acquiring a school took so long, questionnaires did not go out to rangatahi beforehand. Once the consenting school had voiced their inclusion, teachers held meetings at school to inform pending participants. Teachers gained consent from parents for their rangatahi (youth) to participate, however, participants themselves then signed their own consent forms.

At the beginning of each wānanga or module, the study and programme were explained where researchers ensured that participants' understanding of participation was clear and that they knew they could withdraw at any time or not be part of the programme or study. It was also clarified that a withdrawal from the study did not mean a withdrawal from the programme if participants just wanted to do the programme. After karakia and waiata, pre-questionnaires on the subject of each wānanga were handed out and collected, followed by post-questionnaires at the end. The data was then entered on to a spreadsheet for analysis.

Describing the Research Protocol

Research protocols included an obligation to respect and work within a Māori framework. One of the guiding principles was 'whanaungatanga' which, as a research strategy has three major overlapping implications (Bishop, 1996). The first is that the researcher is involved in maintaining and establishing relationships with 'whānau (community) of interest' which is often an ongoing part of the research process. The second implication is that the researcher is involved in the process from a physical, ethical, moral, and spiritual position and thirdly not just concerned with the methodology (Bishop, 1996).

Ethics

Ethics for the Mana Rangatahi research was granted by the Health and Disability Ethical Committee. The Ethics proposal included in-depth information on student consent and student safety during all aspects of the programme, including focus groups. The study was funded by the Health Research Council NZ in a contract with Te Rau Ora and Te Puna Hauora Ki Uta Ki Tai, the organisation carrying out this study. The project was predominantly for Māori youth, therefore the ethics adhered to a cultural lens using the seven guiding principles of cultural values researcher guidelines (Smith, 1999; Cram, 2009) known as the Community Up Research Practices.

All western ethical principles of confidentiality, anonymity, do no harm, consent, and assent (for children), and voluntary participation fall within the guiding principles of cultural values as named above. Ethical issues did not arise obtaining consent from parents and caregivers, as this was done by teachers. Obtaining permission from principals for the project with the schools and ensuring participants fully understood the research was carried out by the research team. Confidentiality and anonymity rights of the participants were upheld and respected.

Results

Qualitative Data from Four Cultural Workshops:

There were 12 pre- and post-questionnaires per cultural wānanga on whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, tikanga and kawa and tino rangatiratanga. The whanaungatanga questions related to awareness of identity, self, whānau, relationships and readiness for the programme which were about painting a broader cultural, environmental, and social structural picture in which the research question sat. Two questions, 'learning about whanaungatanga is useful for my wellbeing'; and 'learning about whanaungatanga will help me to feel better about myself'; focused specifically on whether participants correlated whanaungatanga and wellbeing as per the research question. The first workshop started with *whakawhanaungatanga***,** which is important in helping Māori to connect and form relationships which are an integral part of wellbeing (Carlson et al., 2016; as well as a contributor to resilience (Fleming and Ledogar, 2010; Rogers et al., 2018; Ministry of Health, 2015).

Whanaungatanga. Whanaungatanga is about relationships and connections. Te Rau Matatini (2010) describe whanaungatanga as 'relationships through shared experiences and working together, which provides people with a sense of belonging. It develops as a result of kinship rights and responsibilities, which also serve each member of the kin group. It also extends to others with whom one develops a close familial, friendship or reciprocal relationship.'

The objective of this wānanga was to strengthen wellbeing and resilience through helping tamariki and rangatahi to become secure in their identity and proud of who they are as Māori.

Whanaungatanga - Year One Results

Generally, participants had some knowledge or awareness of various aspects of whanaungatanga before the wānanga. Overall, data from pre-and-post-questionnaires around whanaungatanga showed that for the majority of the twelve questions, there was more confidence in issues relating to whanaungatanga after the wānanga. Another change post-wānanga, was that participants indicated that they were more aware that whanaungatanga was useful for their wellbeing and helped them feel better about themselves. This may have been as a result of an increase post-wānanga in all participants' responses to the classroom feeling like being in a family and that they were all more positive about making new friends. Confidence increased post the programme about relationships amongst themselves. Students came to the group from different classes and although a few students knew each other, some did not. The results show that students were starting to make new friends among themselves.

Year Two:

Year two pre-questionnaire results were comparable to year one in the similarity that participants had some knowledge or awareness of various aspects of whanaungatanga at the start of the wānanga. Another similarity was that data from pre-and-post-questionnaires around whanaungatanga showed that for the majority of the twelve questions, there was more confidence

in issues relating to whanaungatanga after the wānanga. Pre-wānanga results show that over three quarters of the participants knew how whanaungatanga related to wellbeing, albeit the majority in '*a little'* and '*somewhat*'. In the post-wānanga data, knowledge around whanaungatanga and wellbeing increased by 54%. This movement indicates a possibility that participants realised that they were more knowledgeable in the correlation of how whanaungatanga related to wellbeing than originally thought. Another summation is that participants had gained new knowledge from the wānanga, resulting in a sense of wellbeing. The programme in years one and two, offered participants the opportunities to explore a range of items relating to their culture, knowledge, wellbeing, and resilience around whanaungatanga which from the results appeared useful.

Manaakitanga. The objective of the manaakitanga wānanga is to strengthen wellbeing and resilience through supporting tamariki and rangatahi to acknowledge the mana of others as of equal importance as themselves through *aroha*, caring for and mutual respect.

This wānanga explained manaakitanga through the process of going on to a marae and exchanges of protocols between *hau kainga* (people from the land) and *manuhiri* (visitors). The process with kai (food) exonerating *tapu* (sacred, restricted) by making things *noa* (free of tapu) was also a part of the wānanga. Other processes of manaakitanga were shared, particularly focusing on how manuhiri or visitors are looked after and cared for and the reciprocal exchanges of respect. This opened avenues to discuss with the class acceptable and unacceptable behaviours and how our places of learning may be treated like a marae where reciprocal respect and care for each other is shown. The wānanga included areas of ability to extend hospitality and aroha, *awhi* and support.

Year one

Most participants in year one had some knowledge pre-wānanga of awareness of manaakitanga. As to whether manaakitanga was useful for their wellbeing, participants scored a range of scores from 38% scoring that manaakitanga was *'a little'* useful, 31% felt it was *'somewhat'* useful, 23% scored *'a lot'* and 8% marked *'an extreme amount'*. Post-wānanga data shows a seven percent decrease in *'a little'* and an eight percent increase to *'not at all'* indicating that after the wānanga, 15% respondents felt that learning about manaakitanga was less useful to their wellbeing. Post-wānanga scores of not feeling respected in the classroom and less confidence about speaking their minds without being judged were similar to manaakitanga scores of less useful to their wellbeing. Participants did not elaborate, however, group actions demonstrated participation rather than less confidence of speaking their minds without being judged.

Year two

Participants in year two as in year one, had knowledge prior to the wānanga on manaakitanga but, unlike year one, knowledge increased greatly after the wānanga. Scores show that pre-wānanga one third of participants felt that learning about manaakitanga would not help them to feel better about themselves by their score of 33% in 'not at all'. Post-wānanga this reduced to seventeen per cent. Where there had been no score to 'a little better' pre-wānanga 33% scored felt a little better post-wānanga. There were no scores in 'a lot' after the module and 'an extreme amount' remained the same. Confidence remained high in participants thinking that learning about manaakitanga would help them to feel better about themselves post the programme by half the participants feeling more confident made up from scores in 'somewhat' (33%) and (17%) in 'an extreme amount'. What the results demonstrate is a third of participants pre the programme felt that learning about manaakitanga would not help them to feel better about themselves, to two-thirds with increased levels of confidence. Overall, participants scored that learning about manaakitanga would help them to feel better about themselves post the wānanga. This could be the result of year two respondents marking increased confidence in reciprocity of *tuakana and teina* (senior and junior roles) feeling respected in the classroom and being able to speak their minds without being judged. This module was helpful in raising awareness of the concepts of tuakana and teina which is about caring and supporting from the perspectives of older helping younger and vice versa, another aspect of manaakitanga.

Overall, the module for participants in both years raised awareness of manaakitanga, however, unlike year two, year one participants did not score increased level of manaakitanga being useful for a better feeling of wellbeing.

Tikanga and Kawa. The teaching of the tikanga around tribal customs, protocols, and other important aspects of Māoridom was the responsibility of the elders and the *tohunga* (cultural experts). Learning these things, both in the past and in the present is a lifelong experience which occurs through developing very good listening and oral communication skills. Some of the examples of the values passed down through the generations are those of aroha (compassion), concern and hospitality in the widest sense; manaakitanga, meaning caring, sharing, respect and looking after; *awhinatanga* which incorporates the ideology of helping, relieving, assisting, and embracing; and *tiaki* which means to take care of, to cherish, nurture, and to be a guardian (Hui Whakaoranga, 1984).

The objective of this wānanga is to strengthen wellbeing and resilience by raising awareness of tikanga and kawa and cultural protocols as a prototype for self and others safety in a range of school and home settings.

The *powhiri* (cultural ritual of encounter) process was used in this wānanga to demonstrate protocols of tikanga and kawa from gathering at the *waharoa* (gateway) before the *karanga* (call) starts to the end of the hui or reason for being at the marae. All parts of the process are discussed in an interactive way with participants contributing their knowledge and experiences. This laid the foundation for discussions around the tikanga and kawa of school, particularly around safety of self and others

Year one

Year one results show that there were no changes between pre-and-post-wānanga data in awareness of tikanga and kawa. Twenty-seven per cent had 'a little', 46% had 'some' awareness, and 27% had 'quite a bit' of awareness. All participants scored that they had levels of awareness, and no-one scored that they were not aware. This was further confirmed by their scores in knowing tikanga and kawa about going on to a marae. Scores showed confidence about knowledge of going on to a marae and tikanga and kawa involved. In the question on wellbeing, pre-wananga, over half (55%) scored they knew 'a little' about how tikanga and kawa related to wellbeing. Thirty-six percent scored 'somewhat' and 9% scored 'a lot' indicating levels of knowledge. Post-wananga results increased and decreased. Where there had been no scores in not at all pre-wānanga, post-wānanga saw a score of nine per cent and an increase of twenty-eight percent scored in a lot. What the data showed is that nine percent participants post-wānanga initially thought that they knew how tikanga and kawa related to wellbeing, marked themselves as having no knowledge, while 28% felt an increase in knowledge. On the whole, the majority of participants had confidence in the knowledge of tikanga and kawa relating to wellbeing.

Year two

The first question relating to how much awareness participants had regarded tikanga and kawa showed that pre the wānanga just over a quarter (29%) had no awareness and the same number (29%) had little awareness. However, encouraging results show that participant awareness had increased post the programme with just under half (48%) of participants feeling increased awareness. Another positive was a 24% reduction in those scoring 'none' or 'a little', with half the students scoring 'somewhat' and a further 16% feeling 'an extreme amount' of awareness. Whether participants made a correlation of tikanga and kawa to wellbeing pre-wānanga resulted in 29% marking none and 14% a little, while 57% scored some awareness. Post the programme, there was a mostly positive shift with a 12% reduction in 'not at all' and 66% of participants now indicating they have at least some knowledge about how tikanga and kawa relates to wellbeing which was a positive result.

The question on whether learning about tikanga and kawa would be helpful to them in their school situation**,** 66% reported feeling at least 'somewhat' positive compared to just 42% previously. The percentage scoring 'not at all' or 'a little' declined from 58% to 34%. This was a significant improvement. What this shows is that participants' scores increased in the areas of positivity post-wānanga about tikanga and kawa being useful for feeling better about themselves and would be helpful in their school situation.

Tino Rangatiratanga. The wānanga on tino rangatiratanga focused on raising participant awareness about their ability to pursue leadership and to build self-empowerment skills to enhance their own wellbeing and resilience. The wānanga included discussions on empowering self so as to support the empowerment of others. At the beginning of the programme students were informed that Mana Rangatahi was a leadership programme. There were initial looks of disbelief, but the students all appeared to be proud that they were on a leadership course and kept r-iterating this to each other.

Year One

Pre-wananga regarding awareness about tino rangatiratanga, 91% had levels of awareness with just nine percent with no awareness, albeit the highest score of 46% in a little. After the wānanga, there was a 46% increase to quite a bit and nine percent confident to mark an extreme amount where previously there had been no score. Changes indicated an increased awareness about tino rangatiratanga after the wānanga.

In finding out if participants knew how tino rangatiratanga related to wellbeing, results pre-wānanga were positive in that there was nine percent with no knowledge. After the wānanga, movements to a lot increased by 27% and 18% scored an extreme amount where there had been no score pre-wānanga, showing a burst of confidence in knowledge. Other results regarding tino rangatiratanga post-wānanga ranged from increased levels of confidence in feeling safe in the classroom to try new things, speaking up without being judged, being able to support others and that tino rangatiratanga knowledge was useful to them in their school situation because it helped them to become more confident in themselves.

Year Two

Year two participants show that there were varying levels of awareness with the highest at 43% having some awareness. Changes post the programme were that there was a score of 14% with no awareness while some awareness spiked to 72%. These scores were exactly the same for the correlation to wellbeing. For some students post-wānanga, confidence had decreased while for others, awareness had greatly increased. The main outcome of analysis for the two questions is that although there were levels of awareness of tino rangatiratanga itself as well as how tino rangatiratanga related to wellbeing pre wānanga, after the wānanga confidence for almost a third decreased. Conclusions may be that there is room for improvement in the module or that participants did not think that learning about tino rangatiratanga was useful for their wellbeing. Results around other questions for this module showed similar scores in that there was more optimism pre and less post-wānanga. It was thought-provoking to note that in ten out of twelve questions 14% respondents post-wānanga, marked that they had no awareness or knowledge after the wānanga. This related to things such as less confidence that the classroom would be a safe place to try something new, being able to speak without the feeling of judgement, not able to support others and less sure that tino rangatiratanga being helpful in their school situation.

The year two students often verbally argued in class and there were several times when facilitator and social worker had to intervene. Another variable is that tino rangatiratanga is intangible in comparison to the other cultural values where one can learn about tangible demonstrations such as whanaungatanga relationships, powhiri processes and tikanga and kawa of marae. Post-wānanga results show that although there was increased learning for some, there was not for others.

Over the four values, it is apparent that responses overall were more positive with whanaungatanga, manaakitanga and tikanga and kawa than the tino rangatiratanga module. Almost all the same participants attended all the modules. Tino rangatiratanga is not a simple concept to understand and perhaps students may have not fully understood the meaning. This module may need more input in clarity from facilitators.

Rangatahi Focus Groups

Year one. There was a depth of information shared during the focus groups that had not come out during the course of the modules of the wānanga. Themes from participant feedback included:

Culture

Many participants learned about their culture and two participants were keen to learn about going on to their own marae, attending marae meetings and finding out more about their identities. One participant wanted to learn about traditional Māori concepts stating, 'like cooking a hangi outside and making a hangi'. Another participant voiced 'it was good to hear how our ancestors did things' and 'maybe have more things outside' and 'learn more Māori'.

Behavioural Changes

Participants discussed behavioural changes that they had made over the course of the Mana Rangatahi programme which included not fighting, not hitting younger siblings and being more helpful at home. One participant shared that the course had helped him to be more humble and not so angry. The majority of participants were positively influenced by the education and wānanga on drugs and alcohol, some claiming to have reduced their use of both and one claiming to be alcohol and drug-free saying 'I've quit everything, no drugs, no drinking. This class has helped me to see things now and will help me to get far in life'.

The wānanga on drugs and alcohol was education and awareness couched within the framework of Te Whare Tapa Whā, describing effects to the *tinana* (physical body) *hinengaro* (mind and emotions) *wairua* (spirituality) whānau (family) when one uses substances. Even though the legal age for alcohol consumption in New Zealand is 18 years of age, many youths are partaking at ages well below 18 and as one participant commented about alcohol and drug education and awareness 'no-one tells you about these things'.

Suggestions for Further Wānanga

All participants agreed that a programme like Mana Rangatahi should be held in schools because of its usefulness to students. One participant rounded up the course by saying 'I liked the sound of everything. Like I don't do that stuff anymore (referring to drinking), well not as bad as I used to in the past. Yeah, I was like pretty bad at that as well like doing drugs with mates. I thank my sport for that too. It pulled me away and bought me closer to my boys.'

One participant thought that the programme could be shorter, while another commented that they liked it when there was a male facilitator present to 'tell them off' if anyone needed telling off. Student participants did not want the responsibility of that role themselves.

Year two. A total of eight students attended the focus group, made up of equal numbers of males and females. Most participants at the beginning of the programme were very angry, loud, and disruptive, did not listen and showed no respect. In comparison to groups of other similar students in the 'at risk' categories from other colleges we had worked with, this group seemed to operate at higher levels of disruption. Throughout all the wānanga or modules, facilitators or lead researcher had to bring participant attention to maintaining order within the classroom. Reminders would be reiterated on the values of whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, tikanga and kawa and tino rangatiratanga set at the beginning of the programme.

There were two facilitators, one female and one male and the lead researcher in attendance at this focus group.

The students knew each other and as the focus group was carried out after the ten-week programme, participants were familiar with each other and freely participated in discussions. The venue was a classroom at the participants' school and there was a relaxed atmosphere.

The first part of the focus group discussion centred on attendance. Responses were from 'every time' to 'every single one' to 'every time I was at school' to 'I missed one day when I was sick' and another stated that they missed three sessions because of a broken leg. This fits with the attendance record as most students attended almost all of the ten modules of the programme. One student who attended the last four modules, stated that he had not been to school for a long time and had just returned to school. He had been truant but joined the programme and had been at school every day since joining the programme.

In discussions on what went well for participants in the programme, there were a range of responses from 'lollies' (which were given out once); to 'games' and 'tug of war' (used for team building exercises); learning about anger; learning new things like tikanga; and 'getting to know each

other'. A few participants said that they enjoyed missing out their other classes such as Science and English.

Modules or workshops that participants enjoyed most were tikanga, cultural values, learning how to deal with anger, games, learning new things and culture. On talking more in-depth on culture, one participant commented that 'sovereignty and resilience go together'. The group discussed that to be resilient one had to be in charge of themselves standing up for what they believe in rather than being pressured by peers, especially into things they did not want to do. A few participants enjoyed learning about tikanga, and one participant stated that 'it was good to hear about how our ancestors were and did things'. One participant commented that 'racism is still going on' and another referred to their thoughts that the environment is getting worse with pollution and in their opinion, 'the past is better than now'.

Another participant said that they 'got to learn about different cultures. During each wānanga in year two, participants of other cultures were encouraged to add their points of view from their own culture. Within the group were Māori, Samoan, Tongan and New Zealand Pākeha. Within the group dynamics, there were noticeable female leaders.

Some outcomes participants voiced were around issues of anger. One participant said he had learned to walk away from situations where previously, he would have punched walls or people. Some participants told how they now talked to older whānau instead of running away. Some have tried cultural practices of kotahitanga and being respectful. One voiced that they had got worse, and another said that he had been doing well until he had a recent fight.

One comment was that the Mana Rangatahi programme 'teaches you wellbeing stuff not taught at school'. From participant comments, they have voiced their own measures of change in behaviour for themselves. It is more empowering for an individual to come to their own realisations about themselves and what they need to change, therefore be in control of their own decision-making.

A few participants voiced that they learned respect which was a major achievement for them and lacked at the start of the programme.

Teacher Questionnaire Feedback

Two teachers per year filled out the questionnaires. One teacher's comment was that there were issues for participants with school culture such as keeping rules and attendance, but it did not worsen. The question regarding whether teachers had noticed behaviour changes was enlightening and affirmed some of the comments participants of the programme had stated in the focus group. Teachers noticed students' willingness to work; there was less class disruption; a student was more settled in class; and another student responsive to tasks. On noticeable changes, one teacher commented that there was high variance with one student in that they would be calm one day and disruptive the next. Another teacher did not find any negative behaviours that stood out. This was reaffirming of participant feedback about themselves within the focus group and questionnaires.

One teacher found that participant feedback in class was that the programme was good and that some students felt they had learned a lot. Some participants would return to their individual classrooms and talk about what they had learned in the Mana Rangatahi programme. These comments also support findings from the focus group and findings from data in some of the questionnaires.

Conclusion

In conclusion, overall, from the two years of Mana Rangatahi highlighted that cultural values that are meaningful to indigenous young people can be delivered in an environment poised to improve wellbeing and resilience. We observed an increase of cultural knowledge, that reaffirmed and enhanced cultural knowledge, there was new knowledge gained with awareness raised in a number of aspects of cultural knowledge such as whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, tikanga and kawa. Most importantly, participants felt that a cultural programme and cultural support were helpful for rangatahi wellbeing at school.

Information from the focus groups are snippets of evidence which will require further investigation (Cohen et al., 2000) including understanding whether a cultural and theoretical programme is useful for building at risk Māori youth resilience and wellbeing. Data from the wānanga questionnaires, teacher feedback questionnaires and focus group data of this study provided data triangulation for this research, though a small sample, a glimpse of hope for what is possible to improve rangatahi wellbeing. A recommendation is to add to the growing body of research and evidence in 'best practice' for Māori students in the correlation of cultural programmes to wellbeing and resilience.

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