

Research Report

Kei te pēhea aku mokopuna? | How are my mokopuna going?

An inquiry into the nature, experiences and impacts of streaming learners in Whanganui

Dr Tiwha Puketapu
Dr Pam O'Connell
Evelyn Hiri-Gush
Paerangi Maihi

March 2023

Funded by Te Tahua Rangahau mō ngā Hapori, New Zealand Lotteries Commission



He kupu whakataki | Forward

Ko te manu e kai ana i te miro nōna te ngahere, ko te manu e kai ana i te mātauranga nōna te ao. Ki tā Whanganui, e kaha pīrangi ana te tamaiti kia kai rawe ai i ōna karu, i ōna taringa, me te rongo ki nga reka o te ao whānui. Ki tā te ture, ka kuraina ngā tamariki katoa tae atu ki te tau tekau mā ono, ki te tekau mā waru tau te pakeke. Ko te mate, kāore te katoa o ngā kura auraki e piri rawa ai ki te tamaiti me tōna ao akoranga. Oti noa, ka pokepokea te tamaiti kia tū ki te ao Pākehā, kua ki te ao whānui, kua hoki ki te ao Māori. Koia nei te take nui ka pātaia tonutia e nga pāhake, 'Kei te pēhea aku mokopuna i te ao kura?'

Te Puna Mātauranga o Whanganui (Te Puna) in partnership with Tātai Aho Rau | CORE Education (CORE) wishes to acknowledge the New Zealand Lotteries Commission. With their support, the project leaders were able to engage with the education community in Whanganui, our tumuaki (principals), school leaders, kaiako (teachers) and tamariki, mokopuna and whānau. We appreciate that Te Tahua Rangahau mō ngā Hapori recognised the relevance and potential this research offers.

Kei te pēhea aku mokopuna (How are my mokopuna doing?) is a simple question which Whanganui schools, their school boards, tumuaki and kaiako have heard for many years. However, the call for schools to better serve Māori learners has gained little traction based on historical and more recent education data. After almost a lifetime of involvement with early childhood centres, primary and secondary schools in Whanganui, the Executive Chair of Te Puna Mātauranga o Whanganui, John Maihi MNZM, is left still wondering how the New Zealand education system continues to fail so many tamariki and rangatahi Māori.

Maihi is well informed about the low attendance, achievement, engagement and retention rates drawn from schools' data for Māori students in Whanganui. He is intimately aware of the whānau Māori concerns, despondency and scepticism toward government agents and the education system. While there have been gains, gradualism and bias are perceived to constantly limit progress and any chance of a sustained positive shift. Maihi's question is about whānau Māori realities and their perceptions of an education system that benefits the few but continues to not work well for many.

Kotahi te hā o te mokopuna me te pāhake| Nurturing the future

John Maihi MNZM offers a rangahaurunga voice (elder generation) shaped by his contribution to whānau, hapū and iwi. His voice has an air of disappointment with cautionary insights and aspirations for the future that awaits tamariki and mokopuna. He is but one example - one reference point for education provision, past and present, on the Whanganui landscape with his many years of involvement with education institutions and communities from early childhood to tertiary in Whanganui, with government agencies and government Ministers, and with iwi collectives at local, regional, and national levels.

John Maihi MNZM Executive Chair of Te Puna Mātauranga o Whanganui



Maihi's worldview is tinged with memories of fraught relationships with teachers and schooling from an early age and now as a pāhake seeking to make a difference for tamariki and rangatahi in Whanganui schools. He is concerned that community voices are too often diminished and neglected. Te Puna sees this project as a means of reaching out and acknowledging whānau Māori, tamariki and rangatahi perspectives on schooling and its impact on their life chances and well-being. Maihi believes whakapapa relationships to each other and whenua will most likely be mentioned while tamariki, rangatahi and whānau share their perspectives and

experiences of streaming in schools with school leaders and teachers.

Ngā Ihirangi | Table of contents

He kupu whakataki Forward	2
Kotahi te hā o te mokopuna me te pāhake Nurturing the future	3
Ngā Ihirangi Table of contents	4
Matapihi ki tua At a glance	5
What is streaming?	5
Kei te pēhea aku mokopuna?	5
Framing the research	5
What did our community say?	5
What would it look, feel and sound like without streaming?	6
Key findings	6
Ara Whakamua Recommendations	7
Takapau whenua The lie of the land	7
Mā aku karu e rongu mā āku taringa e kite Listening beyond words	8
Kaupapa rangahau Research purpose	9
Ko ngā ia rere o te whenua Voices of the land	9
Ko ngā reo hapori Diverse voices	11
Mana ōrite Equity	11
Kia mataara Being aware and critical	12
Te karu rangahau Research approach	13
Ara rangahau tā te hapori Community-led research	13
Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, he toa takitini Collective action, collective impact	14
Kauaka rā e kōrero mō te hapori me kōrero ki te hapori How did we talk with the community?	15
Kia taka te kapa Making sense of the data	16
He puke tuku kōrero What did our community say?	16
The narratives for awareness of streaming and who benefits	17
Who benefits from streaming	17
The characteristics of streaming we found in this landscape	17
What did our community tell us about streaming and who benefits?	19
Narratives about why we have streaming in our schools	20
Tā te akonga titiro What if?	23
Whiringa kōrero Discussion	24
Ara Whakamua Recommendations	27
References and Appendices	28

Matapihi ki tua | At a glance

What is streaming?

The practice of 'streaming' in education sorts students into different groups based on their 'assessed' and 'judged' abilities. This practice has continued in New Zealand's schooling system for the past 150 years. As a consequence, learners are socialised into the school 'pecking order' with a sense of their academic status and behaviour expectations. The research shows that streaming is particularly damaging for Māori and Pacific children. The result is an education system with huge disparities¹.

Kei te pēhea aku mokopuna?

The intention of this research was to provide a response to this question posed by John Maihi MNZM, Executive Chair of Te Puna Mātauranga o Whanganui. How are my mokopuna going? His question has been asked of education agencies over many years. The publication of *Ending Streaming in Aotearoa New Zealand* (Tokona Te Raki, 2021) gave a specific focus for a response linked to well-being and future opportunities. This research would allow Te Puna to identify and navigate "the lie of the land" in Whanganui, to learn more about what streaming practices are at play before entering into a more strategic iwi-led response with schools and their whānau.

Framing the research

Te Puna, in partnership with CORE, designed the research questions and used a kaupapa Māori approach and equity review framework² for inviting local community participants to share their experiences of streaming and their thinking about why this practice is used in their schools. They also offered a future state description of what it might look, feel and sound like if streaming was removed from all early years' settings and schools in Whanganui.

What did our community say?

The voices of 48 participants are included in this research (23 kaiako and tumuaki, 25 rangatahi mokopuna, kaumatua and whānau). Eight narratives were identified from their responses.

What is streaming and who benefits?

The responses were grouped around awareness of streaming and its impact on learners.

1. We know streaming has many forms and causes considerable harm
2. We experienced streaming and we know it does not benefit all
3. We are unsure of what streaming means and any harm it may cause
4. We believe streaming gives everyone the same opportunities

¹ p.9. *Kōkirihiā: The plan for removing streaming from our schools*. Tokona Te Raki Māori Futures Collective March 2023

² CORE Equity Position, 2022 is an internal document that includes a review framework for equity alignment, with sections on Tiriti-honouring, equity mindsets, equity by design, equity in action.

Why do we have streaming practices in our schools?

The responses were grouped around two interconnected ideas about high expectations and system and institutional bias.

5. Streaming is a deliberate act based on racism, bias and power
6. Streaming happens because it's easier for teachers and better for some learners
7. Streaming sets low expectations for some learners and their whānau in schools
8. Streaming is based on limited testing with little consideration for strengths or aspirations.

What would it look, feel and sound like without streaming?

Whānau, rangatahi/tamariki and kaiako responses illustrated the ongoing demand for caring relationships in their learning relationships, where identity, language and culture is embedded in learning. They saw the need to deconstruct streaming as a key barrier to the aspirations for all learners. High expectations teaching sets the pattern for learning and opportunities in all contexts.

Key findings

Together, the voices suggest that the conversations about ending streaming will need to recognise that this is not just a 'for and against debate' in Whanganui. The eight narratives suggest a more nuanced set of beliefs exist within and across the community that require a more strategic, community-led response. Te Puna and Takitini will consider how to work together to inform and unpack the views and experiences offered in this research.

- The language and practice of streaming is part of the schools' domain and power. Decisions about grouping are generally not made with whānau or rangatahi/tamariki and they are most often based on a limited set of tests and knowledge of the strengths of learners and their whānau.
- The whakapapa of streaming and its impact largely remain a hidden story for whānau, tamariki and rangatahi. This places them without power and influence to advocate for ending streaming.
- A strong and divisive narrative exists across the community. This was reported by educators concerned that it would scuttle any attempts to end streaming. Opposition and influence came from whānau and some kaiako who advocate that high achieving learners benefit more from learning together than in mixed ability groups or classes.
- Blame for poor achievement often accompanies explicit low expectations of learners and their whānau.
- Tamariki, whānau and kaiako have together offered a new set of expectations to base a design for learning without streaming. These could be considered as a guide for monitoring the well-being of Māori learners across Whanganui and as a response to "Kei te pēhea aku mokopuna?"

Ara Whakamua | Recommendations

These recommendations are being discussed with the stakeholders.

1. Takitini Hauora Kāhui Ako informs Whanganui early childhood settings and schools about the detrimental impact of streaming on Māori and Pacific learners with particular attention to local, national, and international evidence regarding learner and whānau well-being.
2. Takitini Hauora Kāhui Ako seeks a collective mandate from participating early childhood settings and schools to end streaming by 2030, preferably sooner.
3. Takitini Hauora Kāhui Ako collective agrees to report to Te Puna on awareness and removal of streaming at Whanganui early childhood settings and schools.
4. This research is used as part of establishing cross-school evaluation criteria to gather data and evidence that will provide a benchmark for answering the question that John Maihi poses and to feed into a wider evaluation by Tokona te Raki (subject to funding).
5. Te Puna in conjunction with supportive funding agencies sponsors marae-based hui for whānau and rangatahi to raise awareness of the whakapapa of streaming and the evidence of harm that streaming practices have on Māori and Pacific learners.
6. Te Puna in conjunction with the Ministry of Education supports early childhood settings and schools to plan and report on ending streaming practices, and the involvement of whānau and the wider community in equity conversations.
7. Support for schools to review and strengthen alternative practices to streaming with effective mixed and flexible grouping should draw on examples within and beyond the Takitini Hauora Kāhui Ako collective.

Takapau whenua | The lie of the land

Te Puna decided to pursue this research to visualise, identify and navigate “the lie of the land”, that is, to learn more about what practices and conventions are at play before entering into a more strategic iwi-led response with schools and their whānau. It is not a matter of numbers in this analysis, it is much more about the perspectives and mindsets that exist across the community. These voices deepen and guide the community conversations to be had along the journey to deconstruct streaming principles, values, and practices in Whanganui schools.

For instance, Te Puna wishes to understand if there is a deep divide between schools and their practices of streaming. Te Puna wonders if there is an appetite for a community-wide and open debate mindful of deep sensitivities and the potential for very uncomfortable conversations. From outside the school gate, whānau Māori and possibly others have considered, if not expected, teaching professionals to be the experts in classroom and structural practices within schools.

The teaching profession has deeply influenced notions and practices of effective teaching with little if any regard for narratives that reflect questions about knowledge and power, about racism and about colonisation. Indeed, there is a sense that something is amiss, even though collective strength has been pursued, but this is often short-lived. In the meantime, we are left to wonder how aware and well-informed are many whānau, what do whānau, and indeed

rangatahi and mokopuna, know and understand about the impact of streaming upon early childhood, primary school, secondary school and tertiary learners.

In one sense, the education system could be understood to be the ‘provider’ which would logically label whānau Māori and their tamariki as the ‘recipients’ of the provider’s products and services. However, this may well be too simplistic, because a “them” (provider) and “us” (receiver)’ mindset is transactional and fundamentally requires that someone provides for someone who pays.

In this research project, it is understood that schools must compete in order to maintain and increase their funding base. In other words, the size of the student roll dictates the size of the school’s budget. With the school-aged population declining in most regions including Whanganui, the potential for staff reductions and budget cuts are close at hand. Despite the sensitivities that ‘bums on seats’ presents to the early childhood and schooling sectors, this research project seeks to brace the coalition of the willing, that is, Te Puna, CORE and Takitini Kāhui Ako. This partnership is an iwi-driven local collective of 26 early childhood settings, schools and kura in Whanganui.

Although community voices have asked for ‘different’ and ‘better’, this has not been straightforward, and remains seemingly intractable, particularly when school-centric perspectives visibly dominate teachers’ and school leaders’ thinking and practice. The research team understands there are longstanding challenges and deeply held beliefs that are likely to be triggered as a result of this research project. Not all educators are comfortable about de-constructing the logic and deeply embedded practice of streaming or considering whether tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau have an opinion about its impact. In contrast, this project may also hear from whānau Māori and tamariki who believe streaming has had a positive impact or that it is not something that has impacted them negatively.

Mā aku karu e rongō mā āku taringa e kite | Listening beyond words

Within this context and associated circumstances, this research seeks to test the proposition that streaming is a colonial construct that reinforces and protects the majority social, educational, and economic position - status quo, with adverse intergenerational impacts on the livelihood and well-being of whānau Māori. While Te Puna would like to hear and see tamariki, rangatahi, and their whānau publicly acknowledging the quality and delivery of education provision in Whanganui this is a lingering aspiration fuelled with hope and expectation.

As a collaborative initiative, this research encourages and supports conversations that value whānau, hapū and iwi voices. We expect to better inform ourselves about the issues and challenges that stem from streaming and the strategies and tactics adopted in response, such as shared responsibility and appropriate and supportive community-focused engagements.

Teaching professionals, learners and whānau would benefit from a greater awareness and understanding of streaming, why it exists, how it works and who benefits. They would more readily see the lie of the land - with its interconnectedness between the people, the complexities and the dynamics that form an education system.

This research seeks to better understand what is streaming as it is defined, understood, and applied in Whanganui education settings. Furthermore, this research project relies on the confidence of tamariki, rangatahi and whānau to share their experiences of streaming and its impact on their life choices and lifestyles.

Kaupapa rangahau | Research purpose

This research was prompted by the publication of *Ending Streaming in Aotearoa New Zealand* (Tokona Te Raki, 2021), a call to action for all the education community to deconstruct streaming across the motu. This research provided a catalyst for Te Puna in partnership with CORE to investigate local community narratives (teaching professionals, learners and whānau) about ability grouping (streaming) by:

- listening to whānau and their experiences of being streamed
- uncovering the thinking and responses being made by schools.

In this way, Te Puna is engaging with the ‘streaming’ providers and recipients’ voices.

Ko ngā ia rere o te whenua | Voices of the land

Te Puna Mātauranga o Whanganui is the mandated iwi education authority. The organisation is required to lead and facilitate initiatives that advance the strategic goals in *Ngā Kai o te Puku Tupuna: Whanganui Iwi Education Plan 2023-2030* on behalf of tupuna rohe and Te Rūnanga o te Awa Tupua o Whanganui. The goals have been reviewed and reset four times since 1993. The plan responds to whānau, hapū and iwi expectations: to improve access to iwi knowledge, skills, and practices; to increase participation with iwi institutions and activities; to facilitate education options that achieve positive outcomes for learners and communities; and to increase participation and achievement at higher levels.

Te Puna believes that reasonable expectations and active involvement by whānau, hapū, and iwi; effective leadership, inquiry practices; classroom relational pedagogies; and place-based offerings are essential for a healthy sense of belonging to place and people. For whānau, hapū and iwi collectives, this is a foundation of identity, culture and language for learning, achievement, and success within and beyond the school gates.

Te Puna is unapologetic about challenging the school-centric nature and extent of educational relationships with whānau, hapū and iwi collectives alongside an invitation to appreciate each other's roles and shared responsibilities, whilst ever thoughtful of community realities and circumstances.

Te Puna advocates for the inclusion of iwi education outcomes and metrics that will penetrate and achieve better system performance that more effectively empowers and supports tamariki and rangatahi to learn, achieve and be successful. This approach reflects our understanding of the connections that are necessary in schools with whānau, hapū and iwi organisations if tamariki are to benefit from valuing, accessing, and using place-based curriculum offerings in their 'schooling' studies and future pursuits.

Since 2004, Te Puna has upheld its mandate to engage with the Crown and agencies to influence a relevant and quality 'schooling' provision that values place-based education and normalises learning, achievement, and success for tamariki as Ngā Iwi. This means:

- (a) increasing access to iwi knowledge skills and practices
- (b) advancing Māori language education and cultural inclusiveness
- (c) strengthening whānau involvement and contributions to tamariki and rangatahi learning and achievement; and
- (d) connecting learning and teaching processes (relational pedagogies) with the whānau, hapū and iwi knowledge and experience.

Place-based knowledge transmission through whakapapa, wānanga and tikanga, embedded within iwi, hapū and whānau relationships and responsibilities to place and people, histories, rituals, everyday activities, and events are our curriculum offerings and learning experiences. This began with a professional learning and development (PLD) initiative called Te Kākahu, which was jointly led by Te Puna and Cognition Education Ltd, partnering with secondary schools in Whanganui and Rangitīkei. The place-based curriculum initiative was picked up with Te Kahukura PLD and now sits with Takitini Kāhui Ako achievement challenges.

Takitini Kāhui Ako is an iwi-led Kāhui Ako, partnering with early childhood settings and schools, with a common purpose and achievement challenges that reflect aspirations and education goals described in *Ngā Kai o te Puku Tupuna: The Whanganui Iwi Education Plan*. The Takitini PLD programme is founded on the Takitini place-based curriculum which was endorsed in 2022. Te Puna views this curriculum as a first step toward Whanganui whānau, hapū and iwi accessing place-based curriculum offerings for all tamariki and mokopuna who are attending local early childhood settings, primary and secondary schools. This coalition of the willing acknowledges the relevance and value of both mana whenua and tangata Tiriti ways of knowing, doing and being engaging in a Tiriti Relationship Space that navigates, forms, and supports dual goals and shared responsibilities. Fundamental to this view of the world is an acknowledgement that Takitini exists on an iwi-centric map extending from the kāhui maunga ki tangaroa.

This research project reflects on the increasingly visible and audible challenges to education thinking and practices about streaming. Some of the secondary schools partnering with Takitini Kāhui Ako no longer support streaming. John Maihi supports their initiative, though it is early days, to assess the impact on tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau at this early juncture. Based on observations conducted at different times in the past 10 years, Te Puna Mātauranga o Whanganui cannot understand why some benefit from the practice of streaming while a significant number of tamariki and rangatahi Māori are destined to be marginalised and under-served. It is unclear what school leaders and teachers understand or what they currently do about the adverse impacts of streaming on whānau and their tamariki.

Te Puna does understand that schools supply and deliver 'schooling'. Te Puna believes that whānau do not sufficiently understand schooling and they do not have the means to access

options of choice. Instead, whānau rely on schools and teaching professionals to provide their tamariki with quality access to learning and to achieve and succeed educationally in te ao Māori and te ao whānui. Sharing stories, hearing each other, listening to the voices of the land, the voices of whānau, tamariki and rangatahi with school leaders and teachers would normalise learning relationships. In this regard, Te Puna is curious to know what is done differently in schools that are not streaming and how the changes are making a positive difference for tamariki, rangatahi and whānau Maori.

Ko ngā reo hāpori | Diverse voices

Who did we ask?

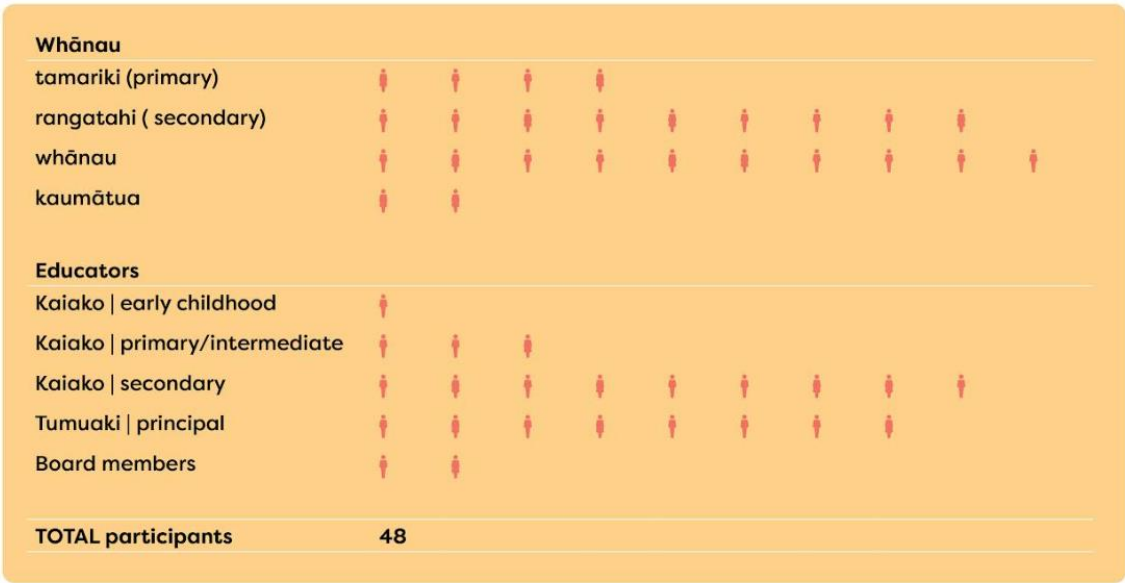


Figure 1: Numbers and categories of research participants

Mana ōrite | Equity

The researchers have applied an equity review framework³ consisting of four focus areas for organisations to consider in terms of alignment to equitable outcomes. Each focus area is underpinned by research on system change (Tokona te Raki, 2020) and equity design (Smith, 2012). This theoretical framework supports the design of research questions and the analyses of participants’ responses. The framework also serves to support a community-led design to end streaming in Whanganui learning settings. The four focus areas are:

1. **Tiriti-honouring:** Do our community voices articulate matters of obligations to Te Tiriti o Waitangi in their discussions about streaming?

³ CORE Equity Position, 2022 is an internal document that includes a review framework for equity alignment, with sections on Tiriti-honouring, equity mindsets, equity by design, equity in action.

2. **Equity mindset:** Do community voices recognise that streaming is a product of colonisation and power dynamics, relationships, and connections (Kania et al, 2018)?
3. **Equity by design:** Do our community voices question who has designed the structures of streaming and if whānau are consulted about the placement of learners?
4. **Equity in action:** Do our community voices focus on the learning practices that occur in classrooms as part of streaming, the definitions of streaming and how they support or inhibit equitable learning, and how kaiako need to know how to effectively teach without streaming?

Kia mataara | Being aware and critical

The New Zealand education system has prioritised learners and whānau as being at the centre of education (National Education Learning Priorities NELP, 2020). Objective 1 in the NELP requires all education providers to be deliberate about eradicating any form of individual and institutional racism or bias, those structures, and practices “which have significant and long-lasting negative impacts on health, well-being, identity and educational achievement”

This requires educators to be critically aware or conscious of the impacts of practices like streaming on the learners they teach. Critical consciousness is a theory founded by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire who called for critical reflection, motivation, and action by marginalised or oppressed peoples. This capability implies an ability to question and analyse the social, political, economic, and racial injustices and inequalities that exist in any society. Critical consciousness recognises who holds the power of decision-making and identifies who may be benefitting from these decisions (Freire, 1970).

In the Whanganui context, being critically conscious is not a given. While educators in Aotearoa New Zealand have recognised the government-led initiative regarding equity for all learners (Ministry of Education, Dec 2021) and acknowledged the new curriculum documents, many whānau and students remain unaware of the impact of colonialism on their lives, their aspirations, and their futures. This is a relatively novel conversation for the neighbourhood groups in the Whanganui community.

*People’s lived experience has been shaped by the use and misuse of power*⁴

Our communities are where the power, privilege, bias, and racism play out in daily interactions (Gruenevald, 2008). Place matters in this kaupapa. It defines a Tiriti-led design for equity. It allows for mana whenua leadership. It allows for deeply understanding the whakapapa and local impact of inequities. Local partnerships can bring the voices of those who experience inequity as an everyday reality, into near view. If the community is to be critically conscious

⁴ p.4 Te ao tangata | Social sciences in the refreshed New Zealand Curriculum, Oct 2022.

then iwi, hapū, whānau and rangatahi need to be able to question, contribute and take joint action alongside educators.

Te karu rangahau | Research approach

A kaupapa Māori research approach is used to answer John's pātai by:

1. undertaking wānanga with Māori learners and whānau, kaiako and school leaders in ways that reflect the tikanga of Whanganui iwi and supported by Takatini leaders
2. gathering, synthesising, and analysing the views and experiences of participants as a mechanism for understanding the status quo, the local whakapapa and drivers of streaming practices, and the cognitive, social, and emotional well-being of ākonga (learners) that results.

Te Puna set the research agenda and its parameters. In effect, this is Māori social action, by Māori and for Māori with the help of invited others (Bishop, 2011). The engagement of participants, the questions and analyses are expected to uphold and fulfil Whanganui ways of being, doing and acting. In the same way, the reporting and recommendations are expected to respect mana motuhake (self-determination) and be consistent with Te Tiriti o Waitangi. In addition, any analyses of the responses are aware of narratives that position Māori as the cause of their situation or as not being capable of learning at particular levels of challenge.

The interview questions were guided by 5 criteria as follows: initiation, benefits, representation, legitimation, and accountability (Bishop, 2011).

- Who initiated streaming in our schools/kura, when and why?
- What are learners' and whānau experiences of ability grouping in their schools/kura?
- Who has benefited from streaming?
- Who is represented in decision-making about structure and policies such as streaming?
- What legitimacy is given to the voices of our learners and their whānau in decision-making?
- Are educators accountable to their communities around streaming and its impact?

Ara rangahau tā te hāpori | Community-led research

There are two additional methodological understandings that further strengthen the kaupapa Māori approach for this research. For clarity, a key driver is mana hāpori which refers to community-led research with the Takitini Hauora Collective, an iwi-led Kāhui Ako which has chosen to plan and support collective action to end the streaming of learners across the rohe.

In this kaupapa, the community is regionally located, with boundaries that make sense to mana whenua, where whakapapa connects the whenua and its people.

Mana hapori

We understand hapori to mean a place where all tamariki, rangatahi, families, whānau, hāpu and iwi, marae, aiga, civic leaders AND school leaders, tumuaki and kaiako can act collectively to end streaming and redesign learning. In this picture, we position early learning settings, kura and schools as being in the service of these communities.

By mana hapori, we mean re-positioning the community in a more powerful place for decision-making on education matters and well-being, sharing power with the educators.

Iwi, hapū and whānau are often at the edge of new educational thinking, the last to know or to be asked for their thoughts and contributions while the curriculum is devised within learning settings and new educational structures are being designed. We know this is changing, but the pace of change is slow and exposed to interference from those with different perspectives and, most often, hold the power and privilege in matters of education.

In our view, a mana hapori approach is emerging as the central pou for ending the practice of streaming in Whanganui. It holds sharper expectations for this outcome by:

- quickening the pace and scale of change in this community
- strengthening coherence and sustainability of the kaupapa (O'Connell, 2010).

Given the positioning of Te Puna Mātauranga o Whanganui as outlined above, including its strong tradition of working with like-minded others to achieve their educational goals, the term community-led research complements the Kaupapa Māori research approach described above.

Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, he toa takitini | Collective action, collective impact

At the heart of mana hapori is working as a collective. Takitini is our working model. Immediately, this challenges the individualism ideology embedded in our current system, where the learner experience is about individual pathways and where diversity is celebrated as individual success. For Māori (and Pacific) communities, a collective ideology underpins a way of being which is socially embedded and transmitted, with a strong commitment to actions and their contribution to collective benefits toward whānau and aiga success.

Community-led in the Whanganui context means that Tiriti partners consciously and respectfully 'open the door', 'enter the space' and 'engage the unknown'. Research and other academic literature describe this 'way of doing' as the 'third space' where mana whenua (Te Puna) and tangata Tiriti (Education Institutions from early learning to tertiary) carve out a place of engagement (Takitini Hauora) with acknowledgement and consideration of the spaces and circumstances that come with us.

The research activity was led by mana whenua but supported and endorsed by Takitini leaders.

Kauaka rā e kōrero mō te hapori me kōrero ki te hapori | How did we talk with the community?

The facilitators who conducted the in-depth interviews were chosen for their everyday working experiences with whānau and youth, in the context of social, educational and health contexts. They are well known to the whānau and youth who were invited and chose to participate.

The engagement process is about sharing and reflecting upon current understandings that encourage hindsight and insight into both personal and possibly collective experiences. The process follows a pattern of engagement that seeks to clarify purpose and reveal the different and perhaps shared perspectives amongst those involved. In other words, participants were invited to share their observations, current knowledge and understanding, and personal experiences. These sessions were conducted with Whanganui place-based tikanga practices (conventions) which reflect the elements of wānanga - a way of doing, which elevates discussion to be conducted with respect and thoughtfulness, to know who you are talking with and about, and to seek understanding and insight.

We used the Whanganui tikanga of wānanga as their traditional method of Māori knowledge transmission and knowledge construction (Mahuika & Mahuika, 2020).

Three wānanga were held at Ngāi Tai o te Awa, as well as two whānau homes and one school over November 2022 and March 2023.

After karakia and kai, Te Puna leaders introduced the research kaupapa and its purpose. CORE's Human Ethics Committee approved our research and information sheets, and consent forms were shared for signing. Then groups of tamariki, rangatahi, whānau or kaiako/school leaders were interviewed by iwi members who are known and trusted with respectful relationships.

There were four questions with the semi-structured interview.

1. We are interested in whether you have experienced what we call “streaming” when you were at school or kura, or now? (Knowing what streaming is)
2. If you are/were streamed, how did this make you feel or impact you as a learner? If you are/were not streamed, how does this make you feel? (experiences/impact streaming)
3. If you do/did have streaming at your kura, why do you think this happens? (Who benefits?)
4. If we did not have streaming in all our schools and kura in Whanganui, what would that look like for learning and learners, teachers, and teaching? (Knowledge of alternative practices)

With the younger learners, the pātai were simplified. For example: *When you are put in classes at high school (or for reading groups in primary school), do you hear people talking about “brainy kids” or the “dumb kids”? How does this make you feel?* This was particularly important as we understood that the word streaming has many other meanings for young people.

Those asking the pātai (questions) ensured everyone had their voice included and that they knew they could leave the interview at any time. The interviews were mostly audio recorded with real-time transcription. In some whānau groups, responses were noted on the question

sheet by the interviewers. The transcripts were checked for meaning and accuracy before an iterative set of analyses.

Kia taka te kapa | Making sense of the data

The interviews were indeed rich conversations, often taking more time as participants engaged deeply, describing their personal and/or professional views and experiences.

The analyses of the participant voices involved two stages. The researchers first read the transcripts independently, each highlighting the content that seemed significant in relation to the theoretical frameworks. Our first scan considered:

1. Were participants aware of streaming in schools and able to describe what it looked like in practice? (Equity in action)
2. Did participants identify who might benefit from streaming and why? (Equity design)
3. Did participants recognise that teacher expectations lie at the heart of the practice of streaming? (Equity mindset)
4. Did participants connect the practice of streaming to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, systemic racism and/ or colonialism? (Tiriti-honouring and equity mindset)

In the second iteration of analyses, the researchers identified a wide variation of participant responses to their pātai on streaming and wondered if there were some inter-relationships between the questions and responses. We drew axes that reflected Questions 1 and 2 and then Questions 3 and 4 above.

He puke tuku kōrero | What did our community say?

The findings that we present here are part of a process, shared firstly in a visual with our participants. This is a key element of our community-led approach in Whanganui. The reporting back process provides a check on our listening to the voices of the whenua and ensuring these voices, often silent until now, are valued in a future state design for learning without streaming in Whanganui.

The narratives for awareness of streaming and who benefits

Four related narratives emerged from the community voices. Figure 2 below sets out these narratives. **Appendix 1** captures a sample of what was offered and by who in the community.

Who benefits from streaming



Figure 2: The nature of streaming and who benefits

The characteristics of streaming we found in this landscape

It was no surprise to find that streaming was more fully described by the teaching community. It is part of the schools’ educational language and landscape. We also know that individual schools in our education system have mana (Penetito, 2010), autonomy, organisational influence, and power (Kania et al, 2022). This played out in their responses.

Some teachers had experienced streaming in another country and could compare this with the structures and processes in Aotearoa New Zealand and their own community.

I hated streaming. I was in the good class, but I had to work really hard, always feeling a failure, always feeling that I was at the bottom of the class ...My culture is very chauvinistic. So, women have to do really well (tumuaki).

There was a lot of pressure put on you, not just by your teachers or your friends, but also by your family, because it was seen as a way to get out of poverty (kaiako).

For both of these leaders, their own experience led them to be aware of the pressures this caused for their own tamariki and the learners in their current schools, and to wholly support attempts to deconstruct what they had in place.

Typically, kaiako and tumuaki reported the following practices either currently in place or having been removed.

1. **Extension classes.** The intermediate and secondary schools across years 7 to 10, reported that extension classes were selected based on literacy and numeracy testing. Some schools had created their own pre-testing for other areas of the curriculum like science. This meant that the extension class was taught their “core” curriculum (Science, English, Mathematics, Physical Education and Social Sciences) together. Whānau or learners were not generally consulted unless a parent queried the decision.

[I had] to justify [to parents] why the 33rd student who had the same results as the 32nd student wasn't in those classes (kaiako/tumuaki).

It was in the area of extension class decisions that schools felt the most pressure from parents who advocated strongly for streaming. Kaiako and tumuaki described having extension classes as part of “marketing” their school. They argued that not having these classes would mean that parents would seek out other schools that retained this practice. And they did. Although a small city, Whanganui has choices for parents and streaming practices are one of the choices available to them.

The belief that high-achieving learners benefit from learning together is one of the deepest of the divides across this landscape for both teachers and whānau.

‘Option’ classes for subjects such as Art, Dance, Languages and Technology still operate with mixed ability classes, so the teachers of these subjects are experienced with working across perceived ability levels. They were quick to point this out.

2. **Banding.** Many schools opt for top, middle, and low bands of classes. The middle band is made up of mixed ability classes and then a low band of learning support classes (sometimes called “home rooms” operating for those who have much greater learning needs). Kaiako often described a selection of classes for the middle and low bands as being determined with behaviour as the key criteria, breaking down groups of learners who may have already established their “reputation” as being disruptive or difficult.
3. **Prerequisites.** At the senior level, where NCEA achievement is the major learning outcome, prerequisites for entry into external qualifications are often demanded by heads of departments. Again, this has been a strongly supported streaming practice in most of the secondary schools that participated in this research.
4. **Within class ability-grouping.** Across the primary and secondary sectors, kaiako also stream learners within classes. Grouping of learners is encouraged and supported as an effective teaching method that allows learners to work cooperatively, building on each other’s strengths to solve or perform curriculum tasks. However, in other curriculum contexts, ability grouping is an enduring and fixed feature for learners. Ability grouping is the most common approach in the teaching of reading and mathematics (p 15. Tokona te Raki, 2023) despite new models of mixed ability grouping being supported by research and professional learning (Hunter, Hunter & Anthony, 2019; Rubie-Davies, 2015).

While this research did not survey each school in Whanganui on their use or not of streaming, the voices paint the picture of most schools still retaining forms of streaming, even with those that have declared their shift to mixed-ability classes. Teachers referred to within-class streaming where learning groups are being streamed under the guise of differentiation.

[Teachers] don't understand how to differentiate within the same class or differentiate within tasks. They think differentiation is giving [learners] completely different tasks to do (kaiako).

This form of differentiation means that learners engage with different knowledge and this impacts on their future opportunities. Teachers are making judgements about the potential of each learner based on lower expectations (Rubie-Davies, 2015).

What did our community tell us about streaming and who benefits?

Together, the voices suggest a hidden story of streaming and often a sharp divide between whānau, tamariki and rangatahi compared to the voices of tumuaki and kaiako. This divide comes down to awareness of the term streaming in the teaching community (as described above) and/or knowledge of the intergenerational harm this practice has caused for many Māori and Pacific learners. The harmful impact narrative is relatively recent with research evidence now being mobilised in media reports and within educational networks. These voices were informed and often angry in tone.

For example, if a participant could clearly describe the different forms of streaming, they were also more likely to be able to say who did benefit in their community and who did not and the impact this was having on learners. Student responses that were coded to this narrative were from schools that had already opted to end streaming. They were most likely part of this discussion at the time.

Kids will go around and label themselves as being in the dumb class...So how do we get [them] out of that mindset? (whānau Board member).

We have a midband that don't stand out, don't have a face, don't have a name, that sort of thing. I don't think anyone benefits from [streaming] (kaiako /leader).

A second narrative emerged that did not necessarily know all the 'ins and outs' of how streaming was applied but did know that only some benefited, not all. This came out of their personal experience rather than any formal evidence base.

They had names of the stars [for the groups], but we didn't call them that. You were known as the smart class or the dumb classes (rangatahi).

I think it worked if you were in the top level.... but not at the bottom level (whānau)

I was probably one of those kids that really benefited from being told that they were special. For me, it was a huge reinforcement.... you are clever, you are smart, you're gonna do big things and it gave me this confidence that I still think I walk around this world with today (kaiako).

In other words, they sensed who benefited and mostly accepted this as just 'what happened' in schooling. Their voices had little sense of agency to change the system. This narrative certainly aligns with other research about the experiences of young people (Tokona te Raki, 2023).

A third narrative marked those responses where there was some knowledge of what streaming meant for them, mostly in terms of dividing up learners using tests, but expressed little or no recognition of any harm that this may bring. These voices did not always recognise the word streaming, as such, particularly rangatahi and tamariki. Our iwi interviewers took time to explain

that it was not about streaming music or video. However, young people did notice grouping that divided the “smart kids” and the “dumb kids but did not always see it as harmful.

I didn't know anything [about streaming], I just went to school, did what I was told and left (whānau.)

Yes, I think [I was streamed], but I don't know, I'm only saying that because [name of cousin] went to school with me but was always in a higher class (whānau)

I was with my mates, so I was sweet. I just did what I had to (whānau).

In this narrative, we heard from rangatahi a version of what they may have been told about being streaming at the time.

And if the dumb people... talk to the clever people, they will slow them down, because they'll just ask them what the answers are (rangatahi).

The last of the narratives from participant responses to questions 1 and 2 is also related to what we have termed the hidden story of streaming. Their responses are grounded on the belief system that has driven the practice deep and wide into our education system. In essence, these voices indicate that streaming works for all and gives everyone the same opportunity.

Their positioning on the two continuums (refer Figure 2) reflects that their perspectives on streaming came from those that did not have an awareness of streaming practices in their own education and did not always remark on or recognise any differences in pathways or outcomes for themselves, their whānau or their learners. Again, this thinking was heard from across the community participants - from whānau, rangatahi and tamariki and kaiako. The relative size of this narrative in the wider Whanganui community is, as yet, unknown.

I was in the A class. I wanted to be in that class because they were good sports people and then we had the C class with the kids who didn't achieve but they did go through and do the school programmes (whānau).

In NCEA, I feel there needs to be ...a streaming option for ... the pathways that [students] want to go in whether they want to be more externally exam focused or internally (kaiako).

Narratives about why we have streaming in our schools

Similarly, four narratives emerged as we sorted responses from our participants as to why we have streaming practices in our schools. The two axes for our coding became “It's about system racism, bias and power” and “It's about high expectations of all learners”.

Why do we have streaming?

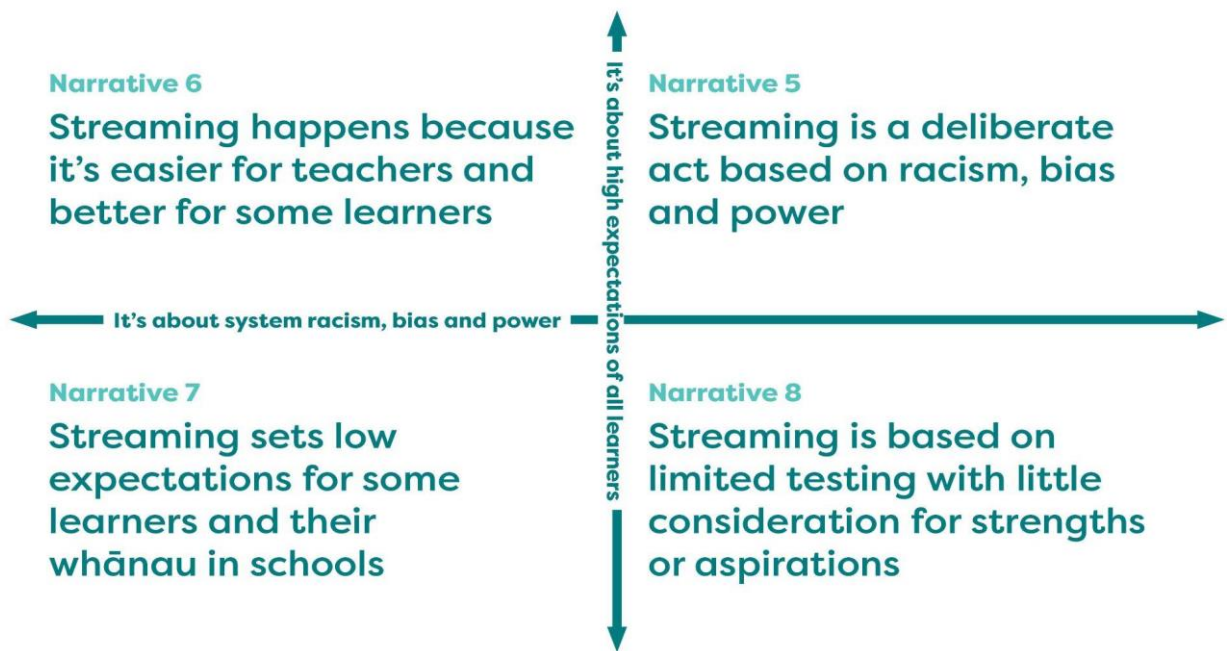


Figure 3: Why do we have streaming?

Participant responses in narrative 5, combined their knowledge or experience in education with this idea of high expectations for all. These responses demonstrated a clear recognition of systemic reasons for the use of streaming in their schools, that it had a whakapapa of colonisation in education and that it was deliberate in its intent to separate racial groupings in terms of their capability and future roles in the New Zealand economy. In this space, the participants from schools were questioning themselves and had been listening to or reading about the experiences around streaming for tamariki mokopuna. In this quadrant, young people knew they were streamed and treated differently based on their identity and language.

All my friends and relations were in another group ... it was the loss of connection for me and I'm thinking this is wrong (tumuaki).

[Māori get] treated different (rangatahi).

Even if everyone had made some progress they were still tiered. So, the tiers never left, it was very rare if anyone jumped out of that tier (tumuaki).

Narrative 6 responses still focused on a system perspective but did not raise perceptions about racism or bias in schools. The rationale for streaming was about the fact that it was easier for kaiako to teach a smaller range of abilities. In this narrative, we see the argument that those learners selected as high achievers would be held back by having the full range of abilities in their class. Tumuaki and kaiako reported that this narrative was strong among some teachers and many parents, and it would be a force to be reckoned with in their journey to end streaming.

We were taught to identify a group, sort, [and] teach to that group. That was part of our training, and it really was a way of organising, but it was organising to make life easy for planning, for the teacher (tumuaki).

Despite how I felt about streaming as a child, when I became a parent, I bought into the same narrative [about needing extension] for my boy (kaiako).

Narrative 7 responses were focused on the low expectations set for tamariki and rangatahi and their whānau. While racism and bias were not explicit words in these explanations of why we had streaming, they still paint a bleak picture of the barriers put in place for learners through daily classroom interactions or “rules” about entry to particular subjects.

We were all told we would end up in jail (kaumātua).

The teacher said that I can't do science...but I want to be a midwife. So, can I do science later? (rangatahi reporting to a kaiako).

Get the kids to school every day. If that happens, we can teach them, but if they're not there. It's really hard (kaiako).

The blame and bias for poor achievement is clear in this narrative through explicit low expectations of learners and whānau. The scale of this narrative is also unknown for Whanganui amongst the community and not just teachers. Noticing, recognising, and responding to this ‘unconscious’ bias in the rhetoric of individuals and institutions is the journey ahead.

The final narrative in the reported reasons for the use of ability grouping and streaming is also a system barrier. The bias for selecting groups and/or classes is in the limited nature of the testing that is applied. Participants, including tamariki and rangatahi, understood that testing of their reading or numeracy skills determined the group they were placed in. Few schools reported conversations with whānau or learners about strengths or aspirations. The research literature about streaming refers to ‘perceived’ abilities (Rubie-Davies 2015; Tokona te Raki, 2021, 2023) for a number of reasons. The tests do not value what others may value as measures for success. As one student put it “we know different stuff”. Kaiako talked of behaviour being the key determinant for grouping. The discovery below aligns with other research about the inherent bias at play behind the cover of test scores (Tokona te Raki, 2021). Furthermore, the tests are often administered and marked by others and the kaiako may not even see the scores or answers (O’Connell, 2021).

Our extension classes were stanine six and above [but] I found out they were even stanine fours in the extension classes, so that didn't make sense...We took a look at the addresses, and I did a map ...to ascertain where these children lived. And there was a pattern [from one school] (tumuaki).

There are some other dangers to be aware of in this narrative. The use of the term ‘learning styles’ can be another way of saying that some students, like Māori and Pacific, need to learn “with their hands”. The implicit bias in this is that they do not learn with their minds (Tokona te Raki, 2023).

I think it would be more beneficial, rather than streaming based on test scores, to stream based on how people learn (rangatahi).

The test will determine how good [they] are and that will give [teachers] an idea of the learning styles and approaches and [teachers] will be able to assist the students (whānau).

Tā te akonga titiro | What if?

As a final pātai, we asked our participants to think about learning practices and environments that did not use ability grouping. What would this look, feel and sound like for them, as tamariki/rangatahi, as whānau and as kaiako?

If this research was to reveal the lie of the land across the community, then the iwi-led collective that will take the kaupapa forward would also need a ground-up view of new expectations from those who have experienced streaming and its impact.

If we didn't have streaming, what would this look, feel and sound like for you?



Figure 4: the essence of their responses, sometimes the actual words.

Tamariki and rangatahi talked about teachers who kept repeating explanations rather than finding ways to represent the next steps in ways that the student needed. These took the form of individual conversations between teacher and student, exploring what had been grasped and where there was confusion. Tamariki and rangatahi were keen to be trusted to work together more than they do, to learn with and from their peers. Many of the whānau and kaiako also had experienced a 'one size fits all' (sometimes termed whole class teaching) and agreed that this only worked for some.

Tamariki and rangatahi talked about the care they expected from teachers, their being able to 'read the room' to notice who might be struggling or who might have other issues or concerns on a given day. They called for more time to understand and "figure stuff out". The fast pace of covering topics and standards in the senior school added to their feeling pressured and anxious.

Whānau talked about teachers really knowing and valuing their child and their aspirations, especially pronouncing their names correctly as a way of honouring their whakapapa. There was discussion in some of the whānau groups about those kaiako who spent time in and with the community - at events important to that community and not just at the school-led engagements.

Those kaiako who had been mentored by Te Puna stressed how important it is for all teachers to understand their own identities, as part of understanding those of their ākongā - Kō wai? Nā wai? Nō hea? Whakapapa is about knowing who you are and where and to whom you belong. This is also confirmed by the equity and cultural capability literature.

Finally, kaiako and tumuaki articulated the big ideas of what they expected to see and hear in non-streamed groups and classes. Again, these ideas reflect the research literature about already proven pedagogies such as high expectations (Rubie-Davies, 2015), whānau-like learning environments, the pedagogy of relationships (Bishop, Ladwig & Berryman, 2014), differentiation for learning (Boaler, 2008) and accountability to communities.

As noted previously, the kaiako voices were largely from schools that had taken action on streaming, and they knew why. However, they are still concerned about the risk of this decision not impacting positively because kaiako are yet to know and use different pedagogies to maximise learning for all. The language and practice of high expectations needed time and professional learning support. Otherwise, different groups within classes would be given different tasks rather than using task design that gives access to the learning for all learners.

Tamariki, whānau and kaiako have offered a new set of expectations. This research is a baseline in some ways, a pou in the ground to start to measure improvement when all schools move to ending streaming. From these broad responses, an evaluative approach and shared criteria can be considered.

Whiringa kōrero | Discussion

Many of the voices we recorded are invisible in the schooling environment because they have not been brought to the table to discuss streaming and its kaupapa, or they are not used to demanding changes to embedded institutional practices. While some of the leaders we interviewed had taken definitive steps to end streaming, some are not confident to do this, fearful of the parent backlash or kaiako not being prepared enough to implement 'mixed strength' grouping at all year levels across all curriculum levels.

The power of individual schools to make their own decisions weighs heavily on the shoulders of those who champion this kaupapa in Whanganui, despite the wealth of international and New Zealand evidence. The current Prime Minister and current Ministers of Education publicly and openly support the kaupapa (Tokona te Raki, 2021, 2023).

The iwi-led collective, Te Hauora Takitini Kāhui Ako, is a unique arrangement in Aotearoa New Zealand and beyond. There is a dual governance structure for the kāhui that sees joint decision-making in the interest of whānau Māori and their tamaiti. Te Puna has been able to advance an iwi curriculum and build the platform for kaiako leads to support its introduction across kāhui early childhood and schooling.

The leads are situated in Te Puna tari when they have their hui and professional learning led by an iwi cultural exponent. In this context, the kaiako and tumuaki leads for the kāhui have the opportunity to be 'in' the community, alongside aunties and kaumātua in daily interactions. This builds strong relationships and trust in ways that individual schools have been tasked with under government legislation but found difficult to achieve.

Our findings have supported a more nuanced view of the ‘lie of the land’. It appears to not be just a matter of yes or no to ending the practice of streaming. There are many perspectives in between these points. The voices we heard revealed the practices and perceptions about the use of streaming that can now be built on, as well as the divides that will need to be bridged. Of course, these are not from all the community voices, but they tell a connected story from ‘providers’ and ‘receivers’ of education across Whanganui.

The launch of *Kōkirihiā* (Tokona Te Raki, March 2023) will bring this practice into national focus with the education sector and, of course, the public. The plan sets out a roadmap for all schools. By 2030 schools should not be ability grouping or streaming their learners.

This more localised research provides a head start on the road map. We know what we face in terms of the structures, practices, expectations, and equity mindsets of our community.

These eight narratives existed across the participant responses and there may be more in the wider community. For example, the limited numbers of participants who actually responded in terms of schools within Takatini meant that we had strong advocates for ending streaming, alongside voices not often heard in these debates - whānau, kaumātua, tamariki and rangatahi. At the same time, we did not hear back from some schools invited into the research. Their silence may be deliberate as they consider their position, or they may genuinely oppose streaming. Certainly, this research told us there is strong whānau advocacy for extension classes in each school, with a set of beliefs about learning that sit behind this perspective.

The road map to ending streaming⁵

By 2024

All schools have engaged with their communities, with their board and students about ending streaming

By 2026

Most schools have planned or are planning professional growth to end streaming.

By 2030

All schools have stopped streaming

However, the research found that for some whānau and young people streaming was not recognised as being the key ‘upstream barrier’ (Tokona Te Raki, 2021) to their aspirations, rather it was an unexamined part of their schooling experience which they did not question, despite knowing that it made them “feel dumb”. There is much to do to raise their awareness of the evidence we now have about impact **before bringing** whānau Māori and all parents to the table to discuss and contribute as partners in educational design in Whanganui.

⁵ p. 38-39. Tokona te Raki Māori Futures Collective. *Kōkirihiā* . 2023

Te Puna has been able to mobilise whānau and rangatahi through their networks who may never have come to a decision-making table in an individual school. This was a deliberate strategy for this research to seek out Māori voices with whom Te Puna already had existing relationships.

The knowledge that most kaiako and tumuaki expressed about the harms of streaming places them as advocates in this community, even though they had made the shift, it has so far not convinced others. The wider community is still without evidence that their alternative approaches are making the difference they seek for Māori learners.

However large or small these narratives may be in the wider community; they are the navigation signposts for the next steps. We argue to continue an iwi-led approach to ending streaming across Whanganui alongside Takitini given that the conversation about streaming is no longer just about schools. We know there are parents in this community who can exert strong pressure on the status quo. Allowing that narrative to dominate is clearly our 'upstream barrier' as Māori learners and whānau navigate their own awa or journey from early learning through schooling.

The other barrier may be inertia or paralysis (Hotere-Barnes, 2016) where schools are caught between the pressures of more demanding whānau and the need to advocate for learners and whānau who do not have the same voice or power. They may do nothing or test incremental changes. This goal to end streaming needs a mana hapori response to rebalance advocacy and power.

Equity work requires community: learning in public, holding ourselves and each other accountable, trying new approaches and working through complex challenges collectively. There are no ready answers or solutions to the complex and unpredictable challenges we're facing, whether in our classrooms or our climate. But solutions and positive changes (large and small) can emerge through the dynamic interactions of diverse people in relationships, working and learning together.⁶

⁶ Gill, H. \$ April 2022 National Equity Project. Blog - found at:;
https://www.nationalequityproject.org/blog/networks-anchored-in-interdependency?mc_cid=f08146604f&mc_eid=42c7520932

Ara Whakamua | Recommendations

The following recommendations are being discussed with stakeholders.

1. Takitini Hauora Kāhui Ako informs Whanganui early learning settings and schools about the detrimental impact of streaming on Māori and Pacific learners with particular attention to local, national, and international evidence regarding learner and whānau well-being.
2. Takitini Hauora Kāhui Ako seeks a collective mandate from participating early childhood settings and schools to end streaming by 2030, preferably sooner.
3. Takitini Hauora Kāhui Ako collective agrees to report to Te Puna on awareness and removal of streaming at Whanganui early childhood settings and schools.
4. This research is used as part of establishing cross-school evaluation criteria to gather data and evidence that will provide a benchmark for answering the question that John Maihi posed and also feed into a wider evaluation by Tokona te Raki (subject to funding).
5. Te Puna in conjunction with funding agencies sponsors marae-based hui for whānau and rangatahi to raise awareness of the whakapapa of streaming and the evidence of harm that streaming practices have on Māori and Pacific learners.
6. Te Puna in conjunction with the Ministry of Education supports early learning settings and schools to plan and report on ending streaming practices, and the involvement of whānau and wider community in equity conversations.
7. Support for schools to review and strengthen alternative practices to streaming with effective mixed and flexible grouping should draw on examples within and beyond the Takitini Hauora Kāhui Ako collective.

References

Bishop, R. (2011). *Freeing Ourselves*. Boston: Sense Publishers.

[Bishop](#), R., [Ladwig](#) J.& [Berryman](#), M. (2014). The centrality of relationships for Pedagogy: The Whanaungatanga Thesis. *American Educational Research Journal*, 51, (1).
<https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831213510019>

Boaler, J. (2008). Promoting 'Relational Equity' and High Mathematics achievement through an Innovative Mixed Ability approach. *British Educational Research Journal*, 34 (2), 167-194

Freire, P. (1972). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Seabury Classics.

Gill, H. (2022, April) National Equity Project. Blog - Retrieved 10 March, 2023
https://www.nationalequityproject.org/blog/networks-anchored-in-interdependency?mc_cid=f08146604f&mc_eid=42c7520932

Gruenevald, D. (2008). The best of both worlds: a critical pedagogy of place, in 21
Environmental Education Research, 14(3):308-324 doi: [10.1080/13504620802193572](https://doi.org/10.1080/13504620802193572)

Hunter, J., Hunter, R. & Anthony, G. (2020). Shifting towards equity: challenging teacher views about student capability in mathematics. *Maths Educational Research Journal*, 32, 37–55. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13394-019-00293-y>

Kania, J. Kramer, M. & Senge, P. (2018). The Water of Systems Change. Found at
https://www.fsg.org/resource/water_of_systems_change/

Kania, J., Williams, J., Schmitz, P., Brady, S., Kramer, M., & Splansky Juster, J, (2022). Centering equity in Collective Impact in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*.

Mahuika, N., & Mahuika, R. (2020). Wānanga as a research methodology. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 16(4), 369–377. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1177180120968580>

Ministry of Education. (2021, Dec). *He Whakaaro: Does Streaming Work?*
https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0012/210027/He-Whakaaro-Does-streaming-work-.pdf

Ministry of Education. (2020). The Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities
<https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/overall-strategies-and-policies/the-statement-of-national-education-and-learning-priorities-nelp-and-the-tertiary-education-strategy-tes/>

O'Connell, P (2021). [Streaming - the unexamined wallpaper.](#)

O'Connell, P (2010). *Is sustainability of professional learning an act of faith or can it be deliberately crafted?* Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Auckland.

Penetito, W. (2010). *What's Māori about Māori Education? The struggle for a meaningful context.* Wellington: Victoria University Press.

Rubie-Davies, C. M. (2015). *Becoming a high expectation teacher: Raising the bar.* Auckland: Routledge.

Smith, L. T. (2012). *Decolonising methodologies.* 2nd Edition, Dunedin: Otago University Press.

Te Puna Mātauranga o Whanganui. (2022). Ngā Kai o te Puku Tupuna: Whanganui Iwi Education Plan 2023-2030.

Tokona te Raki Māori Futures Makers (2023). *Kōkirihiā: the plan for removing streaming from our schools.* Ōtautahi Aotearoa New Zealand
<https://www.maorifutures.co.nz/projects/streaming/>

Tokona te Raki Māori Futures Collective (2021). *Ending Streaming in Aotearoa.*
https://www.maorifutures.co.nz/wpcontent/uploads/2021/03/TTR_Streaming_document.pdf

Appendix one: What did our community say about why we have streaming in our schools



What did our community say about why we have streaming in our schools?

Narrative 6: Streaming happens because it's easier for teachers and better for some learners

<p>Whānau and kaumatua voices</p> <p>[Streaming] makes it easier for [teachers]</p> <p>Streaming was set up to be convenient</p>	<p>Tumuaki and kalako voices</p> <p>One thing that always has bugged me, big time, is that HODs... always chose the top class. Often they were the most experienced teachers with the best knowledge on the subject</p> <p>We were taught to identify a group, sort, teach to that group. That was part of our training and it really was a way of organising, but it was organising to make life easy for planning, for the teacher</p> <p>Despite how I felt about streaming as a child, when I became a parent, I bought into the same narrative [about needing extension for my boy]</p>
<p>Rangatahi and tamariki voices</p> <p>And if the dumb people.. talk to the clever people, they will slow them down, because they'll just ask them what the answers are</p> <p>[Teachers think] some of the kids are not so smart or maybe pushed over their limits. They may not be working...and the ones that are smart, get pushed lower, that [they] don't work to the best of their ability</p>	

Narrative 5: Streaming is a deliberate act based on racism, bias and power

<p>Whānau and kaumatua voices</p> <p>So where we had streaming in my day, we decided we're going to find... a new way of educating our tamariki and our kids. Kohanga Reo, Kura... and the whole practice changed</p> <p>Listen to how they say your name. If they can't say that right, there's no way they're going to know how to treat you properly either</p> <p>[Māori get] treated different</p>	<p>Tumuaki and kalako voices</p> <p>While we [as parents] had kept high expectations for all of our children, here was [a teacher] that was shutting down this opportunity. And worst of all, they shut it down in front of [my daughter] and that was a huge impact. ... that someone had that much power</p> <p>There is still a privileging of certain subjects over other subjects that may not be recognized as pure streaming. They stream kids by ... not allowing them access to a really rich, deep curriculum</p> <p>It's really interesting how liberal people will say that they're not racist ... and then when it comes down to their own kids. "Well, it's not that I'm racist. It's just that my kid wouldn't cope" or "I hear that there's lots of rights". There's all this coded language about why they don't want their kids with brown kids and that's what it comes down to</p> <p>Even if everyone had made some progress they were still tiered. So the tiers never left, it was very rare if anyone jumped out of that tier</p>
<p>Rangatahi and tamariki voices</p> <p>I wouldn't want to feel alone [in] the clever class</p>	

It's about high expectations of all learners

It's about system racism, bias and power

Narrative 7: Streaming sets low expectations for some learners and their whānau in schools

<p>Whānau voices</p> <p>Some call [us] the "hard basket"</p> <p>We were all told we would end up in jail</p> <p>I wasn't even in the class, I was in the cupboard, it was where all the dumb kids went</p>	<p>Tumuaki and kalako voices</p> <p>The expectations are obviously lower on those kids in the lower groups</p> <p>This is because [their] expectation, [their] actual belief system, is that these kids can't do it. And we are hearing those things</p> <p>[Teachers say], "if you let the student into my class, [you are] setting him up for failure because he doesn't have the prerequisites. He didn't do Science last year [so] you can't do ... chemistry"</p> <p>Get the kids to school every day. If that happens, we can teach them, but if they're not there it's really hard</p>
<p>Rangatahi and tamariki voices</p> <p>The teacher said that I can't do science... but I want to be a midwife. So can I do science later?</p>	

Narrative 8: Streaming is based on limited testing with little consideration for strengths or aspirations

<p>Whānau voices</p> <p>The test will determine how good [they] are .. that will give [teachers] an idea of the learning styles and approaches and [they] can assist the students</p> <p>I think it would be more beneficial, rather than stream based on test scores to stream based on how people learn</p>	<p>Tumuaki and kalako voices</p> <p>Our extension classes were stanine six and above [but] I found out they were even stanine fours in the extension classes, so that didn't make sense... We took a look at.. the addresses and I did a map... to ascertain where these children lived. And there was a pattern [from one school]</p> <p>I taught in one place that is age based, each [early learning] centre was a different age. Is that a way of actually streaming by age?</p> <p>We're measuring them only on literacy and numeracy</p> <p>At primary school students know they're working up [curriculum or reading] levels all the time. And so they are conscious of where they are, where they sit within a class</p>
<p>Rangatahi and tamariki voices</p>	

Appendix two: What did our community tell us about streaming and who benefits



What did our community tell us about streaming and who benefits?

Questions we asked

What is streaming? What was your experience of streaming? How did it make you feel? Who does it benefit?

Narrative 2: We experienced streaming and we know it does not benefit all

Whānau and kaumatua voices

I was just deemed to be dumb. [The teacher] used to call us some pretty wild names. And then one day my koro told me not to go to school. He said 'I'll teach you'. And [the teacher] came up and threatened my koro

I think it worked if you were in the top level... but not at the bottom level

Rangatahi and tamariki voices

They had names of the stars [for the groups], but we didn't call them that. You were known as the smart class or the dumb classes

And it was the low class for us [Māori]

Tumuaki and kalako voices

I suppose the system told me you are probably not going to do this bro. Don't bother... just go get a job

So I was really aware that our [learning] experiences were different from [those other classe]

I was probably one of those kids that really benefited from being told that they were special. For me, it was a huge reinforcement... you are clever, you are smart, you're gonna do big things and it gave me this confidence that I still think I walk around this world with today

Narrative 1: We know streaming has many forms and causes considerable harm

Whānau and kaumatua voices

Kids will go around and label themselves as being in the dumb class... So how do we get [them] out of that mindset?

At that time, ...there was a lot of racism in that school where ... [my daughter] and her friends were singled out [as] the useless ones

Rangatahi and tamariki voices

So there was one smart class, the top class, well that was how we viewed it. If you were in the smart class, or you were in the other classes, and it ranged from you were kind of smart to downright troublemakers

We [knew when we came together in Year 11 that] we didn't get taught [the same] knowledge because we were in the lower grade

Tumuaki and kalako voices

Those students were grouped because of their ability and their behaviour. Their perception was that they were the lowest of that year group, or within that class. That was a really, really hard perception to break when we were trying to get them to believe in their own ability

We have a midband that don't stand out, don't have a face, don't have a name, that sort of thing. I don't think anyone benefits from [streaming]

The content that you were offered was incredibly different and the way in which it was delivered was different

Who benefits from streaming?

What is streaming in education?

Narrative 3: We don't know what streaming means and any harm it may cause

Whānau voices

I didn't know anything [about streaming], I just went to school, did what I was told and left

Yes I think [I was streamed], but I don't know, I'm only saying that because [name of cousin] went to school with me but was always in a higher class

Rangatahi and tamariki voices

In primary school [we were] with people that were not so smart and that were smart. You know, they sort of just learned to work together

I was with my mates so I was sweet. I just did what I had to

They do tests and the people who have higher marks on their tests get into a certain class and the ones with lower marks get put into a separate class and they do learning that suits them

Tumuaki and kalako voices

I actually didn't know I was getting streamed. I was in a different class to all of my cousins... it really did bother me internally, like wondering why that happened

Narrative 4: We believe streaming gives everyone the same opportunities

Whānau voices

[streaming] certainly worked for me... I got School Cert and UE and I was on all the sports teams... I can't say if it worked for other people. I don't know

I was in the A class. I wanted to be in that class because they were good sports people and then we had the C class with the kids who didn't achieve but they did go through and do the school programmes

Rangatahi and tamariki voices

I think it's okay to cater for everyone at their own [level] grades

It hasn't really impacted me, I just just go with it

I was able to do the classes I chose

Tumuaki and kalako voices

In NCEA, I feel there needs to be ... a streaming option for ... the pathways that [students] want to go in ... whether they want to be more externally exam focused or internally