

Components of a Maori Concept of Giftedness

Concepts of giftedness	Expansion on meaning	Implications for educators
Giftedness widely distributed. Not bound by social class, economic status or gender.	Range from national heroes to next door neighbour. Greater expectations in some whanau. Success depended on ability rather than whakapapa.	Don't be influenced by socio-economic status, lineage or gender ... or ethnicity. Retain an open mind.
Can be exhibited in individual or group contexts. Can be owned by a group.	'Self-made man' concept does not fit Maori philosophy. People were conceived, raised and abilities recognised and nurtured by others. Often whanau sacrifice involved.	Educators should sometimes avoid 'seeking out' the most talented musician. Teachers should recognise that while some individuals will shine, it is kotahitanga that prevails.
The areas of giftedness and talent recognised are broad and wide-ranging.	Qualities include spiritual, cognitive, affective, aesthetic, artistic, musical, social, leadership and cultural abilities...academics, league players, etc.	To take cognisance of this third component educators must not only provide for a wide range of special abilities, but they must also consider these abilities from a Maori perspective.
Importance is placed on both qualities and abilities	Qualities are perceived as positive personal attitudes such as aroha, bravery and manaakitanga. They are manifest in a person's behaviour. Abilities are perceived as relating to a person's skills e.g. academic and artistic.	Teachers should be mindful of affective, interpersonal and interpersonal – and be watchful for students who show outstanding abilities. This approach could benefit all children, of all ethnicities.
The concept of ability is holistic in nature and inextricably intertwined with other Maori concepts.	No ethnic group's concept of giftedness can stand alone from values and beliefs. All knowledge comes from a higher order and passed down through tohunga. Special abilities seen as gifts.	Teachers need to value and understand Maori culture. They also need to encourage and extend students in their Maoritanga. Consider designing programmes to be more holistic.
There is an inherent expectation that a person's gifts and talents will be used to benefit others.	Gifts are not for personal aggrandisement, but were to be used for the benefit of the Maori community. Gifts brought with them inherent responsibilities and a commitment to reciprocate and to be accountable.	Look for students who are 'being of service'. Provide opportunities where this quality can surface and develop e.g. peer tutoring, peer mediation, writing books for kohanga reo, concerts at retirement homes, working bees on marae.
The Maori culture provides a firm foundation on which special abilities are grounded, nurtured exhibited and developed.	The vast majority of special abilities have Maoritanga at their foundation in some way, eg. Te Reo competence; the ability to present convincing arguments, the ability to sustain interest and entertain an audience.	Give students opportunities and encouragement to develop their talents in a Maori-relevant context e.g. attend Ngata memorial lectures, Manu Korero oratory festivals, mautaihaa Wananga, etc.
Mana tangata is frequently accorded to people with special abilities especially in the areas of traditional knowledge and service to others.	Links to concepts of mana ... authority, prestige, charisma, awe. Barlow (1991) describes mana tangata as 'the power acquired by the individual according to his or her ability and effort to develop skills and gain knowledge in particular areas' (p.62).	Mana is a potential key to identifying gifted and talented Maori learners. Who are the Maori students who are admired by others? Who have influence among peers? Who have rangatira status? Teachers should provide opportunities

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		from which they can earn mana – conversely, avoid situations where mana can be diminished.