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ABSTRACT

It is suggested that significant differences remain between ethnic groups in New Zealand, specifically the Maori and the non-Maori, or "Pakeha" (a term used by the Maori for New Zealanders of European descent), in terms of educational achievement. This gap exists despite emphasis placed on education as a means of reducing social inequality. These differences, when combined with similar disparities in other social indicators such as life expectancy, employment, and composition of prison populations, pose a significant challenge to the belief in equality, social justice, and the potential attainment and maintenance of social harmony. Statistics reveal that over one-half of Maori students who took School Certificate examinations received grades below that required to proceed, whereas only 26.5 percent of non-Maori received a similar grade. Access to and progress through schools has been changed significantly due to curriculum modifications, and greater attention is being paid to Maori language and culture; yet, educational disparities continue. The development of: (1) educational programs aimed at the remediation of educational disadvantage and (2) research that seeks to discover clues to avoid entrenching educational disadvantage continue to be of the greatest importance. Efforts will be needed in other public sectors such as health and justice and the wider community if major changes are to result. Concluding the paper are 3 tables and 16 references. (WTH)



MAORI AND PAKEHA SCHOOL PERFORMANCE: THE CHALLENGE FOR EDUCATIONAL POLICY AND RESEARCH

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MAORI AND PAKEHA SCHOOL PERFORMANCE: THE CHALLENGE FOR EDUCATIONAL POLICY AND RESEARCH

Research in the sociology of education in New Zealand has, with some notable exceptions (eg. the work of Hugh Lauder at the University of Canterbury 1), focused a significant amount of attention on differences in attainment among ethnic groups, rather than on differences in attainment among social classes. In part this may be attributable to the fact that while, as in almost all countries, New Zealanders, have for many years placed great faith in education as a means of reducing social inequality and achieving social justice, it has also been seen by many as one of the primary mechanisms whereby a harmonious multi-cultural society may be achieved.

However, as the following paper will suggest, despite a belief in the achievement of formal equality of opportunity in terms of access to schooling to the secondary level, there remain significant differences between ethnic groups in terms of educational achievement. These differences when combined with similar disparities on other social indicators pose a significant challenge to the belief in equality, social justice and the potential attainment/maintenance of social harmony. In addition to exploring the nature of the disparities in educational achievement between Maori and Pakeha² (one of the yardsticks by which the achievement of these ideals may be measured), this paper will examine briefly some of the consequent challenges facing educational policy makers and researchers.

As indicated by the most recent New Zealand Planning Council report (1986:44) people of Maori descent make up the largest minority group in



New Zealand (12.0%); and while the general population growth is expected to be low over the next few decades, the proportion of Maoris is expected to increase to 15.2% by the year 2011. Furthermore, Maoris will make a substantial contribution to the overall growth in population. It is therefore not surprising that evidence which continues to demonstrate social and educational inequality should pose a significant challenge for social planners and policy analysts.

One of the continued areas of concern which contributes to the notion that the Maori occupies a less equitable place in New Zealand society is education. When, for example, school performance is examined at the point of the first selective external examination, School Certificate, (form 5 - Grade 10), the nature and source of the concern is readily apparent.

School Certificate statistics for 1985 reveal that while 52.57% of non-Maori pupils who were sitting the examination for the first time passed at least four subjects, 23.53% of the comparable group of Maori students passed at least four subjects³. Thus more than twice as many non-Maori as Maori pupils passed at least four subjects in the School Certificate examination in 1985.

Furthermore, from Table 1, when some individual subject pass rates are examined it is clear that for this cohort there are dramatic differences in achievement between Maori and non-Maori.

[INSERT TABLE 1]



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With the exception of Maori (language and culture) which favours Maori pupils by a small percentage, the differences between the two groups exceed twenty percent.

It is therefore not surprising that examination success (or the lack there of) is reflected in school retention figures.

[INSERT FIG 1 AND TABLE 2 HERE]

Figure 1 and the associated Table 2 shows that in the 20 years between 1960 and 1979 (inclusive) there has been an increase in the overall retention rate of secondary students from form 3 to form 7. It is equally apparent however, that there are significant differences between Maori and non-Maori retention rates.

In 1960 8.7% of the non-Maori cohort went on to form 7 (Grade 12) whereas only 1% of the Maori cohort managed this transition. By 1979 these figures were 20.1% and 4.1% respectively. What is as significant is that rather than seeing any reduction in the gap which was evident in 1960, the distance between Maori and non-Maori has increased. The situation is a matter of considerable concern when consideration is given to the fact that in terms of school leaving qualifications large gaps in attainment exist between the two groups (for all levels of qualifications) and in particular when it is recognised that as recently as 1985, while overall one third of school leavers had no formal qualifications, nearly two thirds (62.3%) of Maori pupils left school without any formal qualification:



Again, more careful examination of school leaving statistics reveals that in 1984 .05% of non-Maori school leavers left in their second year of high school, whereas nearly one fifth of Maori school leavers (19.8%) left by form 4 before they were eligible to sit School Certificate⁴.

Early disadvantage in terms of attendance at pre-school is also apparent when the data reported by Fenwick Norman and Leong (1984) is examined. This study, which investigated attendance at pre-school, found that whereas 84.7% of Pakeha children had attended some form of pre-school education only 59.1% of Maori children had pre-school experience.

The reported retention and achievment data suggest that major disparities may be expected in terms of university attendance. While figures for enrolments are not available, Older (1978:94) calculated that in the Auckland and Waikato areas alone, if Maori students were to go on to University at the same rate as the Pakeha counterparts some 2000 Maori students could have been expected to enrol for the university in 1976. fact only 64 did so. Jones (1982:161) in a study of enrolments at the University of Auckland estimated thät Maori students were underrepresented by a factor of 3-4:1 and concluded that ethnic background was some form of barrier to access to University.

It is however not only in terms of educati a that it may be concluded that the Maori is disadvantaged.

To complete the picture that emerges when the above brief educational statistics have been considered, an examination of other common indicators of socio-economic status also contributes to the notion that Maoris tend to form a distinct group within the lower strata of New Zealand society.



For example, life expectancy from birth for Maori male is on average 63.84 years whereas for their non-Maori counterparts the figure is 70.82 years. Similarly Maori females have on average a life expectancy of 68.49 years compared with 76.95 years for non-Maori females⁵.

Unemployment figures based on provisional 1986 census data reveal a similar pattern of inequality with, for example, 14.9% of the Maori labour force being unemployed, compared with only 5.8% for the non-Maori labour force⁶.

The reported differences in employment status and education are similarly reflected in Justice Department statistics. While, as noted earlier, Maoris make up approximately 12% of the NZ population, in 1984, nearly half (47.4%) of male prison inmates, who make up 95% of the prison population, were Maori. Statistics on conviction and sentencing for crime in general show that Maori offenders are also over-represented in these areas.

Without going into further detail it is evident that what emerges is a clear picture of educational and social disadvantage. Given the positive relationship which has been almost universally established between educational achievement, socio-economic status and equality of opportunity, it is not surprising that one of the main areas to receive critical attention from both Maori and non-Maori is education.

In response to the overwhelming evidence which points to disadvantage, the Maori community has sought, in terms of education, to address in particular the issues related to differences in educational achievement and differences in access to educational institutions. The more orthodox



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demands being made of the education system include the need to improve retention rates and increase training opportunities. The more radical response, which identifies the education system as part of the problem, includes the demand for power sharing and the redistribution of resources; in effect the demand for a Maori education system. The theoretical sustenance for the latter demands at least, are based on, as some observers (Nash 1986) have noted, the work of Bourdieu and Boudon. 'cultural deficit' accounts, Maori educational achievement is explained as being attributable to their poor self image as a race, unable to compete successfully in a society dominated by Pakeha institutions and mores. the Maori perspective as presented by Walker (1985), the argument is made that the negative self image is consequent upon the loss of traditional cultural values and the collective identity as a people. The acquisition of what is regarded by some Maoris as culturally antithetical academic knowledge which is often transmitted in culturally inappropriate ways, can be remediated it is claimed, only in a cultural and educational environment which is less monocultural or ethnocentric.

At the forefront of the demands for this cultural pluralism has been a call for access to Maori language and culture, not only for pupils of Maori descent, but for all New Zealand school children. During the last few years these demands have been a significant factor in educational policy-making and Departmental policy initiatives have attempted to accommodate these demands in several ways.

One way in which the department has responded to the demand for a multicultural perspective, has been through the incorporation of taha Maori (or Maori perspective-world view), as an integral part of the curriculum for every primary and secondary school pupil. This approach recognises and



legitimates, for example, differences in belief about such things as land and land ownership, attitudes to punishment, religion, food, dying, history and attitudes to young and old. It is intended that the elements of taha Maori be incorporated in all subject areas of the curriculum.

While the above curriculum modifications go some way toward preserving and perpetuating Maori culture, the central demand and most formidable challenge lies in the area of Maori language. As Benton (1985) notes the critical feature of Maori language is that it is not merely an ethnic language, rather he and others have argued it is the New Zealand language. Its status is intimately related to the Maoris status as tangata whenua (or people of the land), the indigenous people of New Zealand.

While the teaching of Maori Language in secondary school, which began in the late 1950's, has reached the point where it is now offered in most secondary schools, the future of the language is far from secure. Benton (1979) for example reported that in 1979 approximately 4% of New Zealanders and nearly one third of the Maori population had a working knowledge of the language.

Departmental policies which include a new core curriculum and a primary language syllabus have failed to meet satisfactorily this demand for recognition of Maori language. This has been evidenced by the development since 1981, of Te Kohanga Reo, or language nests, in the area of early childhood education.

Te Kohanga Reo evolved out of a concern about the comparatively low levels of participation among Maori preschoolers at traditional forms of early childhood care and education, together with a belief that it is possible



to transmit Maori language and culture in its indigenous state to generations of infants. What is perhaps most significant is that this educational provision has been developed primarily through community and parental support together with government assistance in the later stages of development through the Department of Maori Affairs. By October 1986 some 441 Kohanga had been established, catering for some 8000 children. This reflects an annual growth since 1981 of approximately 15% and represents one of the most challenging developments in preschool education for both Maori and Pakeha.

Finally, since 1977, nine Maori/English bilingual schools have been established, primarily in rural areas where a higher than average proportion of Maori speakers in the community assists in language maintenance. These schools provide a bilingual programme for on average 50-190 pupils.

While efforts are clearly being made, many logistical difficulties remain, particularly in the area of trained teachers who are native speckers of Maori. Because, for the Maori, language and culture are intimately related, the demand is for teachers who are bilingual/bicultural. In response to the pressing need to fully staff the bilingual schools, a bilingual teacher training programme has been established at Waikato University with an annual intake of 10. In addition the department, in what some would regard as an unorthodox move, has, in co-operation with tribal councils, developed a system of teacher recruitment/employment which involves tribal attestation as to individuals' ability/competence in Maori language and culture. The latter group which currently consists of 40 individuals from various tribes, are training to meet current and anticipated demands for teachers at the secondary level.



However, given that the student output of the Kohanga Reo has yet to fully impact on primary and, certainly secondary schools, it is unlikely that the combined output of current primary teacher training programmes (currently 10) and the attestation programme for secondary teachers will be able to meet the demand for trained and qualified teachers.

While the attention that is being given to Maori language and culture will, it is hoped lead to an improvement in Maori self-image, this strategy alone is unlikely to significantly address the problem of access to higher levels of education and improvement in employment prospects for the large proportion of school leavers.

In addition to the above curricular changes, access to and progress through the senior secondary school has significantly changed. The School Certificate Examination which has been criticised by Maori and Pakeha alike, because in the past it has each year condemned to failure nearly 50% of those who sit the examination, has been modified. The modification to this exam has taken the form of abolishing the pass/fail concept. Students instead receive one of 7 subject grades which range from a high level of ability (A1), to a limited level of ability in that subject (D).

Furthermore, at the sixth form level, the University Entrance Examination which previously qualified applicants for University study has been replaced by an internally assessed (but externally moderated) Sixth Form Certificate. University Bursary and Scholarship Examinations are the only fully externally assessed examinations available to pupils who have completed a seventh form year. It is hoped that the modification to School



Certificate and University Entrance will encourage more students to proceed through to higher levels in the system.

While the full impact of this strategy will not be apparent until later in 1987, and subsequent years, any early promise of major changes in enrolment patterns may have been optimistic. A recent newspaper article entitled 'False Hopes in S Cert Grading⁹' reported that many pupils awarded C₁ and C₂ grades, described on the certificate as adequate achievement, were not being permitted in some schools, to continue into the sixth form with C₂ grades and only in exceptional cases with C₁ grades. The currency of the new award system in the market place has yet to be established but is unlikely to be helped by the school promotion policies described above or the publication of the marks range for each grade.

Preliminary analysis of the 1986 School Certificate examination results reported in table 3 illustrate that in terms of significantly altering the pattern of differences in educational achievement in any way has, in real terms not altered in a positive direction. This is particularly so when it is remembered that progress to the sixth form in a subject is restricted by many schools to those students who have achieved at least a B₂ pass in that subject.

[INSERT TABLE 3]

In general it can be seen that for all subjects 21.5% of Pakeha candidates received A passes only 7.4% of Maori (AM) candidates achieved passes at this level. More significantly perhaps, only 26.5% of Pakeha candidates received grades below B₂ (the level required to proceed in a subject) compared with over one half of Maori candidates (51.5%). Thus nearly



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twice as many Maori candidates as Pakeha candidates received what in the educational and perhaps economic market place will be deemed a restricted For those subjects examined earlier in the paper, the evidence is no more positive in terms of Maori student educational and life chances. example with the exception of English and Maori, three times as great a percentage of Pakeha candidates as Maori, received A passes with the ratio for Geography being 4:1. As significantly, candidates receiving grades less than a B2 favours Pakeha candidates with a smaller percentage for all subjects. For most subjects this translates as a modal Grade of B₁ for Pakeha students compared with C1 for Maori students. The difference between Geography is particularly large at 32.6% and defies simple explanation. is also of note that for the subject Maori, a larger percentage of Pakena candidates than Maori received A passes (25.5% vs 17.9%) and, conversely, a larger percentage of Maori, than Pakeha candidates were awarded passes below a B₂ (35.3 vs 29.4).

[INSERT FIG 2, 3, 4, 5]

As pointed out earlier the retention rates for Maori and Pakeha differ significantly. It should be noted, as illustrated by Figure 5 that while seven out of ten Pakeha students who entered form 3 in 1984 entered the NZY3E3 group compared with only four out of every ten students of Maori descent. A strategy of simply encouraging retention rates may not improve any future comparative analysis in terms of achievement if it assumed that the currently retained Maori cohort are elite in some way. It is also unlikely that a strategy to improve retention rates through the senior school will be successful if there is no visible improvment in comparative rates of achievement. Clearly, a focus in one area alone, such as retention rates, is unlikely to meet current demands to improve Maori life chances:



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While the preceding discussion has focused primarily on policy response, the above figures raise a number of questions with respect to needed research. The more obvious and straight forward questions requiring answers are suggested by the type of information that is already collected through the monitoring systems that are in place. For example, given such measures as a new grading system, will the proportions of Maori pupils who attempt School Certificate increase, will the early drop out rate decrease and will there be an improvement in the numbers of Maori pupils gaining, or even attempting, high level school qualifications?

More difficult are the questions related to self-esteem and the impact that this may have on achievement generally. It is significant that while the Maori community demands greater emphasis on Maori language and culture, research by Benton (1985) has indicated on the basis of Maori community demands that this emphasis should not be at the expense of performance in other subjects. The dilemma for research also lies in the challenge to explain the differences between macro and micro level analyses of Maori school achievement. Clearly some Maoris, irrespective of socio-economic status, do succeed in the current system. What then are the features of the home, the school and student, that can help us understand educational success and failure? When genetic and cultural deprivation explanations of differential achievement are rejected, educational sociologists often find themselves pointing at schools and the education system as the source of the problem without being able to specify what it is about the systems that is the source. While the macro sociological explanations of differential achievement have not been completely satisfactory, the relative neglect of a research focus on content and process continues to retard the potential for reform in any substantive way.



early promise of the theoretical work of sociologists such as that of Bourdieu in France which attempted to explain differential achievement in terms of politically controlled cutlural transmission, has not been realised through a sustained programme of research. What seems to be required is an approach which includes analyses at both the wider structural and the institutional levels.

Of immediate concern in New Zealand is the imperative to address the claim made by scholars such as Stanfield (1985), of the ethnocentric basis of most social science research. Arising out of a wider social pressure towards multiculturalism and the recognition that sociologists and social scientists generally are unable to liberate themselves from their own social context, the challenge for research which attempts to find solutions to problems of educational disadvantage, is to reflect a diversity of cultural perspectives.

In New Zealand furthermore, Stokes (1985) has noted the solidification of opposition amongst Maori to research which serves primarily academic aims and which ignores the issues which are most salient for the communities (often minority) which are the focus of the research.

One project which it is hoped will begin to tease out some answers to the complex issue of differential achievement and which reflects a concern for cultural sensitivity, involves research sponsored by the Department and currently underway at the University of Auckland.

This project is focusing on the pre-school socialization experiences of matched groups of Maori, Pacific Island and Pakeha pre-schoolers. The samples have been selected on the basis of 'successful' older siblings



(particularly in terms of reading) and will it is hoped, map the experiences in home and school which lead to early success in school.

One significant feature of this research, is that it attempts to take into account differences in perspective that may be attributable to cultural diversity. The need for more sensitive cultural awareness is evidenced in the way in which the Maori, Pacific Island (and Pakeha) communities have been involved in the design, execution and interpretation of the results of this project.

The issues surrounding the shaping of and participation in research described above are for many Maori central concerns, not only related to the issue of validity, but related to fundamental issues of power - the power to be architects of their own destiny and power to reshape the nature of the Maori/Pakeha partnership that has evolved over the last 147 years. While these imperatives have, as indicated, implications for the way in which research protocols are developed and raise some fundamental questions about such things as ownership of the research, it is not merely a matter of abrogating the responsibility for the identification of critical research issues. If research is to have an impact on policy and the potential for social reform, issue selection and the shaping of research questions must be a shared endeavour between policy makers and the community.

In summary, it is evident that many challenges remain if the goals of social justice, equality of opportunity and a harmonious multi-cultural society are to be achieved. The development of educational policies which reflect the ideas of equality and social justice must seek to reduce the problem of socially differentiated educational attainment. Furthermore, if the aim is to avoid schools becoming arenas of covert and/or overt cultural conflict we



need educational policies which are informed by research which seeks to understand the processes of social and cultural reproduction. This requires studies which are both processual and structural. The development of educational programmes aimed at the remediation of educational disadvantage and research which seeks to discover clues to avoid entrenching educational disadvantage continue to be some of the greatest challenges. It is likely, however, that efforts will be needed in other public sectors such as health and justice and the wider community if major changes are to eventuate.



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POOTNOTES:

- Dr Hugh Lauder and his colleagues at the University of Canterbury are engaged in research which attempts to identify those class and gender based attitudes and aspirations with respect to education and work which could be considered to have a determinate effect on the life chances of individuals.
- The term used by the Maori for New Zealanders of European descent.
- Because most statistical data is aggregated for Maori and Non-Maori categories rather than Pakeha the differences between Maori and Pakeha performance is likely to be underestimated.
- National Advisory Committee on Maori Education Statistics 1985 Table 8 & 9 Department of Education, Wellington.
- Based on the 1980 82 Mortality Experience: New Zealand Official Year Book 1986:153.
- Department of Statistics Information Release Cat No 02,500 Set No 85/250 December 1986 Wellington.
- New Zealand Offici Yearbook 1985:276
- 8 Submission To The Committee of Inquiry Into Violence 1986.
- 9 Evening Post 30 1 87 Wellington.



TABLE 1

SCHOOL CERTIFICATE PASS RATES - SELECT SUBJECTS

1985

NZY3E3

(Percentages)

Subject	Maori ₂	Non-Maori	Difference			
English	37.5	60.9	- 23. 4			
Mathematics	40.6	65.8	- 25. 2			
Science	39.5	64.8	- 25.3			
Maori (Language/Cult)	60.4	56.0	+ 4.4			
Geography	35.2	62.0	- 26.8			

- NZY3E3 is the group of students sitting English and at least three other subjects in their first year in form 5 and represents 91.0% of all first year form 5 students
- Ethnicity until 1985 was determined by teacher identification in 1986 a method of self-identification allowing multiple identification was used.



Apparent retention of third form secondary school entry cohort through to form seven 1960 to 1979

Entry Cohort	Total	Maori	<u>Non-Maori</u>				
1960	8.1	$ar{f 1}.ar{f 0}$	8.7				
1961	7.8	1.2	8.4				
1962	8.1	1.0	8.7				
1963	8.8	0.9	9.6				
1964	9.9	1.1	10.9				
1965	10.4	1.5	11.4				
1966	11.2	1.4	12.4				
1967	12.4	1.7	13.7				
1968	12.6	2.3	13.9				
1969	1 2. 4	1.9	13.3				
1970	12.5	1.9	13.9				
1971	12.9	1.9	14.5				
1972	13.6	2.2	15.3				
1973	13.5	3.0	15.2				
1974	14.1	3.0	15.9				
1975	14.3	3.9	16.0				
1976	1 <u>4.5</u>	3 .6	16.5				
1977	15.5	3:2	17.9				
1978	1 <u>5</u> .6	3.8	17.8				
1979	17.5	4.1	20.1				

Source: Pole: (forthcoming) derived from Education Statistics of New Zealand 1961-1984



1986 SCHOOL CERTIFICATE RESULTS NZY3E3

GRADE		ENGLISH		MATHEMATICS		GEOGRAPHY		SCIENCE			MAORI			ALL SUBJECTS					
	P	M	λM	p	M	ĀM	P	M	ĀM	P	M	ĀM	P	М	ÄM	P	М	ĀM (All Candidates
Äİ	5.7	0.9	1.7	6,2	1.0	1.5	5.9	0.4	0.8	6.3	0.7	i;i	6.0	5.6	5.7	5.8	1.1	1.6	5.4
Ā2	15.6	4.5	5.7	15.8	4.1	5.7	16,2	2.9	4.5	1 5.5	3.9	5.0	19.5	11.4	12.2	15.7	4.6	5.8	14.4
Bi	25.0	13.4	14.9	26.0	15.3	16.6	25.9	11.4	13:5	28.3	14.9	17.6	25.6	23.2	23.0	26.7	14.6	16,1	25.2
B2	24.4	23.6	24.5	24.7	24.1	24.5	25,3	20.7	21.9	23.9	24.3	24,9	19.5	23.1	22.8	25.0	23.6	24.3	24.6
Ci	21,3	34.8	33.2	19.1	32.1	29.5	19.5	34.6	33.4	18.2	30.8	29.1	18.8	24.0	23.3	19.1	31.9	30.4	20.4
C2	7.3	20.2	18.0	7.5	21.6	19:7	6,5	25.6	22.3	7.0	21.8	19,1	8.3	10.4	10.5	6.9	20.9	18.8	8.7
Ď	0.7	2.5	2.1	0.3	2.0	1.8	0,6	4.2	3.5	0.5	3.1	2,6	2.3	1.4	1.5	0.5	2.7	2.3	0.9
<b2< td=""><td>29.3</td><td>57.5</td><td>53,3</td><td>26.9</td><td>55.7</td><td>51.0</td><td>26.6</td><td>64.4</td><td>59.2</td><td>25.7</td><td>55.7</td><td>50.8</td><td>29.4</td><td>35.8</td><td>35.3</td><td>26.5</td><td>55.5</td><td>51.5</td><td>30.0</td></b2<>	29.3	57.5	53,3	26.9	55.7	51.0	26.6	64.4	59.2	25.7	55.7	50.8	29.4	35.8	35.3	26.5	55.5	51.5	30.0
Exam Enrolments	37651	3016	4179	34631	2481	3486	15609	1200	1702	28498	1800	2557	133	357	1011	194411	14501	20247	228473

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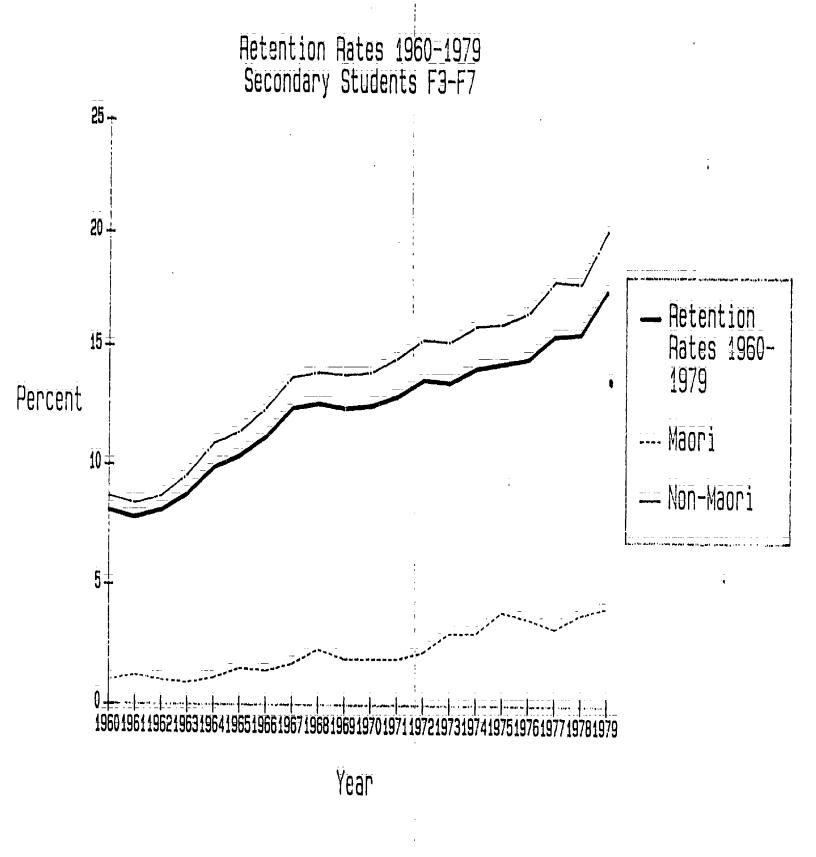
P-PAKEHA (N = 37651)

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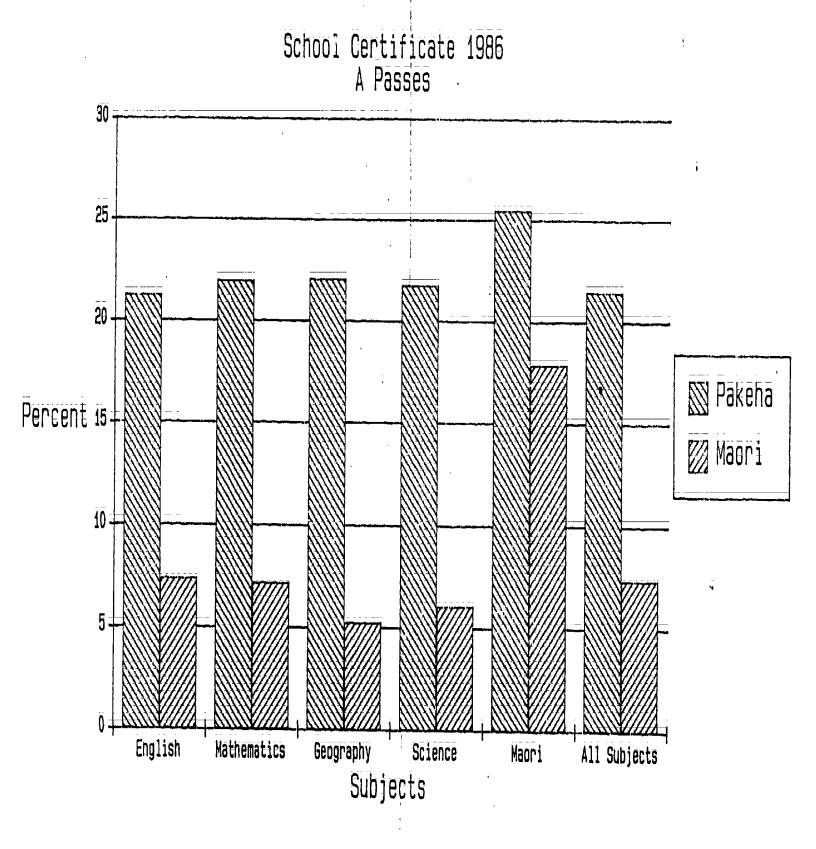
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NZY3E3 = 94.1% OF ALL FIRST YEAR FIFTH FORM STUDENTS

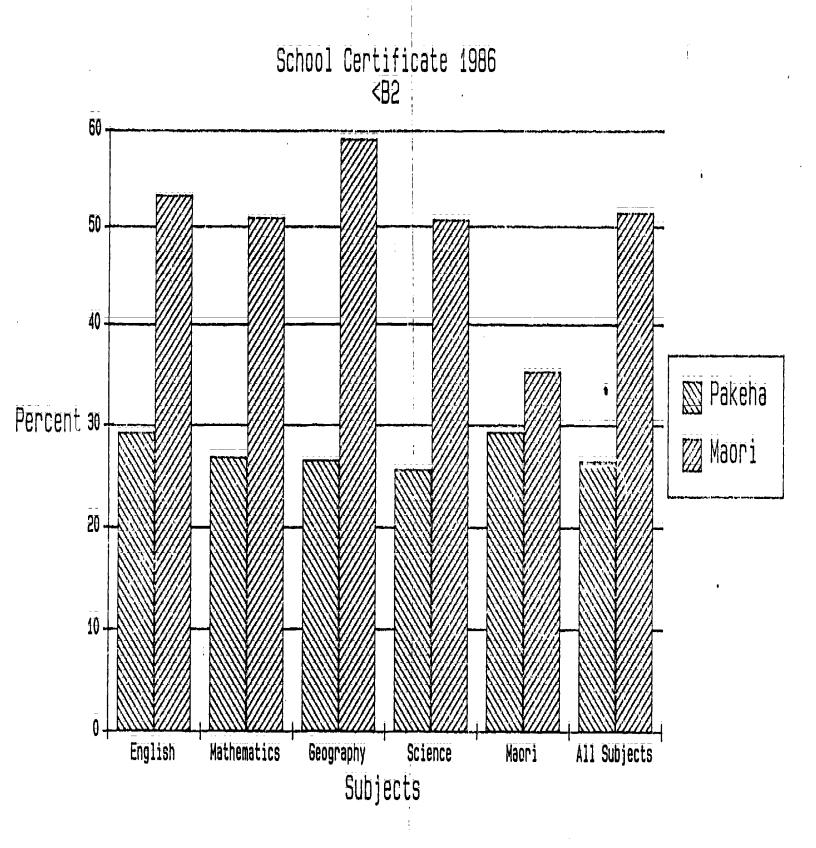






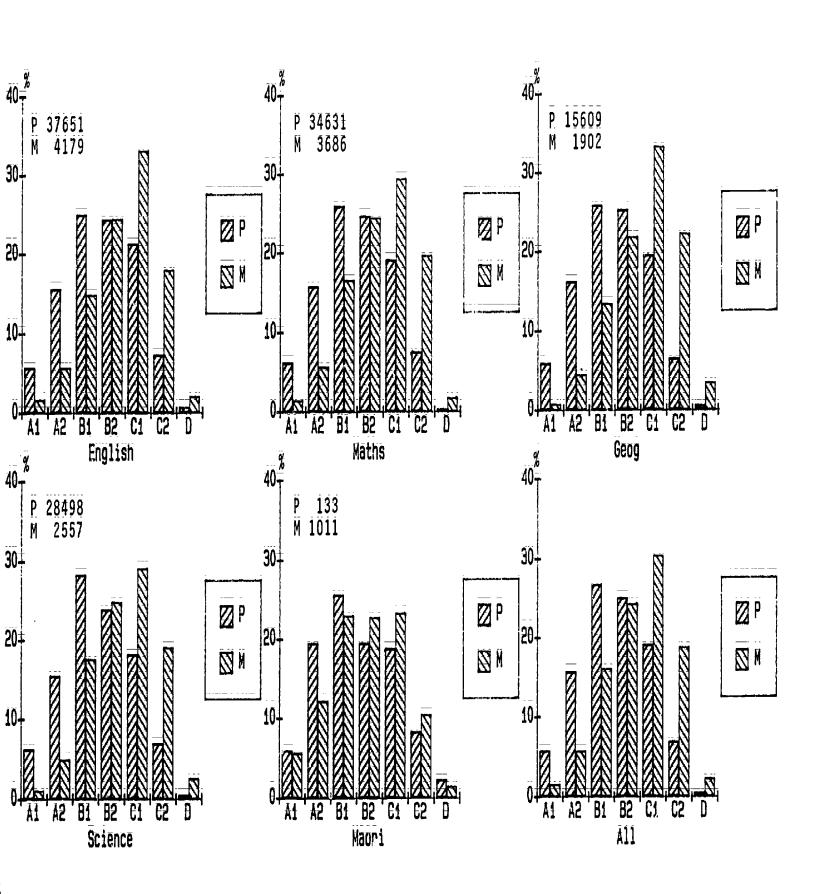




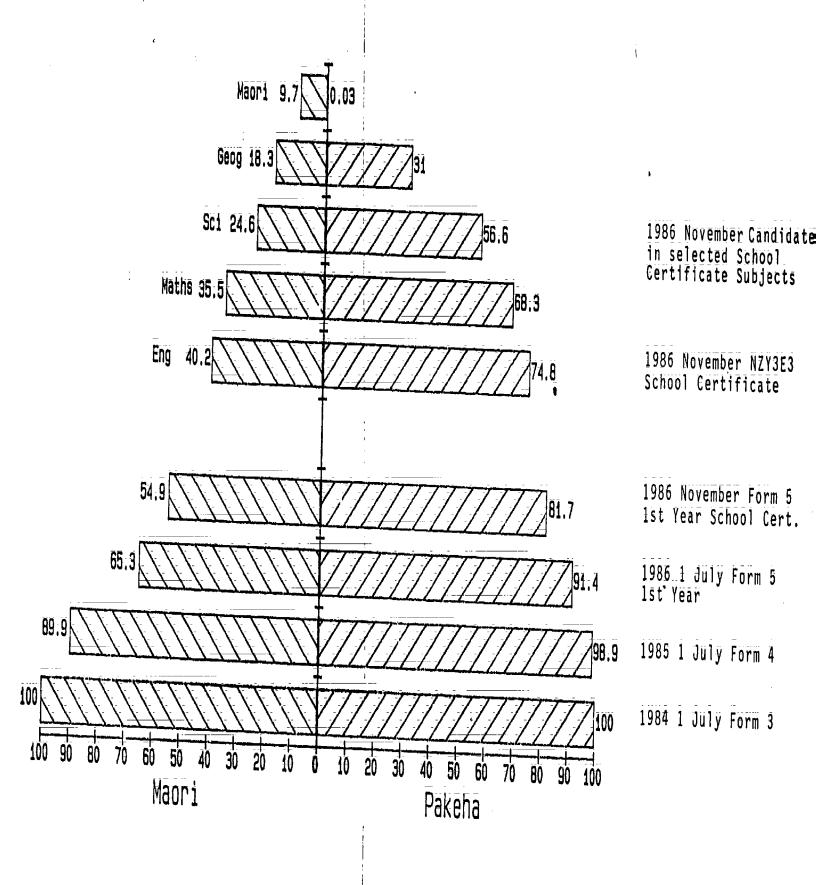




1986 SCHOOL CERTIFICATE RESULTS NZY3E3-MAORI & PAKEHA



RETENTION IN SCHOOL AND SCHOOL CERTIFICATE CANDIDACY OF THE 1984 FORM 3 MAORI AND PAKEHA COHORTS



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