

Integrating culturally responsive teaching and learning pedagogy in line with *Ka Hikitia*

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What advice would you give to someone who is new to teaching in Aotearoa New Zealand about how to go about integrating culturally responsive teaching and learning pedagogy in line with *Ka Hikitia*?

—Mark Bradley, Wellington College

I'd like to provide some insights into culturally responsive teaching and learning pedagogy in line with *Ka Hikitia*—*Managing for Success: The Māori Education Strategy 2008–2012* (Ministry of Education, 2009), along with some practical examples. Three projects will be looked at: Jill Bevan-Brown's *The Cultural Self-Review* (2003); Russell Bishop et al, *Te Kotahitanga: Culturally responsive pedagogy of relations* (2007); and a more recent work entitled *Tātaiako: Cultural competencies for teachers and Māori learners* (Ministry of Education, 2011).

I am the principal of Clyde Quay School in Wellington. We aimed to provide a more culturally effective education for Māori learners. *The Cultural Self-Review* provided our school with a starting point for auditing policies and practices school-wide. *Te Kotahitanga* proved it increased Māori student success in secondary schools. It made sense that if *Te Kotahitanga* was applied in

primary schools, similar results would be achieved. In the main, *Te Kotahitanga* is discussed here as a secondary example. *Tātaiako* resonates with the *The Cultural Self-Review* and *Te Kotahitanga*; in addition, it is aligned to the registered-teacher criteria—hence its inclusion here.

We know teachers take pieces of research on board, and then they start integrating components into their classroom. We realised the power of praxis when teachers had someone working alongside them, whether inside or outside the school.

Historical context

In responding to the question, I offer some historical context. In knowing what has gone before we can chart a path forward.

Crucial to teaching in Aotearoa New Zealand is an understanding of Māori history and

contemporary aspirations. It is imperative to know about the struggle of Māori to legitimise their language, culture, and most of all exert their sovereignty over a Māori world, defined by Māori, controlled by Māori, for Māori. This is not to discourage the new recruit to the teaching service in Aotearoa. Rather, it provides a basis for understanding the push for culturally responsive teaching and learning aligned to *Ka Hikitia* in general education (also known as *ngā kura auraki*).

The history of educational failure for Māori is well documented. Since the 1990s the hallmark of successive governments has been to address disparity. Conversely, in education the standard is “Māori enjoying education success as Māori” (Ministry of Education, 2008). This continues to be evident across policy.

In the past three decades, increasing Māori discontent with the system paralleled government moves to address educational failure. For many Māori, the solution to addressing the dual crisis of failure and the near-extinction of their language and culture manifested itself in what is commonly known as the Māori Renaissance.

Māori sought to remove themselves from a system that they saw as the source of the problem. Aotearoa saw the emergence of *te kōhanga reo*, *kura kaupapa Māori*, *whare kura* and *whare wānanga*. Māori language and culture—its belief system—underpinned everything and was non-negotiable. No longer were Māori people the problem; the system was the problem. This was a cataclysmic paradigm shift. In turn, this changed paradigm impacted directly on education for Māori across sectors, particularly in English-medium environments.

With the advent of Tomorrow’s Schools in 1989 came decentralisation and the establishment of boards of trustees governing some 2400 state and integrated schools. School trustees’ charters had to include equity objectives and the Treaty of Waitangi. The Treaty prevails to this day in the current New Zealand curriculum principles and the National Education Goals (NEGs), specifically NEG 9. The Treaty is also reinforced through the National Administration Guidelines (NAGs), specifically NAG 1 and NAG 2. In addition, the Treaty underpins *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa*, the curriculum statement for the Māori-medium sector which general education schools can also access.

In summary, Māori succeeding as Māori is the necessary ingredient for Māori achievement, *not* a fixation with addressing the perceived deficiencies of Māori students. I have to admit, it takes a lot to dislodge deficit thinking, hence the importance of the praxis associated with the models discussed here.

What are the goals of *Ka Hikitia*?

The broad student outcomes stated in *Ka Hikitia* underscore Māori learners as:

- determining successful learning and education pathways
- recognising their cultural distinctiveness and potential
- contributing to *te Ao Māori*
- gaining universal skills to participate nationally and internationally.

In order to achieve these outcomes, *Ka Hikitia* foregrounds Māori potential, *not preoccupation with fixing up deficits*; finding opportunities, *rather than focussing on dysfunction*; investing in local people and solutions, *not just intervention*; personalising learning, *rather than always targeting so-called deficits*; looking at Māori indigeneity, *as opposed to seeing Māori as a minority*. Vital to the process is collaboration and co-constructing with all Māori participants.

The work of Bevan-Brown, Russell Bishop et al, and *Tātaiako*, are examples of research facilitating Māori student success through culturally responsive teaching and learning pedagogy in line with *Ka Hikitia*.

What is culturally responsive teaching and learning in Aotearoa?

In Aotearoa the aim of culturally responsive teaching and learning is to improve Māori education outcomes where the *tamaiti* (child), the *whānau* (parents and family), and *hapū* and *iwi* (tribal group) are integral to determining the education journey. The core of cultural responsiveness is exactly that: responding to “the child’s cultural experiences”—in this case as Māori and all that it encompasses.

The cultural self-review

As a lead-in to the cultural self-review, Bevan-Brown (2003) offers sound advice. The first step is to increase your understanding of your own culture and the influence it has on your teaching. Secondly, gain some understanding of how *Pākehā* culture influences education and develop an appreciation of the effect this has on children from ethnic minority groups. Thirdly, increase your knowledge of the cultural background of the learners you teach and use this information to provide effective learning for these groups of children. If you are new to this country, you too may be experiencing the impact of *Pākehā* culture as a minority; as a person who no longer has cultural capital.

In 2005, teaching staff at Matairangi Clyde Quay determined to conduct Bevan-Brown’s 2003 cultural audit

for Māori learners and whānau (Bevan-Brown, 2003). Staff wanted to gauge, in the first instance, the extent to which the school accounts for the diversity of Māori learners and those Māori learners classified as having special needs. At the centre of our thinking was the adage, “If you get it right for Māori then you get it right for all learners”.

Teaching staff held a series of meetings during the year to complete the exercise. Staff followed the process identified in Bevan-Brown (2003). The cultural input framework or audit is illustrated below. The programme components and the principles had sets of questions and examples to assist staff in completing the audit (Bevan-Brown, 2003, pp. 63–64).

Staff worked through each programme component and tested it against the principles of partnership, participation, active protection, empowerment/tino rangatiratanga, equality and accessibility, and integration.

As an example, some of the findings under “environment” showed the school valued and promoted te reo Māori and tikanga. Furthermore, the school aspired to give both te reo Māori and tikanga equal status in the school curriculum. On the other hand the school was wanting in terms of “personnel” where it needed to address whānau representation on the board of trustees and appointment panels. Likewise, under “content”

tangata whenua needed to be consulted, not just the Māori whānau within the school community. These are just three examples of findings that the school continues to work on.

Recently the teachers conducted a quick review of the school’s culturally responsive teaching and learning pedagogy in line with *Ka Hikitia*.

Staff noted te reo Māori me ōna tikanga are taught across the school and all staff are expected to participate. In promoting educational success among Māori, success criteria are co-constructed with students so that everyone knows how to succeed. Research leading to how Māori students learn is incorporated into the class programme. The diverse backgrounds of students are recognised and students are encouraged to share and act on this knowledge. Teachers are keenly aware of the importance of te mita o te reo—pronouncing Māori correctly, as is the case with the mother tongues of all children in the school.

Staff noted their participation in initiatives such as *Tātaiako*, he reo tupu he reo ora (consolidating te reo Māori), individual teachers enrolling in te reo Māori courses and whole staff development in basic te reo Māori. As reported earlier, there are also many areas the school needs to work on.

The point here is that the cultural self-review is manageable. Starting with cross-cultural competence will

TABLE 1 THE CULTURAL SELF-REVIEW

PROGRAMME COMPONENTS	PRINCIPLES						
	<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Partnership</i>	<i>Participation</i>	<i>Active protection/ cultural development</i>	<i>Empowerment/ Tino rangatiratanga</i>	<i>Equality and accessibility</i>	<i>Integration</i>
<i>Environment</i>	Reporting to Māori parents on achievement						
<i>Personnel</i>							
<i>Policy</i>							
<i>Processes</i>							
<i>Content</i>							
<i>Resources</i>							
<i>Assessment</i>							
<i>Administration</i>							

(Bevan-Brown, 2003, pp. 63–64)

provide a sound basis until you or your school are ready to progress further.

Te Kotahitanga

Whether you are in secondary or primary, having a working knowledge of Te Kotahitanga (Bishop et al, 2007) research is instructive. In these research projects, Russell Bishop and the research team make it clear that the key to Māori student success is quality relationships and interactions between teachers and students. In doing this, effective teachers know they can make a difference and have a positive, *non-deficit* view of Māori students.

In effective classrooms the pedagogy that prevails is one where power is shared on equal terms; culture counts; learning is interactive and dialogue far ranging; a common vision of excellence is defined and held by all (tamaiti, whānau, hapū/iwi, kura [school]). The researchers labelled this a Culturally Responsive Pedagogy of Relations.

To see how this Culturally Responsive Pedagogy of Relations might work in practice, researchers developed an Effective Teacher Profile (ETP). The ETP illustrates that effective interactions rely on:

- manaakitanga (caring for students as Māori and acknowledging their mana)
- mana motuhake (having high expectations)
- ngā whakapiringatanga (managing the classroom to promote learning)
- wānanga and ako (using a range of dynamic, interactive teaching styles)
- kotahitanga (teachers and students reflecting together on student achievement in order to move forward collaboratively).

As teachers improved and became more expert in affecting the ETP, Māori student results in literacy and numeracy increased. The researchers acknowledged that other factors may account for student gains. However, the evidence was compelling. The rise in teacher expertise in implementing the ETP coincided with continuous student achievement in literacy and numeracy (Bishop et al, 2007, p. 187).

Though it is important to remember that secondary schools and teachers involved in Te Kotahitanga were part of a comprehensive research and professional development project. The ETP can still be used in primary classrooms. The ETP does resonate with *Tātaiako*, a document all teachers should be familiar with. *Tātaiako* is aligned to the registered teacher criteria which is online (<http://www.teacherscouncil.govt.nz/required/tataiako.stm>).

At the centre of *Tātaiako* is Māori learners achieving success as Māori. The competencies are:

- ako (takes responsibility for their own learning and that of Māori learners)
- wānanga (robust dialogue for the benefit of Māori learners' achievement)
- manaakitanga (values Māori beliefs, language and culture)
- whanaungatanga (actively engages in respectful working relationships—tamaiti/whānau/hapū/iwi)
- tangata whenuatanga (affirms Māori learners as Māori)

These competencies are closely aligned to the ETP.

Conclusion

Some of the key messages in *The Cultural Self-Review*, *Te Kotahitanga*, and *Tātaiako* are that culturally responsive teaching and learning pedagogy aligned to *Ka Hikitia* is realised when teachers' cultural competence increases; teachers' deficit theorising is reduced; teachers build positive relationships with students; teachers have high expectations of Māori learners; Māori learners bring their cultural experiences to the table to inform learning and teaching (mana motuhake); and Māori learners and extended whānau are integral to determining Māori education success.

References

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