

Accurate histories, critical curriculum: A conversation with Tamsin Hanly

Georgina Tuari Stewart

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Abstract

The school curriculum and teacher professional standards in Aotearoa New Zealand emphasise culturally responsive pedagogies for Māori learners. However, there is a gap between rhetoric and practice. Drawing on expert-interview methodology, and based on an interview with Tamsin Hanly about complex curriculum issues, this interview article seeks to stimulate deep thinking about how Māori and Pākehā histories and relationships can be addressed across the curriculum. Arguments are made about the need for teachers to learn about, be discomforted by, and confront inaccurate and simplistic histories. The interview article contends that educators have an ethical responsibility to “reboot biculturalism” in schools.

Introduction

Tamsin Hanly has 25 years of classroom experience as a primary teacher in mainstream and Māori pathways in central Auckland. About 7 years ago, Tamsin moved from classroom teaching to part-time lecturing in initial teacher education at The University of Auckland. This allowed her time over 4 years to write her curriculum programme resource (CPR) titled *A Critical Guide to Māori and Pākehā Histories of Aotearoa* (Kellett, 2016). We talk about the CPR in our conversation, but this is not a promotional article, nor an interview about her business. Tamsin’s innovative teaching has long been profiled: her former classroom practice in bilingual science (Pūtaiao) was the topic of an *Education Gazette* front-page article in 2009 (Education Gazette, 2009), and in 2016 she was interviewed on National Radio about her current work with the CPR (Radio New Zealand, 2016). Like Tamsin, I too consider critical curriculum and pedagogy to be essential to the larger bicultural aims and claims of the education system in Aotearoa New Zealand. Like Tamsin, I am keenly aware of how ill-equipped most classroom teachers

are in this area. So, in this interview both parties have a personal stake and profound interest in the topic under discussion. I wanted to interview Tamsin to find out more about what drives her as a Pākehā teacher to tackle complex curriculum issues about Māori–Pākehā relationships in Aotearoa New Zealand schools.

Although an unusual format for this journal, this interview article aims to stimulate deeper thought about bicultural pedagogy and curriculum for Aotearoa New Zealand. Even the choice of country name is political: Aotearoa is a Māori name for the country called New Zealand by its British colonisers, and the use of both, as in the previous sentences, is a deliberate attempt to reflect a bicultural sensibility in relation to national identity.

There is emphasis in the school curriculum and teacher professional standards on culturally responsive pedagogies for Māori learners (Ministry of Education, 2011) and the Treaty of Waitangi (Treaty), which was signed in 1840 between Māori tribal leaders and representatives of the British Crown, and is widely considered the national founding document (Te Ara—The Encyclopedia of New Zealand, 2018). But there is undoubtedly a gap between rhetoric and practice, the reasons for which are poorly defined. In the longstanding debates about these issues, Tamsin’s work is an example of a way to respond but is not presented here as the “right answer”—there are, after all, many possible ways for teachers to think about how Māori and Pākehā histories can be addressed in the classroom.

Notes on method and format

Kaupapa Māori research paradigm

The Māori word *kaupapa* carries many meanings, including “philosophy” and “political cause”. I understand kaupapa Māori theory as a philosophical framework that can inform diverse forms of research (Stewart, 2017) including critical discourse analysis (Stewart, 2018a) and narrative methods (Stewart, Tamatea, & Mika, 2015). Kaupapa Māori theory guides ethical conduct and motivations in research work, without necessarily restricting or directing the ways data can be collected and analysed. This article brings a kaupapa Māori lens to the “expert interview” method (discussed below), and in so doing, shifts the idea of “expert interview” towards what might be

called a “critical conversation” (Hoskins & Jones, 2012), where both terms refer to a dialogue within qualitative research, but the latter term suggests a political edge.

Expert interview methodology

The expert interview is a recognised approach for qualitative data collection that first developed in the German-language academy and is found across the social sciences including educational research, briefly mentioned in recent methods texts (e.g., Flick, 2014). The most substantial work on expert interviews is an edited collection titled *Interviewing Experts* (Bogner, Littig, & Menz, 2009). While expert interviews are widely used in research, their value and status as a methodology remains uncertain. In this article, I make a strategic and politically significant decision (guided by kaupapa Māori research principles) to expand the idea of the “expert interview” using a more democratic understanding of the concept of the “expert” as I talk with Tamsin Hanly, a local expert in bicultural curriculum and classroom pedagogy.

In their chapter in the aforementioned book, Alexander Bogner and Wolfgang Menz distinguish three main types of expert interview according to their purpose, and, relatedly, depending on the relationship between the two people involved and the material under discussion. The three types of expert interview are “exploratory, systematizing and theory-generating” (Bogner & Menz, 2009, p. 46), defined as follows. First, expert interviews are frequently used in exploratory research to gain an overview of a particular social field. Secondly, access to the expert’s “knowledge of action and experience, which has been derived from practice” (pp. 46–47) provides relatively systematic and complete information, and the “systematising” expert interview is the most common form. Thirdly, the theory-generating expert interview has as its goal “the reconstruction and analysis of a specific configuration of knowledge” (p. 55) in which the specialised knowledge of the expert has social relevance—“the power to produce practical effects” (Bogner & Menz, 2009, p. 54). This third form of expert interview stakes a claim to be considered research, in the sense of going beyond merely data collection, to also include analysis.

Depending on the orientation of the dialogue, and the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee, the expert interview can be a rich opportunity

for collaborative co-construction of the educational topic or scenario being discussed. Bogner and Menz (2009, pp. 68–69), provide an additional typology for this relationality, according to how the interviewer is viewed by the interviewee: as a co-expert, a lay person, an authority, an accomplice, or a potential critic. My interview with Tamsin best fits the “interviewer as accomplice” type: we are “personal[ly] acquaint[ed]” and have a “background of shared experience” (p. 68) as outlined above.

Interview articles

This is an interview article because the interview format, below, forms the substance of the article: edited for clarity and ease of reading, but still in the form of a conversational script. Notes in square brackets are added within the interview to explain references to local details or events. The academic literature contains a wealth of published interviews, but the interview article genre is rare in educational research publishing. This interview article is a way to showcase Tamsin’s wisdom, and share it more widely in written form. To ensure integrity of an interview article based on a single interview, I went back to Tamsin to check she was comfortable with the tenor of the interview, how complex issues are addressed through the interview text, and with the final version of the article. I believe this interview article has value for educators, to provoke thought in relation to current debates about bicultural curriculum and pedagogy in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Interview

Georgina (G): *Kia ora, Tamsin. I wanted to ask what started you down this path of radical curriculum?*

Tamsin (T): At the age of 18 on leaving school I started night classes learning Māori language and Māori culture. I started on that journey because I’d been raised without knowing these things. On leaving school at 18 I was confronted with the actions at Bastion Point [the site of an extended occupation in 1977–78, protesting how this land had been alienated from its traditional iwi (tribal) owners (New Zealand History, 2018)] and I was very angry that my schooling hadn’t taught me anything about things Māori, the Treaty, being Pākehā, or anything like that. Then we had children and we chose to raise them speaking Māori and put them into kōhanga reo—that was in the early days of kōhanga.

G: *That early period in kōhanga was so exciting, wasn't it?*

T: Yes, absolutely. Completely amazing. Anyway, I was starting to learn this stuff, so I wanted to become a teacher because I wanted to teach this material to our young people, so that they didn't have the same feeling of inadequacy I did. I was working in mainstream, but when our children started going to school we had to find a school for them, and we weren't happy with some kura at the time because as parents we felt some kura were quite conservative, sexist—things like that.

At that time I was teaching English as a second language to kura kids, so I was seeing quite a lot of kura around Auckland. So we looked around for a school and we found a bilingual class in a mainstream school with [a particular person we knew] as teacher. Because she was a Māori and a feminist—she had political views compatible with ours, and we ended up choosing to put our children into that context as opposed to kura.

We made that decision but within 6 weeks they started to lose their Māori language, so then we set up an immersion classroom and [the teacher] took it over, so our kids went into that. I was really missing my kids and I was a trained teacher and I was wanting to have some kind of input into the classroom, so I started doing science lessons, Pūtaiao sessions with the kids.

G: *You weren't a full-time classroom teacher?*

T: That came later, at first it was just sessions to give [the teacher] time. I went in for sessions with the kids and did Pūtaiao, with my limited Māori language. I'm a second-language speaker. So we started like that, then [the teacher] became the principal the next year, and then we went through various teachers, and in the end, I ended up being in there because we couldn't find anyone else. So I was one of the full-time teachers. We had others too, but we had a very radical curriculum because we had a radical *whānau* [school community] and teachers and principal...

G: *So it was a good space? Experimental?*

T: Yeah, experimental. We were very interested in this area between cultures. We'd all been raised mainstream, speaking English, and I'd been trained mainstream, long before national standards, and I was quite creative in my practice—and because of my upbringing, a political teacher and critical, thinking teacher. We were in this very active and agentic Māori community who in the 1980s and 1990s were learning Māori language and culture, but also very interested in creating their own tikanga.

G: *This was in an urban Māori context, rather than tribally based?*

T: Yes, in an urban context. The kids at that school, their parents had no Māori language, most of them didn't. We were all second-language speakers, but we were also very interested in creating tikanga and thinking about tikanga as in "what was tika [correct, right]?" in that context, and we would go away and research. So, for example, we started having Matariki [Pleiades, marker of the Māori New Year] ceremonies—30 years ago.

We'd spend 10 weeks on the Science of Matariki as a cross-curriculum focus, meaning that we would be basing every curriculum area around Matariki, and the whānau was involved in that, so they educated the kids as well as me. Of course, I didn't know things and I would go to the whānau and say, if we're going to study this topic I need help.

G: *And that topic about the kai?*

T: That's right, we did the Māori café. We spent 10 weeks on cross-curriculum research about everything to set up a Māori café and then we opened it for one week where the kids ran everything and cooked everything, but they'd done all the work—what an incredible outcome—Pūtaiao, Hangarau, tikanga and all their art, so everything to do with running a café and then actually doing it. We did all these amazing kaupapa.

G: *I'm interested in the tension between teaching the whole curriculum together and also maintaining momentum, specifically in science.*

T: Yeah, one of the reasons why science became so important was because our children didn't have descriptive language. Say you want to describe clouds—kapua whakapipī, cumulus clouds, and so on—then you need the scientific language to describe it. If we wanted our children to become very descriptive speakers of Māori language, then we had to go and study science. So then the parents would go away and research all about it and bring back all the Māori language that they found around that cumulus cloud and they would create karakia, they would compose karakia based on traditional knowledge.

The other thing we did was set up an ongoing permaculture organic garden based in Māori thinking about gardening and agriculture and things like that. One of the key things about science for me and the whānau was how completely empowering it was in terms of language to work in this way. What happened was is that we became more descriptive speakers because we could talk scientifically to explain the world and the children could too.

G: *What age group was this?*

T: Primary, so 5 to 10 years old, and then we extended into intermediate, so they stayed to Year 8—about 12 years old.

G: *I suppose it took up your whole life?*

T: Completely and it took all the whānau life too. We were all completely committed to it, as you are when you're doing that stuff as parents, when you've got energy.

One of the challenges was not having resources and so we had to just create all the time, as you would know, you're creating all your own resources all the time. Thank goodness we had parents who were able to do that. Parents who could go away and research language in Māori traditional knowledge, and also bring it back into a contemporary context. We were having *wānanga* [study live-ins] to learn all this new information and then how to transform that into the classroom level.

Pūtaiao could open up the whole world for us. That was a challenge; not having resources and not having Māori language, and having to go and find it and create it. This was even before Te Taura Whiri [the Māori Language Commission, set up in 1987] so we couldn't even email them to ask for help. We would be doing things like reproductive anatomy, so we were finding out all these words from a deep form of language, which was quite controversial for some conservative whānau. Through Hauora Māori (Māori health) we did some sex education with our older kids and for some whānau this was new and challenging. Via colonisation many Māori have taken on British ideologies about women and men and bodies and sex education. So, we were all learning all the time as a community about these things.

G: *Were there debates about iwi dialects?*

T: Yes. Our Māori parents were creating Māori language from traditional concepts and language in new ways. In those early days we were just teaching the Māori dialect that we were taught by our teachers. Some teachers taught their own dialects. We were also attentive to the dialect of the local iwi where our school was located. We were learning about these things all the time. Then we started to get Māori science and maths dictionaries, which really helped us.

G: *It's interesting to position this in the socio-political history of our country at that time. There was almost a very creative moment, wasn't there? We can think of the 1981 Springbok rugby tour protest [(New Zealand History, 2018)] as a kind of touchstone?*

- T: Yes, there was, there was. Absolutely. An incredible period in this country.
- G: *You're now working with your curriculum resource on critical histories of Māori and Pākehā with a PLD (professional learning and development) programme. I wanted to ask you why? I guess you've already answered—it still speaks to that feeling you had at 18 of being deprived.*
- T: Yes, that we were robbed really of our histories.
- G: *Speaking as a Pākehā?*
- T: Yes, absolutely. I do feel that. I feel that Māori ... of course, Māori have been colonised and ripped off, but also Pākehā have been ripped off too by not knowing about Māori things, and also not knowing our accurate histories and other things like the Māori Treaty text information. When I was learning, on that journey learning Māori things and the Treaty stuff, I enrolled at teacher's college and they said, you can't teach the Treaty and, say, scientific Māori knowledge, don't be ridiculous, to young people.
- G: *Because you're Pākehā?*
- T: No, no, because of the argument that Māori knowledge cannot be about real science, and the Treaty history is too hard ... you can't teach young people this difficult and complex material. I didn't believe them, and so during that same time we were doing all that stuff in Pūtaiao, I was also teaching Treaty history, accurate histories, Māori histories, to resource my teaching of social studies in both mainstream and Māori classes.
- I carried on doing that kind of study for my practice as a classroom teacher for 25 years in mainstream and in Māori pathways, but I knew that none of my other colleagues were doing this content, so I did an MA and I asked the question of what histories were we covering in our primary classrooms. I found that most teachers knew no accurate history—only what I call the “standard story”, which is the grand narrative, the colonial version of New Zealand history which includes ideas such as: Cook discovered Aotearoa; Māori handed over their sovereignty to Britain via the (English version of the) Treaty, the land wars were native aggression towards well-intentioned settlers, the assimilation process was benevolent, New Zealand has the most harmonious race relations in the world, and so on.
- G: *The overall idea that Māori are better off for colonisation?*
- T: Yes, absolutely, all those messages. I say to people, it's not our fault we don't know because as part of colonisation it was important to ensure the generations do not know what happened. The standard story of our

country's history served that purpose through state schooling, for all ethnicities in the country, Māori as well as Pākehā. The result is ignorance about accurate histories.

G: *That's what Avril (Bell, 2004, p. 92) calls "discontinuous views of history" that Pākehā have about themselves.*

T: Yes, absolutely. So, I wanted to design a curriculum that teaches this history to educators and beyond, in a cross-curriculum kind of resource, but based in scholarly histories. With my faith in educators, I know how creative we are, and we can teach it if we have that accurate information. If you give teachers some pedagogies about how to teach it, some activity ideas about how to teach it cross-curriculum at all levels, junior through to secondary, you can make a difference. Teachers will teach this material, but they have to have the material first. Teachers have to design their own plans to get buy-in and ownership of the transformation to change the narrative. We have to re-educate our institutions from the ignorance of the standard story.

I spent 4 years part-time lecturing after I left teaching, and that time allowed me to read this literature written by authoritative, academic historians. I then translated this body of knowledge right down to a nice, accessible kind of level.

The key content, firstly, was about indigenous and settler relationships and politics, because we don't talk about Pākehā and Māori relationships enough. We need to have that conversation. There had to be a critique of the standard story to address gaps in teacher knowledge of things Māori, and the resource also had to have pedagogies for how to teach little people about really deep, hard, critical things. It had to include all three Treaty texts; the Māori text, its English literal translation, and the English-language version.

It had to include both settler content and indigenous material. It also had to update our new immigrant teachers, as well as experienced teachers of all ethnicities, like myself, who had grown up in this country yet with no knowledge of these accurate histories and Treaty and Māori knowledge and things like that. It had to have all those things. It also had to go from the Māori origin story right through to the 2000s.

G: *Is it a classroom textbook? Is it levelled?*

T: It's written in six books. The resource is teacher guide material, it's a beginner's guide, an alternative to the standard story. It's not deep Māori

knowledge, not iwi knowledge, not deep Pākehā knowledge. It's all in the public domain but "translated" by me and arranged so it is useful to teachers.

My resource ... includes a one-day programme of in-school teacher PLD. In the morning session I do a PowerPoint lecture and I decolonise, I do a Treaty education workshop session based on accurate histories. They get the Māori Treaty texts, and then I cover our histories right through to the 2000s. Then we look through the books and talk about them, and then they go into planning how they're going to use them in their school. That's the basic outline of the [one-day programme].

After that they get the digital copy, they have to go away and their school commits all their teaching staff to read all six books over a timeframe that the school chooses. Some schools choose 6 months, so they'll read one book a month, or 6 terms, so they'll read one book a term.

It's easy reading and it's got core information, main ideas, and activity ideas, junior to senior with images and other possibilities, and a list of websites. No photocopiable worksheets, nothing like that. No master planning, so what teachers do is read it. They're covering Anne Salmond, Ranginui Walker, James Belich, Judith Binney, Ingrid Huygens, everything that I read over my whole life is in there. It's got a critical, radical, and a creative, politicised aspect. They have to read this material.

Then they have to select material that they feel they want to and then they plan their own lessons in their context and at their level, whether early childhood, primary, or secondary. Then they own the work, so it's not me doing it. Because I believe it's a teacher's craft to do that. You work out how to teach it, you know your context, your kids, everything, your school, your parent community, all that. I have a lot of faith in teachers—they love this stuff.

G: *You must have had some amazing discussions about ...?*

T: Yes, you do, but there's also a timeframe in which they re-read the books. You need to re-read the books because there's so much material in one book, there's no way you can cover everything in it. I mean, the land wars and the...

G: *The PLD on teaching Māori students I've seen over the years doesn't seem to make a long-term impact, you know? The dominant discourse always reasserts itself.*

T: Well, the teacher only day combined with the reading of material and the long-term plan means educators can't slip back. Because the school is committed to this alternative version of history. After their initial reading—say that takes 2 years—they then commit one term per year to be the CPR term, and they re-read Book One again, then re-read Book Two again—this is a six-year plan. The whole school is involved, because I also invite Board of Trustees members, teacher aides, office staff, anyone who can come, to attend because I'm trying to decolonise them as well.

G: *That's great, so it's not that, one day, and then we go back to where we were, which is what so much PLD is like.*

T: Yes, PLD is like that. Now, in terms of the responses, I always get maybe two people in a staff who are quiet or sceptical. I had one person recently who asked, has it been peer reviewed? He was a Pākehā man, middle-class man, it was like big new ground for him and he wasn't... he really had to test me on that level. It is good that you get all the responses. I replied that the work is based on authoritative academic historians and that I would love someone to peer review the work and hopefully that will happen one day.

But the rest of the staff were just absolutely blown away. In a really good session, someone always cries. I don't mean weep profusely, I'm saying that they're moved, particularly by Book Five and Six because in the second session we do 10-minute silent readings of each book and then we discuss what we find in there, and a lot of stuff comes up and we have these enormously deep conversations.

In there I deliberately unpack Māori cannibalism and Pākehā cannibalism, and I unpack Māori colonisation and Pākehā colonisation, because I have to touch all those topics that are red flags, you know? Like ideas about Māori being savages and cannibals, and all that. I have a whole slide where I unpack cannibalism using Anne Salmond's material, so this CPR is really to test our stereotypes about what we've been raised with, the grand narrative and the standard story, and all that.

They're desperately keen to read it and there's always someone who has a cry because they feel the mamae of it—and that's been Māori, Pākehā, women and men. I've had men cry, Pākehā men.

G: *You'd almost think it's necessary to touch them at that level.*

T: It totally does and for me that's a really good tohu for me that the wairua is in here and they're feeling it and they're getting it. Then you get other staff who are just completely blown away and they just love it and it's changed

their life and all that, so there's that level too. I think one useful thing in the PLD that helps is the fact that it is being presented by a Pākehā, having a Pākehā, because if you get a Māori person doing it you'll often just get a whole lot of racism.

G: *From the teachers towards the Māori facilitator?*

T: Yeah that's what we see, but when a Pākehā person is saying this stuff, it makes a difference for some. Then there's the other side of the story—there are Māori people who challenge me about not having a Māori person doing it as well, which I agree is warranted, since Māori have had more than enough of Pākehā speaking for them. It helps when I explain that I didn't know any of this stuff either and I've gone and learned it. It helps when they really get that they've all been raised on the standard story and that governments have done that.

G: *And the media.*

T: The media's been raised on it. Even in Te Papa, in our national Treaty Exhibition, we still only have two texts. We've got the Māori text and if you can't read Māori they've got the English version. They don't have the literal translation of the Māori text. What happens is that everyone basically reads the English text which says that Māori ceded their sovereignty—and in fact they didn't. I unpack that on the first day before 10:30 am so they understand that we've had this incredible hitch.

G: *Lie?*

T: This lie in our history. They do not know that the Māori Treaty text is the legal and lawful version.

G: *Based on the contra proferentem principle* [A legal principle that the indigenous or “weaker” language version of the text must be considered to take legal precedence: in practice this usually means the non-English version, so in the case of Aotearoa New Zealand, it means the Māori version of the text of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Ministry of Justice, 2018)].

T: That's right, they get it and they're just—they can't believe it. They're very transformed. It's a very supportive, transformative process, but it's based on rigorous historical accounts.

G: *Just thinking about curriculum in a more general way, what are your thoughts about Māori education policy at this time? Teachers are feeling like they're being made responsible for Māori student underachievement and with some PLD, the teachers feel they're being blamed individually. Also, it's problematic to just add*

bits of Māori knowledge into the curriculum as we're very liable to distort it. I'm interested in your thoughts about that?

- T: Past national education policies were deliberately assimilationist and integrationist towards Māori. That is part of colonisation. The New Zealand Government and education system was to blame for Māori failing in mainstream schools. Current research shows teachers are still not managing to make much if any difference with Māori student achievement in mainstream. Research says schools are also not meeting the Treaty principle of the New Zealand curriculum. My position is that none of these potentially brilliant equity policies can work, without taking the steps in between. Teachers can't enact those policies because they don't know accurate New Zealand histories.

When teachers learn accurate histories, when they understand how colonisation works and how Māori have been impacted by colonisation, when they understand that Māori poverty and Māori working class are all part of colonisation in New Zealand, then they have a far better chance of making changes in their work, enacting Treaty principles and addressing Māori underachievement.

So that's why Book One is on Māori worldviews, saying this is a beginner's guide and if you live in this country, you have to know basic information about Māori worldviews. When you read this material that tells you what's happened in this country then you understand the reasons behind negative Māori statistics today, that these are a direct result of that colonisation period from 1840 right through to the 2000s and the laws that damaged Māori society and Māori language.

Those colonial laws are all in there, they're in Book Five from 1840 to 2000, every law that was written that transgressed the Treaty and oppressed Māori. I say to them, you're not going to make any difference for your Māori kids until you know this stuff in your heart and in your head, academically, and then you work out as your teacher craft how do I bring this local content and Māori/Pākehā views into our context of our classroom? That's when you'll make a difference.

For me, that's why I do this work, why I work part-time taking this PLD around the country myself. I sent it to the Ministry, and they highly commended it, but the National-led government's position on curriculum policy has been not to tell teachers what to teach. I'm saying this has to be done, decolonisation, particularly for educators of all ethnicities, and that

includes Māori as well who've been raised on the standard story because there's lots of Māori people who don't know stuff.

G: *We went to mainstream schools too.*

T: Yes. Now, in terms of why I do this work, it's also because of all that energy that I've had in my life, of Māori people inputting into me and Pākehā and Pacific people inputting into me, and this is my gift back. This is my offering to go back into that, to try and educate our people in this country and educators particularly because that's how I work. Sometimes someone asks, can we just buy your books? I say, no, you can't just buy my books, you have to do the PLD with me, so you understand, and you feel it and connect with it. They have to do the PLD and make that long-term commitment, 2 years at least, to get their heads around it.

I've had that privilege of going and learning about the Māori worldview. I went and learned Māori language and Māori culture. Some people do that as part of their journey in life. Some people don't do that, but they can still learn more about accurate national histories. I think having the tools is really important and empowering teachers, but you've got to give them the knowledge, historical knowledge and Māori worldview knowledge.

Conclusion

Tamsin is an example of an educator who takes seriously the personal responsibility of knowledge and the power of knowledge, which are tied up in the concept of discourse as delineated by Foucault (McHoul & Grace, 1998). Foucault drew new attention to the links between language, knowledge and power—this linking is what he called “discourse”. The CPR offers teachers access to an alternative discourse from that of the standard story of national history. Tamsin speaks with a passion that translates into her commitment to be politically activist in her work. Reference to tears and emotion shown by teachers in her PLD sessions reinforces the importance of discomfort—of being taken out of one's comfort zone, to challenge one's thinking in order to result in meaningful change.

The education policy framework set out in *Ka Hikitia* (Ministry of Education, 2013) is an ambitious attempt to use culture to drive change in teacher practice. But the ideological nature of common-sense understandings of the history of our country maintains the gap (at least in part) between policy and practice in relation to biculturalism in education. These important policies cannot be

enacted without first understanding the ideologies of colonisation in Aotearoa New Zealand. Ideas about Māori having benefited from being colonised by Pākehā and having “unfair privileges” are extrapolated from the simplistic and truncated versions of the complex truth of history, promulgated by these everyday beliefs that make up the standard account Tamsin challenges.

The discussions in this interview can be applied to current events in national affairs. For example, the controversial “Māori Gratitude Day” column by Sir Bob Jones (The Spinoff, 2018) illustrates a way of thinking based on these inaccurate understandings of our national history. Commentators like Jones will continue to generate serious Māori offence, while remaining completely oblivious, owing to the widespread acceptance of the standard story of our national history as undisputed truth. On these grounds Jones is exonerated of being any more racist than the dominant national view. Similarly, the claim by Taika Waititi that New Zealand is “racist as” can be accepted as valid, in terms of the effects of the standard story about Māori and national history (Stuff, 2018). Public media acts as a voice for the national view, and racism towards Māori in the media has been well-documented (Moewaka-Barnes, Borell, Taiapa, Rankine, & McCreanor, 2012).

Tamsin’s approach fits what I call “rebooting biculturalism” in education in Aotearoa New Zealand, as I described in a recent published forum article (Stewart, 2018b). For too long “biculturalism” in education policy has been understood as Pākehā learning and respecting “Māori stuff”—variously interpreted as learning te reo Māori, to starting classes with karakia and conferences with pōwhiri, that is, formalities of welcome (Stewart, Tamatea, & Mika, 2015). Māori have been obliged to be bicultural since early decades of colonisation, so the challenge of biculturalism is a challenge for Pākehā to examine themselves and their own understandings that have propped up the complacent security of monoculturalism (Bell, 2014). The point of rebooting biculturalism is that Pākehā and the nation-state must overcome monoculturalism. It is not about “including” te ao Māori in education; and attempts to do that are highly vulnerable to distortion. I agree with Tamsin that teachers cannot make meaningful changes for their Māori students without a wider realisation that the standard story of our nation is not based on accurate scholarly knowledge. Meantime, no amount of bilingual signage, blessing of food, or taking shoes off at the door will make a positive change.

Curriculum decisions, like all decisions in education, are politically significant. Teachers cannot take personal responsibility for the distortion of national history that has been taught to generations of school children in Aotearoa New Zealand, including many current teachers in schools and early childhood centres. On the other hand, once teachers know that the standard story of the formation of our country is one-sided and based on inaccurate portrayals of scholarly knowledge about historical events, they are ethically obliged to accept the personal, professional implications of that knowledge. With knowledge comes power, and through the dialogue of pedagogy, teachers have the power to use their knowledge to change the course of the world.

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Glossary of terms used in the article

Words and phrases in te reo Māori are translated as used in this article.

Hangarau	Technology
kai	food
karakia	prayers or incantations
kaupapa	topics
kōhanga reo	immersion Māori-language early childhood education
kura	Māori school/s
mamae	pain
Matariki	Pleiades, marker of the Māori New Year
Pākehā	non-Māori New Zealander, mostly of British origins
Pūtaiao	Science
te ao Māori	the Māori world
te reo Māori	the Māori language
tika	correct, right

tikanga	Māori customs and protocols
tohu	sign
wānanga	study live-in
wairua	spirit
whānau	school community

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The author

Georgina Tuari Stewart (ko Whakarārā te maunga, ko Matauri te moana, ko Te Tāpui te marae, ko Ngāti Kura te hapū, ko Ngāpuhi-nui-tonu te iwi) is an associate professor in the School of Education, Auckland University of Technology. Formerly she worked as a secondary school teacher of science, mathematics and te reo Māori, in English-medium and Māori-medium schools. She completed doctoral studies on the Māori science curriculum in 2007, and is currently completing a Marsden Fund research project investigating academic writing in Māori.

Email: g.stewart@aut.ac.nz