Report

Activating Aotearoa Histories: Giving effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi in education through the Education and Training Act (2020)

Dr Mere Berryman, David Copeland, Elizabeth Eley, Jay Haydon-Howard, Frances Kelly

June 2025

Ako Aotearoa

Poutama Pounamu
Equity, excellence and belonging
THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO

THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

This report is part of the “Activating Aotearoa Histories: Giving effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi in education through the Education and Training Act (2020)” project co-funded by Ako Aotearoa through its AARIA fund and the University of Waikato. All information, including the report and videos are available for free download from the Ako Aotearoa website at: https://ako.ac.nz/knowledge-centre/activating-aotearoa-histories or from the Poutama Pounamu website https://poutamapounamu.org.nz/resources/publications

Publishers
Ako Aotearoa – The National Centre
for Tertiary Teaching Excellence
PO Box 756
Wellington 6140
www.ako.ac.nz
0800 MYAKONZ
info@ako.ac.nz

ISBN Online - 978-1-98-856267-4
ISBN Print - 978-1-98-856268-1

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit http://creativecommons.org/ licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/ or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

Contents

1 | Executive Summary

“Through this research we sought to understand what kaiwhakaako and ākonga within one university had taken from the PPBL and how this learning had influenced and changed their own praxis.” (p. 3, para 3)

Research shows that the historical impact of colonisation on Māori is often problematised and silenced so that our hearts and minds are almost closed to the potential of mutual respect. However, simply telling people to disrupt historical ways of knowing and being has not improved our view of each other, despite being Treaty/Tiriti partners. Māori continue to be underserved by both the compulsory education sector and through tertiary institutions.

Poutama Pounamu Blended Learning (PPBL) is a year-long professional learning and development opportunity designed to surface and challenge long-held beliefs of educators, rooted in the rhetoric of colonisation. The learning is undertaken by participants (kaiwhakaako) and a group of their peers (ākonga).

Through this research we sought to understand what kaiwhakaako and ākonga within one university had taken from the PPBL and how this learning had influenced and changed their own praxis. We also wanted to understand how these learnings might have better prepared these participants to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi in education through the Education and Training Act 2020.

Evidence was gathered through the in-depth analysis of the learning journals and interviews as conversation with seven kaiwhakaako. Evidence gathering began by analysing the electronic learning journals (ELJ) of these kaiwhakaako and their ākonga. Findings from this analysis were then used to explore the experiences of this group through interviews as conversations. The final data source was a focus group interview as conversation, held with Initial Teacher Education students in classes being taught by a kaiwhakaako undertaking the PPBL.

All kaiwhakaako concluded that they had been greatly influenced by their participation in the PPBL. They expressed how their underlying cultural beliefs and attitudes about the shared history of our nation and about colonisation had expanded and, in many cases, had changed to include questions of equity and social justice. The five participants who had been born in Aotearoa, one Māori the others non-Māori, regretted deeply the silencing of many historical acts and the mythtakes[1] with which policy was set and within which, they were raised. This included the need to unlearn many of the relational beliefs they had about each other including aspects of their own family's cultural identity and belonging. They all felt that participating in the PPBL positioned them more knowledgeably to undertake the work in Section 127 of the Education and Training Act 2020 in relation to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Furthermore, they were able to demonstrate that the students with whom they worked had begun to receive relational, pedagogical and curriculum responses that were different to the top-down pedagogical response more commonly associated with lecturing, that they might have more traditionally provided.

When all the evidence was considered, the following four themes emerged. The themes have arisen from the critical reflections and considerations of those who participated in the PPBL and those who benefitted from that participation: their peers (the ākonga groups) and their students. These themes are pertinent and relevant for all those involved in tertiary education, however, just knowing the themes will be insufficient to bring the transformative change needed to make our tertiary institutions places where we all can thrive.

Theme 1: Changing power relations through the professional and ethical parameters of teaching and learning

The overwhelming response to participating in or receiving from the PPBL was a shift in power relations. Kaiwhakaako reported that they were challenged to move from being, as one participant described, a place of "chalk and talk" into a position of being a learner alongside their colleagues and students. All participants in this research talked about, once they had learned the uncomfortable truths about our history, our systems and their own internalised beliefs and positioning, having to strategically reposition their own responses.

Theme 2: Continuing to deepen understandings of equity through cultural and relational pedagogy that is responsive and builds from what learners already know

Participants all expressed how, through PPBL, their underlying philosophical beliefs about pedagogy and practice had expanded and were continuing to change.

1 Moana Jackson (2019) says that unless, as a nation, New Zealand acknowledges and addresses the "mythtakes", the "deliberately concocted falsehoods to justify a process that is actually unjustifiable" (p. 102), we cannot move forward. These unacknowledged mythtakes are part of the policy sediment (Ball, 1993) in which newer education policies are founded.

They could no longer view students as passive recipients of knowledge as they needed to make cultural connections with them to understand what was in their learners' cultural toolkit (Bruner, 1999)[2] and to ensure their pedagogy was responsive to their learners' own prior knowledge and experiences.

Theme 3: Understanding the history of our nation's past and the implications for our future

The third theme that emerged from our findings was the need for all those involved in tertiary educational provision to understand and acknowledge the shared history of our nation and the silenced pervasiveness of colonisation.

Theme 4: Being the best that we can be

Knowing our history was an essential part of being the best we can be, as educators preparing this generation of learners to be respectful of each other's culture, and as tomorrow's leaders of this nation under Te Tiriti o Waitangi. This could mean that we need to understand Te Tiriti and model the relationships envisioned through the principles of this document. Te Tiriti was not a dusty, historical document but provided the basis for the transformation needed to ensure our tertiary institutions did not perpetuate the harm and inequities that understanding our history has revealed. Instead, through Te Tiriti, we can build our reform on mutual understanding, responsibilities and benefits, with all parties, Māori and non-Māori; lecturer and student; leadership and staff.

Know Self, Grow Self, Grow Community

The PPBL content can be framed around opportunities for participants to engage in and learn through the following three processes: to know self, to grow self and to grow community. The experiences of participants in PPBL are shown in three videos, called *Know Self; Grow Self and Grow Community*. These videos are available at https://ako.ac.nz/knowledge-centre/activating-aotearoa-histories and https://poutamapounamu.org.nz/resources/publications.

To truly know self requires the sharing of knowledge in safe spaces where critical reflections on one's own experiences, together with curiosity and increased self-awareness, contributes to direct learning that can result in an increased sense of self. Once the know-self conversation has begun and safe spaces were available to have these conversations with similarly curious, unsatisfied and increasingly self-aware others, the learning was able to continue so that the processes of know self and grow self with like-minded peers, became mutually evolving and interdependent. To grow community means being proactive with this learning and taking it to the wider level of reform, whether it was growing one's classroom praxis or one's professional community. This requires understanding the cultural contexts in which we work and understanding our own agency and power and the power and influence of our society and professional institutions. These are the structures that are still perpetuating, to one extent or another, distinctly different historical discourses of power and privilege.

2 Bruner, J. (1999). Culture, mind and education. In B. Monn & P. Murphy (Eds.), Curriculum in context (pp. 148-178). Buckingham, England: Open University Press. [ISBN 1853964220.]

2 | Abstract

"I'm the broken one because what I'm doing is not meeting the needs of the people in front of me. So if anybody has to change or be fixed, then hold up a mirror." (p. 26, para 3)

This research grew out of a growing discomfort that many structures and staff in tertiary institutions may unwittingly be perpetuating decades of impositional, inequitable and harmful practices on students, but particularly on Māori students.

This paper presents the research findings of an in-depth inquiry into the effectiveness of Poutama Pounamu Blended Learning (PPBL), a professional learning and development initiative. Through their 12-month engagement with PPBL, staff at the University of Waikato undertook a course of slow-burn and carefully layered learning where they examined our nation's history, the impacts of colonisation on our society and our institutions and the outworkings of the unconscious beliefs perpetuated through a colonial view of the world on their own practice. They also reviewed transformative leadership and dialogic pedagogical praxis.

The paper presents the learning journeys of seven participants in the course. Through their own voices we follow: their conscientisation to the inequitable status quo across our society and their part in perpetuating this; their resistance – the determining to exercise their personal agency to bring about change within their own relationships and practice; and transformative praxis – spreading the change across the institution. Alongside the insights of these participants, the experiences and reflections of groups of their peers and students in an Initial Teacher Education course are also presented.

3 | Introduction

“Māori continue to be underserved by both the compulsory education sector and through tertiary institutions.” (p. 9, para 1)

Research shows that the historical impact of colonisation on Māori is often problematised and silenced so that our hearts and minds are almost closed to the potential of mutual respect. However, simply telling people to disrupt historical ways of knowing and being has not improved our view of each other, despite being Treaty/Tiriti partners. Māori continue to be underserved by both the compulsory education sector and through tertiary institutions. This challenge is not new, the long-standing inequity was identified when educational achievement data were first analysed with ethnicity as a variable, the subsequent report stating that “Māori educational achievements (but not their capacity) are below par” (Hunn, 1961, p. 98)[3]. Nearly sixty years later the, then, Secretary for Education also reported that: “the under-achievement of Māori students is chronic, intractable and systemic” (Holsted, 2018)[4].

The question remains on how Aotearoa’s education system, particularly (in this research) our tertiary institutions, could enact more effective education reform based on our learners’ potential when our minds are overcrowded by discourses of need and remediation. The resulting deficit positioning continues to negatively impact on the teaching and learning provided to Māori learners and this must be understood and respectfully disrupted if reform is to be equitable, effective, or transformative. At

3 Hunn, J. (1961). Report on The Department of Māori Affairs. Wellington, New Zealand: Government Printer.

4 Holsted, I. (2018, February 15). Māori student under-achievement ‘chronic’ [Radio broadcast]. Radio New Zealand. https://www.rnz.co.nz/national/programmes/morningreport/audio/2018632155/maori-student-under-achievement-chronic

government policy level and within the policies of individual tertiary institutions, there are clear statements of the desire for equitable outcomes, in line with the outcomes for Pākehā peers, in regard to the achievement, retention and learning experiences, of Māori learners. Researchers such as Penetito[5], Bishop et al.[6] and others more recently[7] contend that countries with a colonial history often tend to understand inclusive and equitable practices as assimilating all students to colonial ways of knowing and being. Macfarlane et al.[8] explain this as inherently positioned by the dominant white, male, heterosexual culture. Freire[9] suggests that disrupting oppressive states can happen through cyclical processes of conscientisation, resistance and transformative praxis; we must learn to recognise our shared humanity and challenge the status quo.

We believe that the assimilation practices embedded within the colonial education responses must be better understood and talked about if it is to be disrupted, and reformed. This must happen if the education system is to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi as outlined in Section 127 of the 2020 Education and Training Act. Despite the promises to Māori, implicit in The Treaty of Waitangi, as a charter for shared power, collaborative decision making and Māori self-determination, the fulfilment of these promises are still being sought in the legal court systems today. However, the 2020 changes to the Education and Training Act signalled extensive changes required within education. By explicitly referring to Te Tiriti o Waitangi we are now being called to give better effect to the Māori language version of the treaty, from early childhood, through schooling into tertiary.

We contend that a better future begins with each of us taking personal and collective responsibility to understand and acknowledge our own historical obligations and entanglements. Our response is a blend of face-to-face wānanga, supported online study, and focus group conversations that provide the backbone of the Poutama Pounamu Blended Learning (PPBL) programme (described below). The PPBL was created to provide ongoing learning opportunities for educators to support deeper understanding of the practical implications of Kaupapa Māori and Critical Theory towards simultaneously indigenising the culture of tertiary education and decolonising imposed power structures.

---

5 Penetito, W. (2002). Research and context for a theory of Maori schooling. McGill Journal of Education 37(1): 89.

6 Bishop, R., Berryman, M., Cavanagh, T., & Teddy, L. (2009). Te kotahitanga: Addressing educational disparities facing Māori students in New Zealand. Teaching and teacher education, 25(5), 734-742.

7 Berryman, M. A., Egan, M. M., & Haydon-Howard, J. (2023). A Pedagogical Continuum: Driving Culturally Responsive School Reform for Māori Secondary Students. Journal of Education and Development, 7(2), 30.
Berryman, M., Lawrence, D., & Lamont, R. (2018). Cultural relationships for responsive pedagogy. SET: Research information for teachers, 1, 3-10.
Pihama, L., & Lee-Morgan, J. (2019). Colonization, Education, and Indigenous Peoples. Handbook of Indigenous Education, 19–27.

8 Macfarlane, A., Macfarlane, S., Savage, C., & Glynn, T. (2012). Inclusive education and Māori communities in Aotearoa New Zealand. Teaching in inclusive school communities, 163-186.

9 Freire, P. (1996) Pedagogy of the oppressed. Penguin Books.

4 | Poutama Pounamu Blended Learning

"Since 2018, eight cohorts of participants linked to the schooling sector have joined the PPBL from all parts of Aotearoa." (p. 14, para 2)

PPBL process

The PPBL is a means to challenge the hearts and minds of educators. It utilises both in-person interactions and online learning. Kaiwhakaako (participants) who join the 12-month course of slow-burn and carefully layered learning, take part in two face-to-face *wānanga* (live-in study over two days), one virtual wānanga and they also complete five online modules. Within the online modules, each kaiwhakaako compiles an e-portfolio, recording their learning, thoughts and feelings as they engage with the content. These electronic learning journals (ELJ) provide a means of storing readings and research individuals have encountered throughout the course. Ongoing feedback is provided by Poutama Pounamu (PP) facilitators to each entry in the online modules. Each kaiwhakaako brings others with them on the journey as the information and curated resources from each module are shared by the kaiwhakaako with a learning group of up to five peers known as their *ākonga* (learners). Greater detail about PPBL can be found on the Ministry of Education's Education Counts website[10] where the Best Evidence Synthesis site features an article entitled: Giving effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi: One school's journey built on Poutama Pounamu Blended Learning. The blended learning mode of PLD offers advantages in the flexibility of choice and time to empower educators to develop new knowledge and skills, within their own contexts, beyond time and distance constraints of face-to-face modes in traditional teacher PLD approaches[11].

10 https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/topics/bes/giving-effect-to-te-tiriti-o-waitangi-one-schools-journey-built-on-poutama-pounamu-blended-learning

11 Dede, C., Eisenkraft, A., Frumin, K., & Hartley, A. (Eds.). (2016). Teacher learning in the digital age: Online professional development in STEM education. Harvard Education Press.
Khoo E. & Berryman M. (2024) Blended professional learning: Insights for developing culturally responsive teachers. Asia Pacific Journal of Education. DOI: 10.1080/02188791.2024.2441665

In this way, teacher learning can be more targeted and relevant as they draw from the expertise of mentors and peers within the programme to collaborate and address real-world issues.

PPBL participants

Since 2018, eight cohorts of participants linked to the schooling sector have joined the PPBL from all parts of Aotearoa. In total about 1500 have joined as kaiwhakaako and they have worked with up to 4000 ākonga. Participants have come from all levels of the education system including: close to 700 from primary schools; about 600 from secondary schools, over 100 from Early Learning or preschool settings; while others came from a wide range of members of the educational community, for example members of iwi and family groups and sector agencies such as the Education Review Office and Resource Teachers of Learning and Behaviour services.

The PPBL content was updated to reflect the tertiary context, the 12-month course structure and requirements remained the same. In 2022, 61 staff members from our own institution, the University of Waikato, joined the course as kaiwhakaako, the majority based within Te Wānanga Toi Tangata (the Division of Education) and Te Wānanga Pūtaio (the Division of STEM), primarily from Computer Science, Science and Engineering. The kaiwhakaako were supported by 11 kairaranga. The role of the kairaranga was to clear the way to allow the work of the kaiwhakaako in the PPBL to proceed. Kairaranga were often in more senior positions than their kaiwhakaako and many attended the wānanga.

5 | Research context

"As educators, we need to better understand how we can respond to the potential of Māori learners rather than worry about their perceived needs." (p. 17, para 1)

Research intent

As educators, we need to better understand how we can respond to the potential of Māori learners rather than worry about their perceived needs. We are concerned that traditional, racialised colonial beliefs about Māori are being perpetuated in the academy. We want to disrupt that, if indeed it does exist, and reawaken previously silenced understandings of our shared histories and Te Tiriti o Waitangi as more respectful pathways forward. It is envisaged that by learning more about these contexts people who have participated in the PPBL will provide greater access and better support initiatives for the students they are teaching.

This research is concerned with educators learning how the colonial tertiary system in Aotearoa can more effectively interface with indigenous Māori people, their cultural knowledges and their ways of being. An important part of appreciating indigenous epistemologies and ontologies is understanding the role education has played in seriously disrupting and eroding these knowledges and replacing them with that of the coloniser. Our aim is that educator participants within our organisation who have undertaken the PPBL will have developed new understandings and then use them to influence their work with their colleagues and their student teachers.

Research questions

1. How did participation in the PPBL influence the underlying cultural beliefs of educators at the University of Waikato (kaiwhakaako)?
2. How did the changes in cultural beliefs or discursive repositioning influence and alter how kaiwhakaako shared the curated PPBL resources and information with their ākonga group?

3. How did changes to cultural beliefs or discursive repositioning change the support of both groups to the student teachers with whom they worked?

Research procedure

Our research is grounded in culturally responsive methodology involving "cultural and epistemological pluralism, deconstruction of Western colonial traditions of research, and primacy of relationships within culturally responsive dialogic encounters"[12]. Culturally responsive methodology stems from both a kaupapa Māori and critical theoretical base and aims at a research design where participants are encouraged to bring their own cultural identities and kno wledge to contribute to the co-construction of new knowledge through spiralling and dialogic interactions. The relationship and positioning of the researcher and their participant s is pivotal, each contributing to the understanding of the research questions, the ongoing procedures for data gathering and to interpreting and understanding the outcomes. In culturally responsive research, the researcher does not stand apart from the participants but creates a "research stance where establishing respectful relationships with participants is central to both human dignity and the research"[13]. Throughout the research process, understandings and findings are collaboratively co-constructed across the team of external researchers, and internal teacher researchers.

This methodology allows researchers to build from and further develop collaborative, respectful research relationships/partnerships.

Research methods

After advising kaiwhakaako from Te Kura Toi Tangata of the research, we obtained a purposive sample of seven kaiwhakaako who completed the PPBL programme in 2023 and the ākonga with whom they have worked. We retrospectively examined the learning experiences recorded in their ELJs.

The kaiwhakaako participated in individual or group focussed interviews using open-ended interview questions and interviews-as-conversation techniques. All interview transcripts and the ELJs provided rich data which was analysed to understand:
— the discursive repositioning of kaiwhakaako and ākonga;
— their views and their expectations about the achievement and potential of Māori student teachers with whom they have worked.
— the reach and depth of their collective endeavours into reforming their own work with student teachers.

Interviews-as-conversations, or conversational interviews, are defined in the SAGE Encyclopaedia of Qualitative Research Methods as "an approach used by research

12 Berryman, M., SooHoo, S., & Nevin, A. (Eds.) (2013). Culturally responsive methodologies. Emerald Books. (p.15)
13 Berryman, M., SooHoo, S., & Nevin, A. (Eds.) (2013). Culturally responsive methodologies. Emerald Books. (p.1)

interviewers to generate verbal data through talking about specified topics with research participants in an informal and conversational way" (p.127)[14]. This participatory method of gathering data requires input from both the researcher and the research participant, shifting the researcher's role from that of the expert to that of a co-inquirer.

Through interviews as conversation, we sought to understand how the experiences of these kaiwhakaako and ākonga align with the features of effective blended learning programmes.

A cohort of nine student teachers, who have worked with these participants, were also interviewed in group focussed interviews as conversation to understand what underlying cultural beliefs and attitudes their tutors have demonstrated, and what cultural beliefs and attitudes student teachers most value in their tutors.

Research Participants

In total, across the university, 61 staff members joined PPBL as kaiwhakaako, including 21 kaiwhakaako within Te Kura Toi Tangata. The kaiwhakaako based in Te Kura Toi Tangata were emailed an invitation inviting them to participate in individual or group focussed interviews for this research. Seven kaiwhakaako agreed to take part. Of these, two School of Education kaiwhakaako who held leadership positions, two who are senior lecturers and one who holds a research and teaching position. A teaching fellow, who joined the University only the year before, was also a part of this group. This provided 33% of the original kaiwhakaako sample. All participated in the wānanga and worked through the modules with a collective total of 23 ākonga between them.

Information from video-recorded interviews have been edited into videos to highlight key messaging.

The voices of nine Māori student teachers are included in this analysis. They are part of a cohort of students taught by one participant in this research.

The electronic learning journals (ELJs) of these kaiwhakaako were downloaded and thematically analysed by members of the research team. The ELJs included comments, new learning and thoughts across their participation in the PPBL wānanga, their response to module content and ongoing reflections. This process began by stripping out all curated, programme related resources, materials and instructions from the journals, leaving only the responses of the kaiwhakaako, their ākonga, and the PP facilitator who had provided the ongoing, individual feedback and feed-forward.

Direct quotes were then thematically analysed by researchers who were able to identify common themes, grounded in the responses of individuals. Responses were then used to raise these preliminary findings. A sample of direct quotes were then chosen to present in a collaborative story.

14 Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.) (2005). The Sage handbook of qualitative research (3rd ed.). Sage

Data Analysis

Grounded theory was used to identify and prioritise themes from interviews as conversation and develop a collaborative story thus bringing voices of kaiwkakaako and ākonga together into a shared narrative. We present this collaborative story to exemplify the important aspects that opened hearts and minds as a roadmap for changes required for enacting the 2020 Education and Training Act and specifically the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

According to Noble and Mitchell grounded theory is "concerned with the generation of theory, which is 'grounded' in data that has been systematically collected and analysed" (p. 34)[15]. Grounded theory can be grouped into three distinct designs: constructivist, emergent, and systematic[16]. This research uses constructivist grounded theory to acknowledge the integral role the researcher and educator partners play as they bring their prior experiences, perspectives, and subjectivities to the study and therefore to the presented themes or theories[17]. Analysis using grounded theory involved coding, to highlight key aspects in the data; collecting aspects of the data that was then grouped; categorising; and generating theories and theorising to explain the subject of the research[18]. The emerging theories are grounded in the diverse voices of the participants so that their experiences from participating in the PPBL programmes are discovered, conceptualised, and understood.

A collaborative story from student teacher voices is a means to exemplify their own experiences with tutors who have participated in the PPBL. Collaborative storying, or collaborative storytelling, was selected as it is a research method that acts to address people's desire for participatory educational research[19]. This method of choosing deliberate quotes of participants' experiences to tell their own story, complements the participatory, power sharing method of gathering data using interviews-as-conversations. Together, these methods place respectful relationships at the centre of the research with the resulting collaborative story serving to honour and amplify the shared voice and experiences of all participants, including that of the researchers.

15 Noble, H., & Mitchell, G. (2016). What is grounded theory? Evidence-based Nursing, DOI: 10.1136/eb-2016-102306

16 Charmaz, K. (2006). Constructing grounded theory. Sage.

17 Green, D., Cresswell, J., Shope, R. J., & Clark, V. (2007). Grounded theory and racial/ethnic diversity. In Charmaz, K. & Bryant, A. (Eds), The SAGE handbook of grounded theory (pp.472–492). Sage. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781848607941
Strauss & Corbin (1994). Grounded theory methodology. In N. Denzin, & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of qualitative research, (2nd ed., pp. 273–285). Sage.

18 Charmaz, K. (2006). Constructing grounded theory. Sage.

19 Menter, I., Elliot, D., Hulme, M., Lewin, J., & Lowden, K. (2011). A guide to practitioner research in education. Sage. (p.145) https://doi.org/10.4135/9781473957770

Ascertaining Discursive Repositioning

In order to give a more personalised starting point from which to individualise the follow-up interviews-as-conversation we analysed the ELJs of the kaiwhakaako participating in this research prior to undertaking the interviews. We were, therefore, better positioned to understand any discursive repositioning experienced by kaiwhakaako and their feelings of agency and power. Bandura[20], suggested that human agency can be recognised as:

1. personal agency, where an individual believes they have the ability to act in ways that either produce desired effects and/or prevent undesirable effects;
2. proxy agency, acting through or with others who have expertise or can exert influence to produce the desired outcomes; and/or
3. collective agency, which fosters a group's motivational commitment to their shared goals, resilience to adversity, and group accomplishments. Group attainments are influenced by shared knowledge and skills, but also as a result of the "interactive, coordinative, and synergistic dynamics" (p. 75) of their shared undertakings.

Underpinning all three forms of agency are our perceptions of efficacy to achieve our desired outcomes. If groups share common beliefs and act interdependently around a shared kaupapa, this can result in greater collective efficacy. Burr[21] suggests that if people maintain discursive positioning from which their efficacy is motivated by shared moral concerns, they can become "strategists able to choose courses of actions and carry out intentions" (p.146).

In our ability to carry out intentions and achieve efficacy, Archer[22] discusses the usefulness of internal dialogue, our ability to reflect on what has happened and determine what action to take next. Extending beyond reflection alone, internal dialogue or reflexivity is determined by what we see as important and worthwhile as well as our context including what constrains us and enables us to act. As we determine and enact agency, we actively shape and reshape the contexts within which we engage[23] thus shaping and reshaping these same contexts. Our sense of agency is strongly linked to the numerous discourses we draw from, how knowledge is socially constructed, and how power plays out within these contexts.

We found that, rather than asking kaiwhakaako to merely reflect on their experience in the PPBL an insider starting point prompted inner dialogue and a more reflexive re-entry point for the final conversation with kaiwhakaako, helping them to consider what they thought was happening when they had responded in a particular way. Greater reflexivity also helped us to understand what biases, unconscious or otherwise, we may be passing on to our students.

---

20 Bandura, A. (2000). Exercise of human agency through collective efficacy. Current Directions in Psychological Science, 9(3), 75-78. https://journals-sagepub-com.ezproxy.waikato.ac.nz/doi/pdf/10.1111/1467-8721.00064

6 | Findings

“All the time it came back to what, within my professional and ethical parameters, can I still do differently?” (p. 26, p. 5)

All participating kaiwhakaako concluded that they had been greatly influenced by their participation in the PPBL Four main themes thematically emerged in relation to how their underlying cultural beliefs and attitudes had changed. These themes are presented and discussed next using words taken from participants’ interviews as conversation.

Excerpts from interviews with the participants are also presented in three videos, called Know Self; Grow Self and Grow Community. These videos are available at https://ako.ac.nz/knowledge-centre/activating-aotearoa-histories and https://poutamapounamu.org.nz/resources/publications.

Theme 1. Changing power relations within the professional and ethical parameters of teaching and learning

For one kaiwhakaako, the opportunity through this research, to review and revisit his ELJ and be interviewed had helped him to deeply reflect on his own practice in terms of power relations, and also what was happening in this regard, at a societal level:

> It’s bubbling along at the top and it challenges me… [for example] after observing a student teacher to measure their bi-culturally responsive practice…then going away and coding it to what I considered… “Oh yeah, that’s bi-cultural. He chatted to the students. He joked with the students. He encouraged student agency…”

> Then there’s a sudden realisation that actually I feel like I’m coding his culture … how do I, a Pākehā, ensure I’m right? How could I be challenged and questioned as to whether this is actually bi-cultural? Are we thinking that by saying kia ora and having a good relationship with them that is responsive? Or is it simply culturally [responsible]?…

> And I've got a horrible feeling after my observation and coding… I've actually been looking at culturally responsible, much more than bi-culturally responsive. So now I'm going back to my Blended Learning journals over the next term, reviewing the content, what did we say were authentic [power sharing relationships]?

He now sees his making judgements about students concerned with power relations within the cultural and ethical parameters of teaching and learning. Furthermore the arrogance of making relational judgements about each other, are not just historic but they are ongoing:

> I read through my notes and journal last week [prior to our interview] and it actually struck me in an awful way. I don't feel that there's been a change. I was just lining it up with what our current government are doing. And I just felt like, oh, my goodness, I don't think this is changed. I think we are continuing on with the same, whether it's come from the Pope [Papal Bulls within the historical Doctrines of Discovery] or wherever with this idea that there is a civilization and there is a right way of doing it and we have it…we know how to run this, we don't need the [Waitangi] tribunals input.

This kaiwhakaako reminded us about the importance of being given safe spaces to speak truthfully about this situation if we are to understand it:

> Being in a safe environment, being in a trusting and trustworthy environment, …it was the first time I'd actually been in a group like this… There can be a sense …where, "oh, God, it's Pākehā bashing again," and I sort of understand where that comes from. I sort of went through that when I did my degree … So I sort of went in [to the PPBL] with that same white male, middle class kind of feeling.

> What really struck me about the [PPBL] it was simply have a look, here's some information. And because it was left to us to decide… you can't argue with what the evidence is showing. So I think that the way it was provided to us was very well balanced, you led us in such a way that you were promoting self-growth and you were promoting self-development. Here's the food you eat as little as you want or as much as you want, but we will encourage and support you in your thinking and I think that's so powerful…I've never seen it quite so well done.

Another kaiwhakaako reminded us why it was so important to understand how power was playing out:

> The institutional racism; the positioning of teachers and fellow students; the lack of inclusion in decision making and who decides what is valued and how this recognised… this creates the sense of disconnect and irrelevance that can underpin students' learning experience and further erode their identity and hence their sense of wellbeing.

He discussed how power sharing and developing student agency can, and should, work together:

> Giving students authentic voice in the co-construction of learning environments is essential practice, and will help alleviate the issue of keeping tertiary students engaged and completing their qualifications.

> ...[providing] more student voice and options in what they study and engage with. While I do this already at the postgraduate level, and the undergraduate includes the co-construction of learning, the focus in the mathematics papers is very clearly on content and pedagogy rather than a key emphasis being on emotional and spiritual elements of learning.

> I think this greater emphasis on them [learners] managing their learning and co-constructing their learning and understanding in collaborative groupings will appeal to most. Some will still like to work individually though and this should be accommodated too.

For him this was part of both a personal and professional journey:

> I will try to be more aware of this and further incorporate peer tutoring, peer assessment and giving students the opportunity to be the leaders of their learning. [I will] look to further open up dialogic space for the oral negotiation of meanings and justification of their [learner] positioning. Some of this would be through selecting rich mathematical tasks and opportunities for collaborative problem solving.

> This accentuated the need to further my reading, thinking and action related to changing my personal perspective and actions, and those I engage with at home and in my work

The next kaiwhakaako suggested that understanding power has meant:

> I've changed the way I look at being a teacher. In fact, I wouldn't even call myself a teacher now. I'd call myself a learner alongside everybody else. That change in power dynamic from teacher; even though I've never been a great one of, you know, chalk and talk, or I know everything and I've always been open to conversations; I think I had to strategically reposition myself, and that involved how I thought about things, how I spoke about things, and definitely how I responded to things.

This movement in relational power, was away from doing things for and to learners, while sometimes still perhaps positioning herself as a saviour, to being a learner alongside learners, more in line with the deeper mutuality and reciprocal care that sits behind the Māori concept of manaakitanga[24] and ako:

> … being willing to just let go of that power…position myself as a learner through them, being open alongside them, …allowed greater conversations to happen, allowed deeper levels of learning.

> And that's only possible because I also now have a different version of what whanaungatanga looks like. So I've always been strong on relationships. I always consider myself a relational practitioner, but there might be an element of shining white knight on a horse that sometimes snuck in there.

This relationship required her to better understand how she might contribute a more equitable response:

> You know, when you can see that there's inequity and you want to do something about it… and so you suddenly think I can fix this. OK, how to reposition that, because fix means something was broken and blended learning helped me to get to a space where I could see what was broken.
>
> And the thing that's broken is what I'm doing. I'm the broken one because what I'm doing is not meeting the needs of the people in front of me. So if anybody has to change or be fixed, then hold up a mirror. And so that was the difference, … how I deliver, how I talk, how I engage [with learners].

When she understood that to maximise everyone's potential, she had to change, she began to understand what equity could look like. This began with relationships of trust where hard conversations could be respectfully had and received:

> You know, it's not about being best buddies, it's about having clear relationships. It's about knowing each other. It's having trust. It's being able to have the big hard conversations and not back away with them.

This included setting clear and high expectations and holding everyone to account including herself:

> It's about setting really high expectations. And no matter what happens, you hold people to them, including yourself. You know, this is what we have to do. This is where we're going… and it doesn't matter what happens on the way.

24 Underpinning manaakitanga is the recognition that every individual has mana or personal prestige and that by treating people respectfully you can influence and increase not only their mana, but you also enhance your own personal mana.

It also included accepting that multiple pathways could achieve the shared outcomes:

> Before, I think my idea of high expectations was I would affect everybody to get them from A to B. And some people might go from A to B, and some people might go from A to Z, then to E. But as long as we all know that this is where we're going and that's what I'm holding you all to account to. So we might all have different paths, and that's the equity rather than equality. …so realising that there are other stops along the way for some people.

> All the time it came back to what, within my professional and ethical parameters, can I still do differently? My repositioning, how I think about conversations when things get hard or they're falling behind or they're stuck or they're not picking up what you're putting down, I've stopped going …okay, well how can I fix them [the learners] to think, well, what can I do differently to help them get to wherever it was that we all agreed we wanted to go?

Largely it came back to understanding their own agency to continue to effect change which required participants to consider their own approaches to pedagogy and a more equitable range of responses so that all learners achieved the common outcomes that were required of them, but in their own ways.

Theme 2: Continuing to deepen understandings of equity through cultural and relational pedagogy

Participants all elaborated on how their underlying philosophical beliefs about pedagogy and practice had expanded and were continuing to change. One said that learning from the PPBL:

> …fits in really well with my philosophy as a teacher because I consider pedagogy to be a continually evolving journey. Like I don't see a point at which I say: I'm the best teacher ever; or, I can stop learning how to teach now. I think it's the same thing. I think we always need to advocate for equity, empathy, those sorts of things…, passing it on to the next generation, being a good role model.

For her and others, this meant understanding the constraints of working within a tertiary institution but understanding that if some of what they [the tertiary institution] were doing was ineffective, they have an ethical responsibility to contribute to change:

> I think that a lot of the time we don't have that much capacity at the tertiary level to get to know our learners that well. We sort of have a name and we have a transcript. Oftentimes, maybe we'll have nationality information [international students] as well, but you tend to have to seek that information out.

Participants talked about how, through the PPBL and working with their ākonga group, they had begun to realise that knowing who your students were meant making cultural connections with them in order to understand what was in their learners' cultural toolkit (Bruner, 1999)[25] and to ensure your pedagogy was responsive to this knowledge:

> How do you go the next step, which is to build the learning… for Māori learners based on their cultural toolkit, their prior knowledge and experiences. How does that work for you? Well, this was something that within my ākonga we struggled with quite a bit ….

> We felt like we had to do more than we felt we were capable of doing. And so during the course [PPBL], coming back to things that we felt we could actually have the capacity, the agency to do. This was a really important outcome for us because we all really wanted tangible things that we could actually do. And we were, I guess, concerned at the beginning that maybe we couldn't do enough. And so learning to accept that what we could do, may be enough.

25 Bruner, J. (1999). Culture, mind and education. In B. Monn & P. Murphy (Eds.), Curriculum in context (pp. 148-178). Buckingham, England: Open University Press. [ISBN 1853964220.]

Making cultural relational connections to help learners feel more comfortable for example, had implications for all learners:

> So in terms of really getting to know people, it's probably more about making a connection in the moment and those moments of contact that you do have. ...for me, and based on the learnings through the course [PPBL], that can be about doing things that make people [learners] feel more comfortable to be who they are.

However, working with Māori students brought new specific responsibilities:

> So in the context of our Māori students it might be about greeting them in te reo Māori, trying to learn correct pronunciation and constantly being on that journey and correcting yourself or being willing to learn to do better.

The importance of learning te reo Māori and taking mātauranga Māori into their practice was a common priority across all participants:

> But there are things that we can do immediately that are actually quite straightforward to do like for example making sure that we give a mihi when we start, that we use Māori terms when we can and that we take care to learn how to pronounce te reo the best we can.

Sometimes learning was subject specific, by adding culturally appropriate curriculum content knowledge:

> ... in science we can even include mātauranga into our teaching within the actual content material. We can refer to taonga species and place-based learning, things that are literally local to the region.

> ... it could actually be in the context of introducing mātauranga Māori into our course material. I'm a biologist, and so you can kind of draw on examples from nature for, for example, specifically referencing taonga species or treasured species, [making links to] place-based learning. So referring to actual places, place names by their correct Māori names, and also then employing some more principles from kaupapa Māori.

Sometimes it was about how they undertook teaching and learning and being prepared to do things differently:

> Some of those principles from te ao Māori, bringing them into the teaching, as well as potentially bringing in some elements of mātauranga Māori, if that's a possibility.

> So relationship building, hoping to make people feel comfortable getting them to interact with each other and share a little bit about their background, if they're comfortable to do that. ... putting a lot of time into whakawhanaungatanga.

> Things like ako and the way that I teach. So now I expect it to be a two-sided dialogue, not just me at the front teaching everything. And the student is the sponge, but rather, I recognise that the student brings their own learning and experience and can teach both me and their peers as well.
>
> … one of the things that we do is we have put investment into events and also kind of cultural groups that are designed to sort of help Māori students when they first start. So Māori students in science are assigned to a mentor and we have a kind of a mentee mentor relationship [tuākana tēina]. In that process, there's kind of support going through the levels. So that [mentor relationship] sort of gets assigned at first year and… hopefully the student stays in that programme. They also get personalised emails. Our Māori students now get personalised emails from our Māori coordinator.

It also meant being prepared to move into learning contexts that one might previously have shied away from:

> …having done the blended learning programme, feeling more confident to work with Māori history and Māori knowledge.

> I've always had Māori readings and scholarship in the papers as relevant to the topic of the paper. And that was something we started quite a few years ago and making sure that it was part of the learning outcomes and that we were including aspects of Māori knowledge in the assignments. But an example recently was a student who wanted to look at the land wars and their impact on wellbeing. Not the war itself, the impact on the land and …growing the crops and the health of the people.

> And I think feeling that I could now work with a student on… a touchy subject like that, that was complex… but having more confidence that I could say, look, it's not an area that I know a lot about, but I'm really interested… we could look at this together. And then me reading up about the particular war she was talking about so that that we could have that conversation.

> So I think that was a change for me to feel that was OK to do if the student wanted it. I wouldn't have proposed a topic like that. But feeling that, yes, OK, if that's what you'd like to look at my role's to support you with that learning.

Working with colleagues more effectively meant understanding how one's enthusiasm to create change might also get in the way:

> … you have all this knowledge and so you're super eager to share it with other people when similar problems or things come out. And whilst I think I'm being aggressively helpful, they can see it as being, you know, somewhat bolshy, or she knows everything or is coming in as the expert.

> And so one of the greatest things I did was put a sign on my door that said, [name of participant] shut up and listen.

Often just by being more mindful of how power manifests itself, spaces could open up for other voices to be heard:

> I found, and I think my ākonga [PPBL group] found too that unless you create space for other people to speak into, your own voice can become a little bit dominant. And sometimes that's because you lay a question down or a wondering and you don't get that immediate response you know you're looking for. You think I've said something really provocative here. They're going to talk about it and they go quiet. And so rather than wait, you dig a bit more and then you dig a bit more and then you dig a bit more. And what that does is it kind of shuts people down.

> And so creating the space and then just stopping and being okay, just sitting with the quiet because it was awkward at first with the practice because we'd just be sat there looking at each other with nobody saying anything. But then as I felt more comfortable in that space, suggestions would come through and you got to hear things that you would not have heard before because you didn't make space for it. So people allowed themselves to be a little bit more vulnerable. They were happier sharing their opinions, even if it wasn't a popular one. And from that, discussions grow.

For many learning how power manifests itself through one's own actions was a powerful learning:

> And so the learning for me was that number one, my voice can't be the loudest or the most often in the room. My ākonga took that with them too. You can't be the one force feeding cause you're passionate about it, so you can't be forcing it on other people. So you have to create the space.

> But the second thing is, when you do, you learn a lot. You learn as much or more as you thought you already had because you get it from different perspectives and you get different ideas and you get to unpack a bit more and dig a bit more and make sense of things together. So yeah, shut up and listen. It's great. Make space for other people. Because if you make the space, they will step into it.

As well as changing pedagogy and curriculum, the need to influence change included working within systems and structures that maintained traditional power relations such as course assessments:

> ...continuing to try out new things in the classroom, new assessments, reflect on how they went learn from them, try to exchange ideas.

However, change was also needed at multiple levels:

> I think the biggest thing for me probably is the next step... is to try to push back again at that committee level and say, "Hey, this is actually an area that we're not quite hitting on." So try to keep pushing that forwards because I have kind of let that go. So I think I probably I need to try that again.

Theme 3: Understanding the history of our nation and the implications for our future

Participants expressed through conversations, how their underlying cultural beliefs and attitudes about the shared history of our nation and about colonisation had expanded and changed. One of the non-Māori kaiwhakaako born in Aotearoa, now understood that:

> Worldwide, colonisation has detrimental effects for indigenous peoples; for health, economically and in this particular context education. Although all are clearly linked. A critical methodology opens up spaces to interrogate some of the pervading discourses related to power and "normal" but change has to come from within both the colonial worldview as well as the transition of power enabling change.

> One approach to opening up spaces for interrogation is through dialogic space. Change and learning can occur when people's voices and hence worldviews are valued in respectful, reciprocal ways. Who decides what is valued and how that might manifest in action?

Another, took her experiences critically back to the result of being educated against a backdrop of assimilation that marginalised and perhaps silenced Māori identity:

> At primary school, and this is in the South Island, I don't remember any Māori. I don't remember any native schools in the South Island. Well, in my region anyway. It never came up to be honest. There's one family who I think back might have been Māori but I didn't actually know.

> When I went through high school, I didn't think that there were any Māori. Although interestingly I've come across one recently who is Ngāi Tahu and I've met her as an adult and she is Māori. We were at boarding school together. I had no idea she was Māori. So that was completely hidden and she said to me as an adult that her father funded the boarding school by getting flounder from Lake Elsmere. I had no idea that she was Māori.

The implications of why, by whom and how Māori had been hidden, was a new concept for her:

> So they clearly embraced their being Māori, who they were at home, but that was very hidden for her and I was quite amazed by that. So I can't say that I wasn't at high school with Māori, but I can say that I was at high school with people who weren't in a position to strongly identify as being Māori

A Māori participant described this same situation from her own family's perspective:

> … my grandfather could speak a little bit of te reo Māori but never did. My great grandparents were fluent, but didn't really speak around my grandfather. …then as a result, my mum's generation have limited te reo knowledge.

> I went through a very mainstream type schooling system when I started, and I went to a high school that very much didn't celebrate culture.

> And if anything, I was probably trying not to acknowledge I was Māori at high school. It wasn't something to be necessarily proud of in that environment, but it was always there. There was another Māori student and I remember us approaching a headmistress [to see] if could we do Māori through correspondence, but even that was refused. We had a kapahaka group, which was nice, but that was kind of stop and start.

A participant, born in England, went straight to the importance of learning about our shared history as the process for moving forward with greater respect:

> It was challenging, I think when you go into the details of the history, being very aware your ancestry is on the Crown side. So hearing about the way things had worked for Māori here, and yes, it was confronting to be part of the history that had caused so much damage and hurt and thinking that that was not just in the past, it's a continuing thing.

> So when we were facing the issues of racism that were still having an impact now, but I think I came into it very much wanting to see how we could make a difference individually and collectively and feeling, you know, as head of school, you have a big responsibility to get staff involved in this. So for myself, but really pleased to have staff part of that too. So that was really where I was coming from.

> But it was a challenge and I learned things that I had no idea about. And I think I'd shared at the time, you know, I wanted to read more and understand more because it opened a door that was showing me there was an awful lot I knew nothing about and needed to know.

The opening of this door had shocked her when it was first introduced through wānanga but ākonga had been open to this conversation and collaboratively they had continued to make sense of it and therefore their potential responses:

> I haven't found anyone who reacted negatively about having the conversation, … in my little ākonga group.

> When we did it [learned about some of the beginnings of colonisation] together on the marae, I think we were, we were all shocked and I know it made a big difference for some of my colleagues as well as me because we talked about it there and I think for some New Zealand born people often with a long history of living in New Zealand, it really changed… I know in our conversation it had changed their thinking about their own upbringing, they saw it completely differently once, once I'd learned that history.

Ākonga were open to these conversations, they wanted to understand the history of our nation in order to better understand the implications for our collective future:

> So I haven't had anything like your experience, where somebody who's Catholic then wouldn't talk about it or didn't talk to me about it. I think people wanted to talk about it. It was shocking and surprising, but they wanted to explore it.

Knowing our history was an essential part of being the best we can be, as educators preparing this generation of learners to be respectful of each other's culture, and as tomorrow's leaders of this nation under Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Theme 4: Being the best we can be...

All participants talked about improving themselves through the PPBL. For some people this meant understanding Te Tiriti o Waitangi and modelling the relationship envisioned through the principles of this document:

> I think one of the things coming from England is feeling that I have a commitment to be the best, best person I can here . Like I'm, I'm a visitor really. I came to this country and it's welcomed me. So I went in wanting to know how to be a [Te Tiriti o Waitangi] Treaty partner.

For others this meant in their professional capacity as educators and teachers:

> I think I'm very committed to education in New Zealand and you know, my role as a teacher and then as a teacher educator, so wanting to do the best that I can with that. So I went in wanting to know more.

One kaiwhakaako talked about leading with empathy in her teaching and explained this as:

> ...it's to do with just removing, starting assumptions.

> So if they come to you because they're asking for an extension, which is a fairly common thing, ...kind of like giving them the benefit of the doubt that they're coming with the genuine need ...you know, not viewing it, that they're most likely just lazy or this or that, but that everybody's got their own stuff that they're going through, especially now. Everybody's balancing so many different things.

> And over and above the actual time that you see a person, they've got so much more going on in their life than that. And you know, people don't know what I'm going through. So why should I assume that I know what other people are going through? Better to just assume the best of people. I think kind of encapsulates what I mean.

Many talked about the importance of knowing your learners in order to help them to learn more about what was important to them. One said:

> If you don't know what's important to them [your learners], then you don't know them.

> The transition of power to student-led pedagogies – enabling their voice, identity and eventually change. Kaiako changing to these pedagogical approaches is important issue. Importantly, them [staff] taking a more culturally responsive, relational approach is also an issue.

> Change and learning can occur when people's voices and hence worldviews are valued in respectful, reciprocal ways. Who decides what is valued and how that might manifest in action are issues still for many [PPBL] ākonga?

This requires:

> Recognising your own prejudices and world views that are born from your place and time is critical and then continually applying reflexivity to your teaching practice in terms of whether it is culturally responsive or maintaining habits. As a team, we have some strong staff who can guide us in some of these spaces. In Tauranga Moana we have strong leadership who value education as well.

He reminded us that learning was not just about learning "stuff," but it was also about helping one's learners to be able to engage in social change to make the world a more equitable and better space for all:

> Helping them to build what is important to them in their learning, through the things and ways that they value. Also, sharing their purpose – whether it be environmental, social or political. if their finish line is to change someone else's life; how is that enabled?

Reform such as this was often achieved by extending these learnings beyond themselves. The next kaiwhakaako discussed how collaborating with her ākonga group had spread understandings and activism for change across a school:

> I think we [her and her ākonga] collectively decided that it would start with taking conversations further. So rather than just having the conversations between the three of us, they'd go to their workplaces and carry on these conversations. And in one particular setting, it was clear that there were a lot of people who were wanting change and needing change, but not necessarily sure of how they got there.

Spaces, in which to create change were now recognised and opportunities were taken:

> They already had weekly meetings where they had PLD and discussions, and my ākonga asked if they could take one of those sessions on a weekly basis and start up a new interest group... and so hers was about all things Māori and how that was represented at the school.

While the interest group started small, because of the new kaupapa and the way they had learned to operate with the resources they had been provided with, interest began to spread and be owned:

> And she started off and there were a couple of people who turned up, I think more out of curiosity to see what it was all about, but then thoroughly engaged with the things that were happening. They were having some big discussions and real robust conversations. And there was some fragility and a few tears, but from that it kind of grew. And so it got to the stage where most people at the school wanted to be in that one learning group.

This got real traction when the senior leadership recognised the importance of what was happening:

> … the senior leadership team recognised that that was clearly a need that wasn't being met elsewhere. And so they took the learning across the whole school and created spaces for that. And senior leadership got involved. They started upskilling themselves. A number of people across the group including senior leadership went and did their Māori learning and engaged themselves in that.

As more people became engaged and new conversations were had, it was clear that they would benefit from involving others from the school's home community:

> They started reaching out to their community. They befriended the local marae and made reciprocal relationships.

They soon learned that making reciprocal relations was not a simple matter of telling people they must engage in a particular way:

> … at the start they had quite an opinion of what our Māori community can do for us, but through the work that they did, led by the ākonga, they got to a point of how can we support each other in this work? And then that became a real powerful connection and they saw huge growth from that. And once they recognised that when it was mutually beneficial, it was a genuine relationship rather than a token – invite someone in, it just grew exponentially.

Recognising the need for mutual benefits was the relational cultural context within which new responses were possible:

> They had all sorts of things go on and they started their school year working on a marae, which was the first time they'd ever done that. They now do pōwhiri to welcome new students and new staff, which they've never done before. [Before]…they've always wanted this, but they'd say things said like, "OHH, but where do you find the kaumātua to come and do it?"

> And they don't have that question anymore because now they had a genuine relationship with people. You know, "if this is what you want to do, let us guide you with how the tikanga goes." So it's tikanga lead rather than you just wanting to tick a box and say that it was a nice way to start a group of people off. So it was a genuine relationship that they're continuing to build… what started with difficult conversations, ended up in this beautiful relationship with multiple marae communities and knowing where their school is based on the whenua.

Reform built with mutual responsibilities and mutual benefits, continued to strengthen and be owned by more people:

> …it's still growing and building. And so now it's not a PLD that they have once a week. It's now a way of being and doing, which is huge. It's a huge change… from a willingness that got spoken about to have some agency, get some efficacy, do something about it. In two years they've managed to make that big shift.

The voices of students

Interviews were held with a group of nine students who were part of a cohort of Initial Teacher Education students being taught by a kaiwhakaako undertaking the PPBL. The group comprises nine mature Māori students, all learning through marae wānanga. The experiences and the learning from these students supports the identified good practice for Māori student success within the tertiary education environment.

The students appreciated the opportunity to work collaboratively, rather than in competition with each other:

> We are all aiming for the same goal.

> … whanaungatanga amongst us, the peer support, the encouragement when we're down we get picked up by each other. We've learnt to let our emotions and our stresses out at wānanga in front of each other, and that's sort of made us, put us on the same level.

They were clear that as mature Māori students who had not succeeded in the education system, many were still facing multiple challenges. They appreciated that, as the principles of PPBL were being enacted through their course, that they were receiving holistic and appropriate care:

> I've had some pretty difficult experiences, the beginning of my year was very turbulent for myself and for my family, we were almost homeless so, that kind of kick started the year off on a bad foot.

> We're all struggling, we're all finding it hard, we're all in the dark in a way and just having a few people and our cohort to rely on …and that was a big helping point for all of us.

> It's been nerve racking but also feeling that I have been able to somewhat keep up even though I'm still going through my difficulties with not having internet, with having to go to the library and use others internet

However, they shared how learning through wānanga provided support and made their papers more achievable. They talked about the wānanga as feeling like they were coming home because they belonged to this wider family.

> You stress out in your own privacy and that helps nobody but because we shared it, we helped each other and that was a biggie for a lot of us. A few of us would probably have quit if we didn't have that sort of support and whānautanga.

Being part of a whānau meant going above and beyond, being unrelenting in support, even when it meant putting in the metaphoric boot to pull them up:

> Yes, it's like that you got to boot them. They'll be coming up to me and like saying, have you started? And I'm like last week, how come you haven't? and then, oh yes, I'll do it now. That has been helpful, like pulling each other up.

They linked this to what they had learned about Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the importance of hearing everyone's voices:

> That's actually how a lot of Māori people feel and think, and it's reinforced by our treaty whānau, our tauiwi whānau and it actually gives power to us, because it's not just us talking, just Māori talking amongst ourselves. It's actually tauiwi supporting the kōrero too, so it's, yeah, I really enjoy it I think it adds a lot of weight to it, to the learning, yeah.

The process of learning through wānanga was seen by everyone as challenging and helpful:

> Wānanga is so helpful like today you get a whole full 10 hours of lectures in a day sort of thing so we catch up and it's not as gruelling as we make it [out to be] but it is quite hard.

Importantly knowing the people and processes through face-to-face wānanga meant the online course processes and learning became more accessible:

> Submitting online is simple enough, however one of my main things is because I'm going through all these struggles, I find it hard to reach out to really fix my situation, anxiety, whatever it may be, it plays a big factor. But, because of the whānau here I've been able to persevere.

> It's nice to see that we get feedback if we don't pass, and they tell us exactly where we need to be and that's awesome because it takes away some of the guess work. It lets us know exactly where we should be taking.

As can be seen through the voices of these students, the culturally responsive and relational pedagogy, both explicitly taught and implicitly modelled through the PPBL was supporting a group of Māori students to both complete their university course and to achieve in there. We would contend that these students would typically be unlikely to consider tertiary study due to their life circumstances, had multiple obstacles to overcome in order to complete the course and faced challenges in achieving their degree . However, with the support provided and the four themes described above being exemplified through the pedagogy of this kaiwhakaako, all these students have (since this research was undertaken) graduated from the University of Waikato and are in employment as teachers in their home region.

Know Self, Grow Self, Grow Community

This specific research has helped us to consider our understandings about how participants engaged with the pedagogical framework of the PPBL and the extent to which this framework was also important to answering the research questions.

The PPBL wānanga and module content were initially conceptualised and framed around opportunities for participants to engage in, and learn through the following three themes: to know self, to grow self and to grow community using both inductive and deductive reasoning. Engagement was not intended to be consecutively undertaken, from start to finish, but with the contexts being layered and working analogically, dialogically and interdependently with others.

Through the PPBL wānanga and journalling experiences it was intended to create safe spaces where kaiwhakaako as learners would analogically use information and inductive reasoning to return to previous learning; to move from the specific to the general, and engage in a process of unlearning, relearning or extending learning into new spaces. Then, working with facilitators in their ELJ or hui with their ākonga group, similar contexts would be created to learn deductively by drawing their learning into new specific actions and conclusions to collectively disrupt a status quo that continues to advance societal discourses of power, meritocracy and privilege for some.

It was hoped that this process of learning with others, using inductive and deductive reasoning, could help extend and grow big picture (societal discourses) and specific detail comprehension (what do I want to stand for). In this case, practicing thinking critically and collectively growing one's agency through our shared ability to integrate theory with practice in an ongoing interdependent way. Thereby, rather than just maximising understanding through shared expertise, being able to identify new agentic positioning and take evidenced steps towards more emancipatory, socially just responses.

Despite questions specifically about this framework not being asked of participants, they provided sufficient evidence to conclude this section by considering what this pedagogical framework looks like. This is Short vignettes, using our voice and the voices of the participants who were filmed, exemplify each section of this framework.

Know self

To truly know self required the sharing of knowledge in safe spaces where critical reflections on one's own experiences, together with curiosity and increased self-awareness, can contribute to self-directed learning that can result in an increased sense of self. This process, exemplified by the following participant, shows that for her this process of conscientisation began at the first wānanga:

> I think you definitely created a safe space to be exposed [to new learning]. Yeah, I think that the way it was run, it was amazing. And then the way that all of you as a team worked with all the people coming. Yeah. I thought it was incredible. Like, you did make that safe space. It was OK to explore and be confronted and be kind of mulling it over, you know. That was really well done.

Know self, continued by hearing historical information that she had not previously been consciously aware of:

> The biggest surprise I think was right back to that beginning stuff that you shared with us. You know the [Doctrine of] Terra nullius and the Catholic Church and the white supremacy and that, that whole history was unknown to me. And that was surprising and shocking.

While it was shocking for her, as supported by the curated materials, she read more and began to get a deeper sense about these previously silenced historical narratives:

> And yeah, it took a lot of actually coming back afterwards and reading more and going, Oh my goodness, I didn't know. I knew about the Catholic Church sweeping through different countries, but not that whole sense that the people there were [considered to be savages therefore not human]. It was a really confronting and really made a lot more sense about some things.

> Once I knew that you can't not know it. So that's a really important learning. I think that's stuck. And then I think for New Zealand that kind of reminder of the colonial past and the history of that, that we're still experiencing that it wasn't something just [back] then. It's like the way that we were able to explore with you and the others.

Bringing these historical acts back to the previous taboo subject of racism, a subject that is alive and thriving in the contemporary professional contexts in which we all engage were her next steps. This allowed her to really know herself, in ways that she had never seen herself to be, but in a way that was non-judgemental, more socially-just, solution driven and future-focussed.

> You know, I've always been very focused on not being racist and trying to provide equity and inclusion. I came from a very multicultural background in the UK. I was one of the few white kids at my school. I've been in multicultural settings and travelled a lot. So I think I'd always taken that into my interactions with people and tried to be not, you know, not racist.

> But I think what the course [PPBL] showed was that there is that kind of hidden racism and that hidden privilege. That you're not aware of until you get to see it, I suppose.

Grow self

Once the know-self conversation had begun and safe spaces were available to have these conversations with similarly curious, unsatisfied and increasingly self-aware others, the learning was able to continue so that the processes of know self and grow self with ākonga, became mutually evolving and interdependent. Often the most challenging conversations were able to be had with colleagues and friends, about subject matters that previously had never been considered.

> Such a lot of shocks in that… I think just as the discrimination and the racism and the way Māori people were treated in the laws and the actions and the way things were done. And I mean, I think one of [ākonga name removed] stories stuck with me, with the people coming back from the war, and everybody had been kind of, you're all soldiers together and you go off to war and you do this and then…

The previous taboo subject was being shared with others, who like her were also learning and also contributing to the learning:

> When people came back the European soldiers getting land grants and the Māori soldiers not, and then she had a story of someone with an English name who was Māori and then he got treated differently because of the English name. And that was just, yeah. It was a huge shock to me.

And again the learning came back to her learning more about herself and what she wanted to stand for:

> And it's quite difficult coming from England like it's my history as the other side of that history. And now I'm living here in a land where we were kind of really understanding much more about that history and it's how it's reverberated right through and the ongoing effects of it. Yeah [the learning] put a different perspective on all sorts of things. So I learnt a lot.

Grow community

Being proactive with this learning and taking it to the wider level of reform, whether it was growing one's classroom praxis or one's professional community, requires understanding the cultural contexts in which we work. It also requires understanding our own agency and power and the power and influence of our society and professional institutions that are still perpetuating, to one extent or another, these distinctly different historical discourses of power and privilege. Here she begins by talking about thinking more deeply about what might be going on:

> There's been a few situations in my role where I hear about complaints and things like that so being much more alert to what might be going on here; it might not be what it looks like on the top. So that's been really helpful.

Once you were open to learning, the confidence to critically analyse one's own situation and continue learning was essential:

> Critically analyse what it is that our praxis is sending across [to our learners/ staff] ...and I think that's one of the big learnings that I'm having at the moment. It's not just the conscientising, but maybe giving me a bit more confidence... [to understand] the whole disconnect between what we espouse and what we perpetuate; in the ways that we perceive our practice or how our students perceive our practice. And just a reminder that with Māori... [this is so important]. I think you know a lot of the videos or the student stories [in the PPBL] were very much about how they perceived or experienced something.

> Which might not be how it was intended by the whoever was doing whatever, the other teacher or the..., but I think that has been an important learning to really think about how it's received, not what was intended, but how it's received.

When critical engagement was happening at a personal level it was often quick to expand to other contexts essential to this work including the political context:

> Like the changes in the political context have been huge since we did this. I was on one of the [national] curriculum reference groups, and they are going so far down that new approach, you know structured literacy, structured numeracy.

The university and schools:

> I think we're gradually making those shifts at university and then they're going to be the other way in the schools. [Universities] ...sort of following schools [and] slower to make our changes to practise and then potentially the schools will have to swing. I wonder how that will go because so many teachers have been on that [new professional development] journey?

And back to the vulnerability of contexts for learning from the PPBL that include:

> ... much more inclusive practise and local history and you know all that content knowledge of the learners and then I'd read some

7 | Conclusion

All participants concluded that they had been greatly influenced by their participation in the PPBL (p. 45, para 2)

The four emergent themes presented in the previous section:

1. Changing power relations through the professional and ethical parameters of teaching and learning
2. Continuing to deepen understandings of equity through cultural and relational pedagogy that is responsive and builds from what learners already know
3. Understanding the history of our nation's past and the implications for our future
4. Being the best that we can be...

work interdependently and become most influential when they are collectively applied with others in a mutually evolving cycle to bring about change. However, they will not happen in the vacuum provided by a society where those in power continue to benefit and be privileged from the silencing or re-storying of a racialised status quo that generates disparities and perpetuates social injustice. This research shows that the PPBL provides a clear learning pathway and curated resources for very determined acts of learning, where equity and social justice is possible.

All participants concluded that they had been greatly influenced by their participation in the PPBL. Most suggested that through their engagement they had become more critical in terms of understanding how power played out in the academy and in society. The debilitating influence this situation was continuing to have on specific groups of learners was also clear. They also discussed how more relationally-based, pedagogical and curriculum responses, together with extending their own specific cultural learnings, had provided a more equitable response, especially, but not solely, for Māori learners.

An essential influencer to this change was in their new understandings about the history of Aotearoa including colonisation and the influence this had had on the education system and therefore on them. That education could, as Freire[26] warns, either continue to assimilate our next generation into the logic of the current system, or it could become the means by which we as educators should respond more critically and creatively to transforming our current disparities. Building a more emancipatory future requires acceptance of ongoing and reciprocal responsibilities to engage with others in creating and spreading a new institutional culture of curiosity, self-awareness and social justice, with systems and structures in place to ensure this culture can be understood, accepted, nurtured and grown. This requires the need to not only unlearn many of the relational beliefs we have about each other, including aspects of our own and other's rights to our own cultural identities but to also think more critically about the current political climate. While participating in the PPBL positioned participants more knowledgeably to undertake the work in Section 127 of the Education and Training Act 2020 in relation to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the current furore around the Treaty Principles Bill is potentially distracting us from a system-wide attack that began almost as soon as the current coalition government took office. These attacks are widespread – reactionary in the sense they seemingly reverse former, evidence-based, policy decisions that advance more equitable outcomes to ones that claim we are all better served by equality (the removal of free access to bowel screening for Māori being the latest in a long line of examples). The rhetoric being these decisions are fairer, save money, are more democratic and therefore morally superior. A more critical, needs-based, and socially-just societal response might well have been to undertake a cost-benefit, comparison analysis, of the extent to which early screening had reduced medical costs for Māori, who received medical attention for bowel cancer, or how many had died from bowel cancer since this initiative was started.

The evidence, throughout this research, suggests that being the best educator we can be, is about our professional responsibility to increase equity by changing power relations. We can do this by utilising our professional, adaptive expertise to ensure our pedagogical responses are culturally and relationally grounded in what learners bring to this context, no matter their age or ethnicity. The evidence also suggests that this professional responsibility brings with it a moral imperative to understand the history of unequal power-relations that our nation was and continues to be built on, and to disrupt these contexts in ways that are respectful but 'aggressively helpful'.

If we are to take a more meaningful role as educators in Aotearoa there is work for us all, and while individually our contribution may be insignificant, collectively we can be influential.

26 Freire, P. (1996) Pedagogy of the oppressed. Penguin Books

Ako Aotearoa

Poutama Pounamu
Equity, excellence and belonging
THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO

THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato