



Cultural confluence – challenges for a training provider intending to work cross-culturally within Māori and Pasifika contexts

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Naku te rourou nau te rourou ka ora ai te iwi.

With your basket and my basket the people will live.

Executive summary

Within the complexities of bicultural and multicultural Aotearoa New Zealand, seeking to understand the institutional culture within which we work, and the impact of that culture on staff, students and external stakeholders is simultaneously an entirely appropriate and immensely challenging task.

This project has sought to respond to that task, using as a window an immersion experience undertaken by one cohort of students within the final year of their programme. Insights on the experience have been collected from different groups and these reflections have been considered in the light of the broader issues of organisational culture.

The findings and discussion focus on general institutional factors, and on aspects more specifically related to student learning. Central to the findings is the significance of 'connection', the attitudes that create that sense of engagement, and the realisation that connection, while intangible to some degree, is nevertheless the result of intentional activity.

The report concludes with recommendations specific to BTI, but applicable to other educational organisations seeking to work in the bi- and multi-cultural environment that is Aotearoa New Zealand.

Introduction

This report is the account of a journey – or perhaps more accurately it is a collage of snapshots taken in the course of one section of a longer journey.

In order to make sense of the contents of the report some context is needed. Bethlehem Tertiary Institute (BTI) has been in existence for 18 years and is a private training establishment delivering pre-service professional qualifications in teacher education and counselling. It sits as part of a wider campus, Bethlehem College, which espouses “Christ-centred education from the cradle to the grave”. Its cultural location is essentially white, Anglo-Saxon and protestant. Situated geographically on land which historically belonged to Ngati Kahu, there is, within the leadership of both the campus and the institute, a strong element of expressed desire to respect and work with tangata whenua, and to provide a safe and supportive educational environment for students of whatever cultural background. While numbers of Māori students are relatively small they nevertheless form part of the student community, and in recent years BTI has endeavoured to foster this by the provision of scholarships for students who come from local iwi.

Additionally, in the course of its growth, BTI has established links with nations of the South Pacific – particularly the kingdom of Tonga – both in Tonga itself, and also with Tongans resident in Aotearoa New Zealand. This has outworked itself in two ways – firstly, a number of Tongans have completed the Teacher Education programme for both primary and Early Childhood education. Secondly BTI has been invited to develop and/or deliver two teacher education programmes in Tonga itself – one, the development and delivery of a three-year Diploma of Teaching Studies for in-service primary teachers for the Wesleyan Church, and secondly, the development and resourcing of a three-year Diploma of Early Childhood Education for the Tongan Institute of Education to be delivered by Tongan TIOE staff. Specifically thinking about the developing work in Tonga, it should be noted that the initiatives for BTI’s involvement have come from the Tongan end of the relationship, not as a result of any intentional ‘colonising’ by BTI.

Herein is the journey on which BTI has been travelling – how does an essentially pakeha/palagi provider of professional training relate, teach and research in ways that are appropriate, respectful and mindful of the multicultural melting pot of both students and wider organisational contacts in which we find ourselves? How do we facilitate the flowing together, the confluence, of the diverse cultural groups that are our staff and students?

These questions sit alongside our awareness of the history of poor achievement for Māori and Pasifika students at secondary and tertiary levels of education, as evidenced by the relatively low rates of participation, retention and completion.

The task of investigating our organisational perspective and practice around cultural issues is clearly a considerable undertaking. There is no desire to conduct a theoretical exercise that has no potentially transformative outcomes. Authentic transformation is, however, neither a simple nor a rapidly achieved process. Consequently we have chosen to start our specific contribution to the journey in a smaller, more easily defined context.

In Year Three of the Bachelor of Education (Teaching) programme for Primary Teaching and Early Childhood Education, students take a year long paper called *Teaching Children from Diverse Cultures*. The course description states:

“Because New Zealand demographic trends are towards a population of diverse ethnicities, New Zealanders in general and teachers in particular, will be called on to be increasingly multicultural in their interactions. Christian teachers will, therefore, seek to have an empathetic understanding of cultural identity concepts, settlement issues and cultural characteristics of children from diverse cultures.

Furthermore this course aims to equip teachers with knowledge and understandings of the concepts and issues associated with teaching children from diverse cultures, with a particular emphasis on preparing beginning teachers to work with Māori and Pasifika students, as well as supporting students for whom English is an additional language.

The learning objectives of the paper are to:

1. Reflect, with reference to an understanding of the concept of culture, on the nature and influences that have defined the student’s own identity and the effect of this on all of life.
2. Critically engage with the issues arising from our national immigration policies, and with concepts presented in the course regarding the bi-cultural and increasingly multicultural contexts of NZ schools and centres.
3. Critique the related research to better understand philosophies, models and strategies for working with children from diverse cultures.
4. Engage with theoretical learning in professional contexts, in order to further develop skills and resources for professional practice in bicultural as well as multicultural teaching contexts.

As part of the paper, students take part in a three day immersion experience in an early childhood centre or primary school in the Bay of Plenty or Auckland regions. The linguistic and cultural environment of the immersion experience schools is predominantly Māori or Pasifika. Therefore, students are exposed to teaching and learning models based in these

cultures. The schools and centres to which students go are identified by BTI staff, and students randomly allocated in small groups.

This immersion experience is one of relatively few situations where institute staff and students have specific interaction with Māori and Pacific Island environments. The decision was made to use the immersion experience as a window through which to view the subject of institutional cultural perceptions and practice, and to ask the question, “Are there clues within BTI staff and student, and centre staff experience of the immersion visit to the answers to the broader and less well-defined institutional questions around our cultural journey?”

Some key questions help guide this inquiry:

1. Is there congruence between the institutional rhetoric around cultural awareness and students’ perceptions of institutional practice?
2. What are the experiences and insights of students involved in the immersion experience in relation to cultural awareness?
3. How can BTI develop its own cultural awareness, and that of its students, both within the specific context of the immersion experience, and within the bigger picture institutional situation?

Methodology and Method

Theoretical perspectives

This study, in desiring to explore experience in a beyond-the-surface way lends itself to a phenomenological approach. In contemporary research, “In its broadest meaning, phenomenology is a theoretical point of view that advocates the study of direct experience taken at face value” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000, p. 23). Rooted in the work of Husserl, with subsequent development from writers such as Heidegger, Gadamer and Merleau-Ponty, a phenomenological approach is concerned primarily with seeking to see as others see, and to understand the meaning that others make of their experience, rather than overlaying the interpretations of the researcher (Kvale, 1996).

The process

As referred to in the introduction, the immersion experience undertaken by students as part of a paper in the third year of the Bachelor of Education, *Teaching Children from Diverse Cultures* (TCDC), was used as the basis for this study.

Data was gathered in a variety of ways:

1. TCDC Students 2009.

In 2009, 26 students were enrolled in the TCDC paper. Students were invited to take part in a focus group discussion before and after the immersion experience. The focus groups were facilitated by an external facilitator, not involved in the teaching of the paper. The purpose and process of the project were fully explained to the whole group and then students self-selected into participation on a voluntary basis. Members of the teaching staff involved in the paper were not aware of which students participated.

The pre-experience focus group discussion was centred on the following questions:

- It is quite likely that in your future career you will have both Pasifika and Māori students in your classroom. What skills and/or knowledge do you think you will need in order to work with them specifically in relation to their ethnicity?
- To what extent do you think BTI is able to facilitate your development of those skills and insights?
- Thinking specifically of the immersion experience that is part of the Teaching Children from Diverse Cultures paper, what are your thoughts and feelings about going and being part of the school/centre to which you are going?
- What do you hope to learn from the immersion experience?
- Do you have any particular concerns about the immersion experience?

The post-experience focus group used the following starter questions:

- Describe the experience and any highlights and challenges.
- What have you learned about yourself from the experience?
- How might the experience influence your teaching practice?

This group is referred to as: *Students 2009 -pre or -post*.

2. Feedback from a sample of staff at the centres and schools visited by BTI students.

In 2009, the 26 students visited 8 centres and schools. Three of the centres/schools were randomly selected and the staff of the selected centres/schools were asked if they would be

willing to be interviewed as a group. The group interviews were held after the three-day immersion experience. Two of the interviews were conducted by an external facilitator, but due to logistical difficulties the third discussion was facilitated by a member of the BTI staff. The group discussions focussed on the questions:

- What do you think are the key outcomes that you would like students coming to your centre/school to take away from their time with you?
- Do you have any expectations about the knowledge/skills that the students who come will have at the start of their visit?
- How might BTI develop/strengthen its ability to equip students to work in cross-cultural settings?

From hereon, this group will be referred to as *IE staff* (immersion experience staff).

3. BTI staff involved in teaching the TCDC paper.

At the end of 2009, the three staff involved in teaching the TCDC paper met and discussed the paper and their perceptions for approximately an hour and a half. This discussion was facilitated by the researcher. The staff members were fully aware of the research study reason for the discussion and gave informed consent for the discussion to be held, recorded and used in the study.

This group is referred to as *BTI staff*.

4. 2010 TCDC students.

In 2010, 24 students were enrolled in the TCDC paper, and took part in an immersion experience identical in format to the 2009 cohort. As part of the course requirement, students completed online pre-experience and post-experience reflections. These reflections contributed to the data gathering process.

This group is referred to as *Students 2010 -pre or -post*.

5. Individual interviews with Māori and Pasifika students.

In December 2010, after completion of their degree programme, 7 students who identify as Māori or Pasifika were interviewed by a member of the BTI staff, and invited to reflect on their experience as a student at BTI, with particular reference to cultural issues. Informed consent was gained.

This group is referred to as either *Māori student* or *Pasifika student*.

A formal ethics proposal was submitted to the institute's research ethics committee and approval gained. Particular attention was paid to potential conflicts of interest, especially in relation to staff-student relationships. Informed consent was gained from all participants. Students participated on a voluntary basis. Neither lecturers nor researchers were aware of which students took part in the focus group discussions. The group discussions were recorded and transcribed, with no identification of individual voices. No transcripts or reflections were read until after all assignments related to the paper had been marked, and the paper completed (coinciding with students completing their qualification).

Each of the five data-gathering elements contributes a snapshot to the development of a bigger picture. In keeping with Gadamer's (as cited in Sharkey, 2001) caution around reliance on pre-set standardised methods of interpretation, no formal analytical tool was used. Rather, reading and re-reading interview transcripts and reflections served to highlight comments on experience and insight and hence to identify themes.

Findings

The first point to note from the 'snapshots' is that they display a strong sense of cohesion. There are obviously points of variation but overall there does not appear to be major dissonance between them. The findings are presented as themes, with verbatim from the transcripts or reflections to illustrate.

A positive experience – professionally and personally

Overall, the reports of the immersion experience were positive, from both personal and professional perspectives.

Learning about your own cultural identity is really important, that you really do have one - and going into a setting where they're really aware of their cultural identity - you almost wish that you grew up with that strong emphasis on your culture. It's really important to know where each child is from and each child in the Samoan centre is completely different. Some are from different families, some were half Māori – unique individuals with their own story. (Student 2009 – post)

I was in a kura I've never seen a more well behaved, well managed by the teachers, well-structured set of lessons. It's been the best classroom experience I've ever had, even though I was only there for 3 days. (Student 2009 – post)

It's a positive way to teach because they will come across in the future children of different cultures and then be able to adapt to those different cultures and know what they learn in here. (IE staff)

In terms of preparing for teaching students from a broad range of ethnicities, if they don't have a taste of something like this they're never going to have any concept of what that means (IE staff)

The significance of connection

The strongest theme to emerge from the collated data was the significance of connection – the intangible, non-quantifiable sense of knowing and being known. This connection was primarily relational but extended beyond the purely personal to connection with the environment of the institution, the centre or the school.

One of the IE staff described the relational connection as

There's an openness. If I let it flow to you, you let it flow to me...

Other IE staff said,

We loved it - because we are all doing the same for the children.

It's all about loving and sharing our professional careers.

And another IE staff member talked about a particular expression of relationship in her centre that had surprised the visiting student.

We talk about relationship - like we do a lot of cuddles and kisses in our centre - and I said to her this is what we do. It's our way of accepting people and saying "You're just like us, you're no different to all of us"because teachers need that loving and caring - and that's what we do in the centre. She comes in, in the morning. "Come here - cuddle!" I think that's what made her more relaxed because we have that bond. Whanau. Cos with European ways, they don't do that, but we do that. She loved that cuddle!"

There was a recognition that such attitudes are deeply rooted in cultural ways of being.

Being good hosts even at a difficult time of the year, you don't think about those sorts of things, you think these are people who have a need and we can assist them with that so it comes back to the philosophy of the whanaungatanga and looking after others and all those things that we hold dear within our tikanga.
(IE Staff)

Many of the BTI students reported very positively on the way they were received in the school or centre.

The teachers in the Whanau unit were intentional in accepting and allowing us into their classrooms, culture and lives. (Student 2010 – post)

I was expecting to feel uncomfortable at times but I never was put in a situation where I felt uncomfortable. Everyone accepted me for who I am and accepted what we were there to do - they all went out of their way to help us.
(Student 2010 – post)

On the whole the school itself was welcoming, but it came down to individual teachers. (Student 2009 – post)

One student commented that it wasn't just the staff at the school who were welcoming:

Students were also in general a lot more welcoming and outgoing than I had thought they would be. When I walked out of the door with the class I was to be with, literally 3 or 4 of the students buzzed around me and hugged me. This was a lot more close up and personal than I had ever had in other state schools.
(Student 2010 – post)

The sense of welcome, however, was not universal. In the student comment, note the link made between welcome and belonging:

For me it was more of a challenge personally as opposed to professionally, because the class I went to didn't particularly welcome me in a very nice manner, so I didn't feel a sense of belonging. (Student 2009 – post)

It is evident from the comments made that participants do not equate simply being together with 'connection'. One IE staff member commented on the student visit:

They looked like observers on the outside looking in rather than taking an active part in the classroom.

In talking generally, one of the IE staff contrasted 'connection' with an attitude of:

"that's what you people do, that's not what we do", "we've always done things this way and you guys might do things your way, but never the two shall meet".

Comments from BTI staff endorse the perception that time together does not equal connection, and underline the importance of intentionality. In talking about students they reported that,

...even though they had journeyed with each other for three years, as they sat and shared with each other about their cultural backgrounds, the things that had shaped them and the influences that had made them who they were, some of the customs and traditions that they had and held dear, some students said "I had no idea of all these things that had shaped you and where you were coming from".

BTI staff went on to express this idea of intentionality, metaphorically, as 'bridge-building'.

I like [the] use of the word 'bridge'... ..if there's the desire to actually connect then I'm looking for a 'bridge'.....When our students get a grasp of the potential to find the bridge and to develop understanding and to learn from someone else, to make the connection, then I see a way forward. I keep thinking 'we will find a bridge'. There's someone on the other side of the bridge as well, but it's almost like - take the initiative to go there.

Another aspect of this 'connecting' that emerged from participants was the significance of personal security as a jumping-off point – as if the bridge needs securely embedded foundations on which to be built.

What you find is the students who have a particular security in themselves...They have this nice holistic view of themselves in this world, and often will step over fences that other people see as walls. They will walk into spaces that other student teachers are scared of, or go into quite shut down.
(BTI staff)

The children and teachers did such a beautiful job that me fumbling my way through some badly pronounced Te Reo I felt would have spoiled things, so I wrongfully chose to remain silent...My own insecurities and I kick myself for this. Is it not better to have tried than not given it a go at all!
(Student 2010-post)

I love the Christian part of being here and the support that is available. I just don't take advantage of it because I am busy and embarrassed to ask for help. Fear of

failure is my biggest issue. Fear that I may be seen as incompetent by European brothers and sisters. (Māori student)

One student contrasted their own experience with what they saw happening in the school:

I just thought that maybe the difference between the structure could be that their main focus is on children knowing who they are and their identity. In mainstream Pakeha I never got to who I was or where I came from and I didn't really find out my identity until I was well into my twenties. I think that was why they were so happy and well balanced. (Student 2009-post)

The beyond-the-relational aspect of connection was typified by one of the IE staff.

It is more coming to feel first – that's why you need more time I suppose. It's the environment first – you've got to feel – it's something that is all around you.

Within the issue of time together there appears to be a challenge. This is exemplified by one IE staff member's comment on the length of the immersion experience. Several participants felt that a longer visit would be more beneficial -

...but having said that I wouldn't want them for too long either. Because it can almost contaminate the programs we're trying to run. It's hard enough in a mainstream school to get our kids communicating in te reo. We're gonna learn throughout the day without contamination of people wanting translations and speaking English alongside them.

And one of the students had picked up a similar attitude:

The teachers [said], "That's OK, I'm sure that 3 days with a palagi wouldn't have hurt our children too much." So that was the general attitude I had for 3 days - so I would say mine weren't very welcoming. (Student 2009-post)

With connection at the core of the themes within the data, other themes were apparent that either promoted or hindered the development of connection.

The importance of language

Language is clearly a significant facet of connection. IE staff recognized the limitations of a lack of language on the ability to fully enter into the immersion experience and were advocating for greater time for language learning by students. This stress upon language has more than pragmatic significance in that familiarity with language also conveys respect and a valuing of the other. However, as one of the Pasifika centres observed, they themselves were dealing with multiple Pasifika languages within the one centre – and there is obviously no way in which students could go prepared for such a range of linguistic situations.

I am feeling a bit nervous about the experience on account of being and unable to korero fluently. I guess, more to the point I am feeling a bit whakamaa that just because I am Māori I "should" be able to korero Māori, which I know is

nonsense really. I am aware that possessing the “Reo” does not define who I am. I am defined by who God says I am and He says I am. (Māori student)

In relation to this I had a funny incident on the first day where one child managed to open her packet by herself at lunch time. She seemed proud of this achievement and proclaimed it to me. I responded with “tino pai to mahi” (good job/awesome work). The second I said it she turned and looked at me with a very surprised expression on her face and said “you speak Māori?!” This incident pointed out to me that I do have the ability to speak in Te Reo. This little Māori girl had understood me. It gave me an awesome feeling that I had been able to communicate to her in the language of her culture. (Student 2010-post)

My conversational Māori created problems for me at times and limited the interaction I felt I could have within the teachers and children within the Rumaki unit....I do regret my lack of preparation in learning the language more and the impact it had upon my identity and interactions with others. I have learnt once again the great power language and communication has in any form of relationship. (Student 2010-post)

There was one [student] that knew sign language, and one was from overseas. So they could share their introducing a new language to the kids and they swapped and shared in that way. So I thought that was a good way of them getting involved without having to worry about what’s the numbers in Māori for maths. (IE staff)

Some students were aware of language as part of a bigger picture.

It has also made me consider that it is not just about using the language but about so much more....the way I teach, the way I respond, the assumptions that I make. (Student 2010-post)

It has inspired to me learn more Te Reo, and to be mindful of the difficulties children from diverse cultures may face in our predominantly English speaking melting pot. (Student 2010-post)

The impact of previous experience

For many the IE was a new and unfamiliar setting.

I’m excited, because Auckland is home and my family are there and yet I’m nervous, because I am entering a Decile 1A primary school in Glen Innes which is an environment unfamiliar to me. (Student 2010-post)

It was evident from student comment that both their previous experience and the views of family and friends contributed significantly to their being able to relate in a relaxed way to the immersion experience.

I think my reaction or negative response is due to my upbringing from my parents conveying the message that the English language was to be spoken and stating

that if we wanted to learn to speak Māori we can go to the Marae.
(Student 2010-pre)

I don't remember actually being too worried about it. Why this was the case is probably not just due to one reason but is most likely due to a myriad of events and experiences that I have had throughout my life.
(Student 2010-pre)

My one, [the visiting student] she did a drive by the day before and was told to lock herself in and keep the windows up and to be wary of the kids because it's quite rough here..... she got that advice from her parents - who have never been to Otara. (IE Staff)

I have spoken to several students that have been on the immersion experience before to get an idea of what I may encounter, and I have to say, the feedback is all positive. (Student 2010-pre)

In one instance the experience itself was a powerful aid to connecting with the students in the school visited.

Something unexpected happened during my three days there. I was often asked by the kids "What is Your Culture?" I responded by saying I'm a Kiwi, but I'm half Iraqi of which I am learning about. This allowed a connection that I know others did not have with those students – most of them are half Tongan or Samoan or Cook Islander etc. This "Halfness" that we shared bridged a cultural gap (even though we were completely different cultures) that allowed us to understand the cultural difficulties of being a mixed breed among others.
(Student 2010-post)

The dangers of assumptions and generalisations

One point that emerged as a factor that undermines connection was the making of assumptions – of making generalizations, and failing to acknowledge individual diversity. Alongside this is the challenge reported by the centres, of breaking out of some of the pre-conceived ideas that they had felt from students and others. Examples of this occurred throughout the interviews:

- a) The awareness of assumptions.

One other aspect I was not expecting was how similar the classes operated to mainstream educationThis truth spurs me to ignore any stereotypes that each cultural group learns in one particular way and helps me acknowledge the need to treat each child equally and in a unique way. (Student 2010 –post)

- b) The centres themselves noted that it could not be assumed that other centres even apparently sharing the same cultural roots would operate in the same way.

- c) Students commented on the uniqueness of the children:

It's really important to know where each child is from unique individuals with their own story... (Student 2009 –post)

- d) One of the IE staff commented on the value they placed on diversity within their own staff:

Also I want to add in there that when you look at diversity in the school, the diverse staff that you have - that's what makes us unique and that's what makes us draw on each others' strengths.

- e) Students experienced this diversity – which could create confusion:
One teacher told us we were there to observe...the other teacher told us that she wanted us to be a part of the classroom learning... (Student 2009 –post)

- f) Part of the conversation at one of the centres illustrated how it is possible to observe behaviour and interpret it (make assumptions) differently.

Some of the students were a bit standoff-ish only because they weren't confident in getting involved in something that they hadn't observed first.

... The standoffishness came from fear of the unknown

... Could be that, or could be respect ...

- g) IE staff related experiences of working against preconceptions:
To me it's good that the young girl will go back and tell people "Otarā's not such a bad place, South Auckland's not what it's perceived to be".....

The value of modeling and preparation

Another theme noted was the importance of modelling, and the reciprocity that is likely to follow. The lecturers modelled a way of relating, as did the staff of the centres, which was picked up by students, and by children.

Our kids just accept them. That's the way they are because that's the way you are..... So the kids have been modelled and they will reflect that attitude.
(IE Staff)

We must have male Māori lecturers, someone strong enough to make a call and we do it (Māori student)

The influence of leadership as part of that modeling was noted by students. For example:

The leadership of the school is so strong, and permeates all levels of the school. [Name] is obviously excited about his job, and his enthusiasm is contagious. He has a sound plan and rationale for the vision of the school, and has worked very, very hard to get the school where it is now, and continues to work towards where he wants to see it in the future. (Student 2010 –post)

In the reports of participants, the preparation that had taken place at BTI prior to the immersion visit was important.

A lot of it's to do with preparation beforehand - what the institute is telling them what the reason is for this experience. (IE staff)

- and the students reflected a sense of being well prepared.

When we were practicing with the patu, and even though I knew the protocol of not stepping over your weapon or leaving it on the ground, I did this, and had to undertake the punishment for it, called "peru peru". Because I already had this prior knowledge of the importance of the patu I was more accepting of the punishment. (Student 2010 –post)

One student talked about a situation which they did not feel specifically prepared for, but the overall sense of readiness allowed for processing of the challenge.

An area that I am uncomfortable in not being aware of prior was Tikanga in the classroom. I feel that I was ignorant in the belief I held that I could simply observe a class and not interrupt it. I became most aware of this on the last day when it was decided to circulate around the various classrooms in two groups. I was not aware, however, that by doing so that the class would have to stop whatever learning that was occurring and welcome me in. I could tell this frustrated some of the children as they were so very keen and eager to learn new information and skills and that my presence and following protocol would limit this. (Student 2010 –post)

The impact of the staff/student demographic

BTI staff commented on the impact of the presence of Māori staff and students:

We have so few Māori on campus.....If we had ten Māori in a class where we could talk through these issues it would get to the heart of things. There would be a more robust debate.....

There's a real difference between the classes that have no Māori students as colleagues in them, and classes that do. There is a lack of mystery in the classes that have Māori students.....

BTI staff comments reflect their sense of the unlikelihood of any group being truly multicultural or bicultural if it is dominated numerically by one group. The flow-on from this numerical dominance is the inevitable marginalization of minority groups. In this context, BTI staff made parallels between bicultural issues and the Christian ethos.

For example, if ... our Christian character was only in one paper, we would find it really hard to maintain a discussion or a story about ourselves or the students that we could put some integrity around.....If [the] institution was not a Christian institution, and you were teaching things Christian, it would rapidly, it would very quickly be at the margins politically.

Discussion and recommendations

There are two key conclusions to be gleaned from the data in the study. The first is the centrality of connection in developing the ability to work across cultural groups. This core of connection seems to supersede whatever the ethnic mix of staff and students, and whatever the ethos of the institution might be.

Second is the awareness that connection is primarily a heart issue. While structural matters (e.g. environment, time) and academic knowledge contribute, they are both secondary to the issue of attitude, specifically attitudes of open-ness and a willingness to build bridges. Linked to this is the recognition that creating connection is an intentional activity.

This discussion will focus on general institutional aspects, and on areas more specifically related to student learning.

From an **institutional** perspective there seem to be four factors to consider.

1. Role of leadership

Students commented on their awareness that leadership set the tone for the school or centre that they visited. This parallels the work of Morgan (1997) and Schein (2001). Morgan believes "A focus on the links between leadership style and corporate culture often provides key insights into why organizations work the way they do" (1997, p. 135). Schein comments "The bottom line for leaders is that if they do not become conscious of the cultures in which they are embedded, those cultures will manage them." (Schein, 2001, p. 375).

2. Staff development

It is clear from participant comments that past experience, and the learning from that experience, was significant in the attitudes and expectations held ahead of the immersion experience. While this is evident for the students it is equally applicable to staff. Staff professional development must give opportunity to examine individual attitudes, and, if need be, to work through potential barriers to building connection – past experience, preconceptions, and areas of mistrust.

The idea that cultural dominance and power imbalance in schools and classrooms are simply the result of misperceptions on the part of individuals is challenged (Sleeter, 2004). Rather, writers contend for the existence of long-standing systemic and structural patterns that perpetuate hegemonic Eurocentric education (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Sleeter, 2004). These writers have challenged the idea that addressing issues of cultural and educational racism simply involves changing previously held misperceptions – that all that is needed is a cognitive re-education (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Sleeter, 2004). Schein (2001) believes that organisational culture is deeply rooted in the collective experience, and therefore that change requires significant investment. This matches the participants' perception that 'time spent with' does not equate with 'connection'. Sleeter (2004), writing in the North American context, cites an example of professional development opportunity that included more than 100 hours 'hands-on' experience in multi-cultural settings. Sleeter reports that these experiences, "reinforced rather than reconstructed" (p.164) the views and attitudes of those

involved. She concludes that ‘re-education’ needs to include “structured immersion experiences” (p.176) of at least one month. Her paper concludes with the statement,

An educator qua organizer must directly confront the vested interest white people have in maintaining the status quo, force them to grapple with the ethics of privilege, and refuse to allow them to rest comfortably in apolitical interpretations of race and multicultural teaching. (p.177).

The use of words such as ‘directly confront’, ‘force’, and ‘refuse to allow’ needs to be considered. It is unlikely that such ways of working will produce the hoped for reconstruction of attitude and the resulting sense of connection. Such approaches seem clearly at odds with the attitudes of graciousness and mutuality apparent in the responses of IE Staff in this study – attitudes which opened the way for student engagement.

3. Staff demographics

It has been asserted that the culture of a school (or tertiary organisation) simply reflects the cultural origins of the group that comprises the majority of the teachers in the school (Hall & Bishop, 2001). In line with this, Sleeter (2004) argues that staff development cannot substitute for diversifying the cultural mix within any group of teachers, and talks about the need for “multiracial coalitions” (p.176). While BTI staff acknowledged this, one Māori student strongly felt that attitude is more important than ethnicity:

I don't care who teaches Māori as long as their heart is right

4. Intentional space sharing

One aspect of the intentionality of connection-creation is the willingness to place ourselves in unfamiliar space. The immersion experience seems to have been a significant learning opportunity for students. Taking up Sleeter’s (2004) recommendation of a structured immersion experience it is worth considering what a parallel experience for staff might look like.

Intentional space-sharing is one possible outworking of the Treaty principle of partnership. Ngai Tahu’s approach (Te Tapuae o Rehua, 2010) has been to formalise its relationship with a number of tertiary institutions within the South Island and its rohe. In its “Treaty-Based Guidelines and Protocols: For Tertiary Education Institutions”, Te Tapuae o Rehua (Ngai Tahu’s working partner group in education), the iwi addresses key areas of the tertiary education context. As well as issues of staff professional development, the document deals with protocols, and extends to campus design. In line with this, one of the Tongan students interviewed in this study, commented on how much she enjoyed seeing Tongan artefacts around the BTI campus, as this connected her with home.

While both the literature and participants raise issues of time spent, staff ethnic mix, and formal agreements, it seems that participants see these as only of value when linked with connection – engagement at a heart level.

In focusing specifically on **students' learning**, three conclusions can be drawn. First is the requirement for a platform of knowledge. Second is the awareness that head knowledge alone is inadequate and must be supplemented by heart attitude. Third is the observation that developing student heart attitude comes largely from tutor modeling and teaching that is rooted in relationship.

1. Providing a foundation of knowledge

As Wilson (2002) points out, all pre-service teacher education programmes within New Zealand have a responsibility to pay attention to issues of culture if they are to prepare students adequately to teach in the contemporary environment.

The new curriculum document (Ministry of Education, 2007) includes reference to the Treaty of Waitangi and cultural diversity as two of its foundations of curriculum decision making.

Additionally, the New Zealand Teachers' Council Graduating Teacher Standards (2007) has an introductory statement:

These standards recognise that the Treaty of Waitangi extends equal status and rights to Māori and Pakeha alike. Graduates entering the profession will understand the critical role teachers play in enabling the educational achievement of all learners.

Standard Three relates specifically to contextual factors: an understanding of the complex influences that personal, social and cultural factors may have on teachers and learners; knowledge of tikanga and te reo Māori; and an understanding of education within the bicultural and multicultural contexts of Aotearoa New Zealand.

As illustrated by participants' comments, this broader base of knowledge can be added to by means of language learning and acquiring familiarity with appropriate protocol.

2. Heart more than head

Participant comments clearly demonstrate the significance of heart attitude in creating connection and hence positive learning experience.

Recently, Keegan, Brown, Hoskins and Jones (2009) presented a paper at the NZARE conference, reporting on their work at Auckland University. They report that one paper in the teacher education programme covers Māori language and culture, and treaty-related issues. Students completed pre- and post-course questionnaires investigating knowledge and attitude. Initial results suggested that the paper created significant gains in knowledge and very small, but statistically significant positive change in attitude. The presenters reported that follow-up interviews with students affirmed that student attitudes were

shaped predominantly by previous experiences, and that the course did little to change those pre-existing views.

It would be inappropriate to draw from this the conclusion that the learning from past experience is fixed and unchangeable. What it does highlight is the need to give intentional attention to the past experience and learning, and to explore the assumptions and preconceptions that students bring into any situation. Learning in these contexts cannot simply be at an intellectual level. Out of such intentionality students can be invited to develop new self-awareness, and new abilities to question and be open to new ways of thinking and being.

3. Modelling and relational teaching.

The data in the study reinforce the importance of relationship as a foundation for significant positive learning. This echoes recurring themes in the literature. Bishop and Berryman (2006) report that students in their study identified relationship with teachers as the “most influential factor” (p.254) affecting achievement. These authors conclude that, “The first necessary condition of effective teaching was the importance of teachers believing in their own ability to make a difference” (p.267).

Hawk, Tumana Cowley, Hill and Sutherland (2002) report on a collation of three New Zealand studies – one each at primary, secondary and tertiary levels – which looked at Māori and/or Pacific Island student perceptions. Hawk et al conclude that the three studies all show a common theme – that, the most significant element for students was “the right kind” (p.44) of relationship with teachers. While the specific expression of relationship varied in the different sectors, this right kind of relationship expressed itself as empathy, caring and respect. Hawk et al comment on the significance of teacher modelling, and the likelihood of reciprocity in the teacher-students relationships – when teachers live confidence in, and loyalty to, students, mixed with high expectations, the likelihood is that these qualities will be reciprocated, with high levels of achievement. Hawk et al comment that while expectations are high, the right kind of relationship includes an allowance that neither teacher nor students gets it right all the time. Hall and Bishop (2001) see this development of empathic relationship as an outworking of an ethic of care, in which integrity, truthfulness, faithfulness and humility are characteristics of the relationship teachers seek to have with all students.

Other writers (eg. Banks, 2001; Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Gibbs, 2006) have ‘unpacked’ this relational quality, and the following characteristics summarise their findings:

- Self-awareness
- Awareness of bigger picture socio-political issues
- Respectful awareness of students’ backgrounds
- A belief in students’ ability to achieve regardless of background

As noted by one participant in this study, these qualities are more important than similarity of background or ethnicity.

In conclusion, the findings in this study are neither particularly revolutionary nor do they differ substantially from existing research literature. That, however, does not imply that the findings are insignificant. The need to focus on connection and attitude is clearly a very significant finding for any educational organisation seeking to develop cultural confluence that allows positive learning to happen.

Statement of limitations

It is the hope of the authors of this report that readers will find much in the data and discussion that is of application to their own context. The authors do note, however, particular facets of the institution in which the study was conducted, and specific aspects of the study and its methodology that impact upon the application of the findings to other settings.

Specifically we acknowledge that:

1. The Christian interdenominational ethos of BTI may give a particular 'flavor' to the findings. We believe that all tertiary institutions have an ethos, a set of values and principles that permeate the work of the organization. Readers of this report will need to read the study in the light of the ethos of this institution, and adjust and adapt the findings to their own context.
2. The sampling of the first group of students (2009) was, because of the self-selecting nature of the process, liable to create a potentially skewed data set. This observation is made in the awareness that any questionnaire or data collection method that relies on volunteer responses is liable to skew, and therefore that this study is not unique in the use of such an approach. We also would want to point out that reflections from the whole 2010 student cohort were drawn on, thus reducing to some degree the potential skew in the data set as a whole.
3. We write from and within specific cultural backgrounds and perspectives, both conscious and sub-conscious. We hope that some of this cultural 'one-eyed-ness' has been reduced as a result of the two researchers contributing differing cultural perspectives – specifically, European and Cook Island Maori.

Recommendations

These recommendations are specifically oriented to BTI, but, with the above provisos, we trust that they are applicable to other organizations:

1. Given that the participants' views reflect a valuing of the immersion experience, the recommendation is that BTI should continue its inclusion in the Bachelor of Education programme, extend its inclusion to other programmes, and seek to develop the relational connections with the schools and centres involved.
2. That BTI consider paralleling the student immersion experience with a staff immersion experience, which would include the opportunity to explore

assumptions and preconceptions before, and to reflect on the experience afterwards.

3. That BTI affirms that it's Christian ethos and the importance of relationship as part of that ethos is an appropriate platform for developing the ability to work cross-culturally.
4. That BTI look to develop cultural space and staff linguistic ability (not just Te Reo) as structural supports.
5. That BTI recognize that developing the scaffolding within which such connection can occur is an intentional exercise, and does not just happen.

Kaua e rangiruatia te hā o te hoe; e kore tō tātou waka e ū ki uta.

Do not lift the paddle out of unison, or our canoe will never reach the shore.

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Appendix:

A review of the literature

Any exploration of cultural diversity and bi- or multi-cultural practice in Aotearoa New Zealand is a complex and potentially contentious task. To undertake a literature review that does more than take a relatively surface view of the issues would be beyond the scope of this study.

Hence this section is intentionally brief. Attention will be drawn to three areas which impinge on the specific focus of the project: organisational culture, addressing cultural diversity in the school setting, and finally, attention to the issues of preparing pre-service teachers for a culturally diverse environment.

1. ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND THE NEW ZEALAND CONTEXT

One of the foremost authorities on organisational culture is American Gareth Morgan. Much of Morgan's work relates to the business sector but his research is relevant to any organizational structure and the associated human activity. Morgan states, "Organizations are mini-societies that have their own distinctive patterns of culture and subculture" (1997, p. 129). He elsewhere defines organisational culture as:

The set of the set of beliefs, values, and norms, together with symbols like dramatized events and personalities, that represent the unique character of an organization, and provides the context for action in it and by it. (as cited in "Organizational Culture", 2007, para.3.).

Institutional values might be reflected in ritual, symbolism – both visual and linguistic, and policies and processes.

Schein (2001) and Morgan (1997) have discussed the role of leadership in organisational culture. Morgan believes "A focus on the links between leadership style and corporate culture often provides key insights into why organizations work the way they do" (1997, p. 135). Schein comments "The

bottom line for leaders is that if they do not become conscious of the cultures in which they are embedded, those cultures will manage them." (Schein, 2001, p. 375).

Schein (2001) also comments on the influence of the cultural biases of each member (or sub-system) of the organization. These individual assumptions become personal reality, and act as a bench-mark for the behaviour of others – both individual and corporate.

Schein (2001) believes that organisational culture is deeply rooted in the collective experience, and therefore that change requires significant investment. Schein contends that insiders are often blind to the culture of the organisation and therefore that change is best aided by external input. The contribution of an outsider, in Schein's view, can contribute a cultural analysis - which can be particularly of use in identifying aspects of culture that seem puzzling and resistant to change. In research terms this analysis is ethnographic work (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Sissons, 1999) - providing an outsiders' view for management, staff and stakeholders about the real shape and constitution of the organization in question. This view is beyond mission statements, marketing, staff profile documents, and external audits - all of which can have narrow frames of reference in terms of critique of policies and practice.

Thinking specifically of Aotearoa New Zealand, these issues take on a particular shape within our current socio-political landscape. With the backdrop of colonization and the re-emergence of our founding document, the NZ situation is unique. The Treaty of Waitangi has been slowly but surely reasserting its influence both in public discussion and debate, and also in government policy. This has continued under the current National Party-led government coalition. National have constructed a government in partnership with its traditional ally, The Act Party, but the presence of the Maori Party is significant. Ironically, this is despite a pre-election move by National to remove all reference to the "Treaty" from government legislation. Of note is a shift within institutional and policy documents from the use of the "Principles of the Treaty" to "Treaty Centredness" or "Treaty-based" practices.

In the education sector, there is significant initiative within tertiary organisations seeking to come to terms with issues of culture. For example, the website of Ako Aotearoa, an organization committed to the enhancement of teaching and learning across the tertiary environment nationally, states:

Ako Aotearoa is committed to becoming a treaty-based organization, embracing the principles of te Tiriti o Waitangi. We will also work within the context of the Māori Tertiary Education Framework. In particular, Ako Aotearoa will look to develop partnerships with Māori through the establishment of a Māori caucus and a wider Māori reference group. We will support and learn from Māori for Māori initiatives (Ako

Aotearoa, 2010).

There are obvious signs that, within our educational context, the cultural flavour or 'tone' of an institution can have a dramatic affect on student numbers and their cultural experiences. One example is the popularity of Te Wananga o Aotearoa, not only with Maori students but also for New Zealanders from a wide spread of cultural backgrounds.

Te Wananga's popularity, however, sits alongside a history of poor achievement for Maori, as evidenced by the relatively low rates of participation, retention and completion. In her 2001 Master's thesis entitled *Barriers to Maori student success at the University of Canterbury*, Jennifer Reid addresses issues of institutional culture, and in particular monoculturalism. She states, "The socio-political process of marginalization has resulted in the peripheralization of Maori in Aotearoa/New Zealand" (2001, p.3).

Reid (2001) makes reference to Spoonley (1995) in exploring the issue of the inclusion of ethnic studies (e.g. Maori or Pasifika courses). She believes this not only fails to remedy mono-cultural dominance but also may contribute to its ongoing impact by helping to veil its very existence:

Bicultural initiatives, such as Taha Maori, tend to strengthen "educational racism," as the Pakeha cultural values on which mainstream education is based remain invisible when the focus is shifted towards Maori culture.

In this context, Taha Pakeha and Taha Maori are not perceived as equal counterparts; instead Maori culture is positioned as "Other", a deviation from the established norm. In contrast, anti-racist education not only focuses on cultural differences between different ethnic groups but more importantly emphasizes power relationships - the societal privileges or disadvantages that dominant or minority group membership bestows upon individuals. (Reid, 2001, p.49).

Reid's thesis is a study of the dilemma that NZ has faced within higher education in addressing bicultural concerns and the special place of Maori as partner to the Treaty.

Specific iwi have taken various initiatives in regard to partnership. Ngai Tahu's approach (Te Tapuae o Rehuna, 2010) has been to formalise its relationship with a number of tertiary institutions within the South Island and its rohe. In its "Treaty-Based Guidelines and Protocols: For Tertiary Education Institutions", Te Tapuae o Rehuna (Ngai Tahu's working partner group in education), the tribe addresses key areas of the tertiary education context where its students experience learning within

the backdrop of organisational culture and ethnic realities. A sense of place and legitimacy is addressed.

Te Tapuae o Rehua is a unique partnership forged between shareholders Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology, Lincoln University, Otago Polytechnic, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, the University of Canterbury and the University of Otago that was first established in 1998.

Formed against a backdrop of poor educational outcomes for Māori, the Te Tapuae partnership is committed to working together to increase numbers of Ngāi Tahu, and Māori katoa, participating and achieving within the South Island's tertiary education sector (Te Tapuae o Rehua, 2010, para.1.).

Some key issues that the document discusses, reflecting Ngai Tahu's partnership model, are campus design and layout (semiotics), protocols, recognition of "manawhenua" and "rangatiratanga", and staff professional development. The resulting document is comprehensive in its identification of the areas in need of change to bring about success in the partnership. Clear guidelines and protocol for dealing with these eventualities are laid down.

In comparing Reid's discussion with the Ngai Tahu initiative, the difference between the narratives is the presence or absence of collaborative partnership between tangata whenua and the institutions of higher education. It is worthy of note that the Te Tapuae o Rehua context is contemporary, and Reid's thesis includes retrospective historical analysis - there seems to be strong indication in the literature that through dialogue and scholarly research, new models are emerging.

The rise of the Treaty/*Te Tiriti* discussion currently is one that is taking on a tone of real collaboration and partnership. Inherent in the current discourse is a critique of power through the acknowledgment of the 'positioning' of past approaches.

Institutional practice clearly has implications for individual staff. Describing the journey undertaken by himself as an educator critiquing the place of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in practice and pedagogy, Crockett (2009) comments:

The research referred to in this paper was inspired by overlapping interests: continuing to develop my contribution as a Pakeha to a partnership based Treaty education pedagogy; seeking to explore and collate experienced practitioner knowledge as a resource for social work and counselling students; and learning more about social

constructionist theories and practices. Participants reported some significant enhancements to their practice as a result of reflections on their discursive positioning through the research process. (Abstract).

In concluding this first section of the review, notions of visible partnerships that resonate with not only the principles but also the spirit of partnership appear to be growing in the ways in which government and NGO's and educational providers articulate a response to the Treaty/*Te Tiriti*. This awareness takes note of the facts that societies are in a constant state of flux and the existence of internal influence of cultural "sub-groups" which attempt to resist or modify the dominant cultural norms and practices.

2. CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN SCHOOLS

This second part of the literature review narrows the focus of attention, and considers issues of cultural diversity within schools. While the context of the discussion is the compulsory education sector, much of what is written has application for the tertiary environment.

Hall and Bishop (2001) have provided a succinct historical background to the contemporary situation. In particular they note a long history of cultural diversity within New Zealand schools. This has been supplemented in the last 60 years by increasing urban migration of Maori, and increasing immigration from both Pacific Island nations and from a wide range of other cultural backgrounds. Forecasts suggest that the demographics of schools will continue to change, with the probability that by 2040, non-European cultures will form the majority of the population (Gibbs, 2006).

Despite the long-standing culturally diverse nature of students, educational philosophy and practice has largely been mono-cultural in perspective and teachers predominantly of pakeha/palagi cultural origins (Hall & Bishop, 2001). Hall and Bishop go on to state that there is "ample evidence" (p.188) that this situation has resulted in lower educational achievement especially for Maori and Pacific Island students. Bishop and Glynn (1999) report that mainstream education appeared unable to achieve sufficient internal change to correct these difficulties. Consequently, New Zealand has seen the development of culturally specific educational initiatives in the form of kura kaupapa Maori, and of immersion units within mainstream schools (Hall & Bishop, 2001).

While segregation may benefit the students within such settings, and may contribute a "critical gaze on mainstream practices and processes that will benefit Maori and non-Maori alike" (Bishop &

Glynn, 1999, p.140), many students from non-European cultures remain within mainstream education.

In considering the future of culturally responsive education, the literature makes a number of foundational observations. Firstly, the idea that cultural dominance and power imbalance in schools and classrooms are simply the result of misperceptions on the part of individuals is challenged (Sleeter, 2004). Rather, writers contend for the existence of long-standing systemic and structural patterns that perpetuate hegemonic Eurocentric education (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Sleeter, 2004).

Secondly, and perhaps somewhat paradoxically, it has been asserted that the culture of a school simply reflects the cultural origins of the group that comprises the majority of the teachers in the school (Hall & Bishop, 2001). Consequently, Sleeter (2004) argues that cultural diversity will never be addressed until the teachers themselves are drawn from a wider range of cultural backgrounds.

Thirdly and from a different perspective, it has been argued that education needs to be learner-centred, in which “students should become independent learners” (Bishop & Glynn, 1999, p.132). This approach recognises the significant role of school education in identity-formation. This development of a sense of identity, and the consequent authenticity and dignity (or lack thereof) is not formed in isolation but rather, emerges from the complex patterns of interaction, to which school dynamics are a significant contributor (Hall & Bishop, 2001).

These foundational observations lead to a premise described by Hall and Bishop (2001) as a requirement on teachers “to approach their craft in a way that positions the culture of students at the centre of the pedagogic interaction rather than unwittingly perpetuating cultural neutral and dominant forms of pedagogy...” (p.189). Clearly, however justified such a conclusion may be, it falls short of providing the ‘how’ of what such a cultural centrality might look like in the classroom. Research studies have turned to Maori and Pacific Island students themselves for answers to these questions.

Bishop and Berryman (2006) report that students in their study identified relationship with teachers as the “most influential factor” (p.254) affecting achievement. Of interest, in this study, while whanau members and school principals also identified relationship as the key factor, the teachers themselves had a different view. The majority of teachers reported the home environment as being the most significant contributor to achievement outcomes. The authors conclude that, “The first necessary condition of effective teaching was the importance of teachers believing in their own ability to make a difference” (p.267).

Hawk, Tumana Cowley, Hill and Sutherland (2002) report on a collation of three New Zealand studies – one each at primary, secondary and tertiary levels – which looked at Maori and/or Pacific Island student perceptions. Hawk et al conclude that the three studies all show a common theme – that, as in the previously mentioned study, the most significant element for students was “the right kind” (p.44) of relationship with teachers. While the specific expression of relationship varied in the different sectors, this right kind of relationship expressed itself as empathy, caring and respect. Hawk et al comment on the significance of teacher modelling, and the likelihood of reciprocity in the teacher-students relationships – when teachers live confidence in, and loyalty to, students, mixed with high expectations, the likelihood is that these qualities will be reciprocated, with high levels of achievement. Hawk et al comment that while expectations are high, the right kind of relationship includes an allowance that neither teacher nor students gets it right all the time. Hall and Bishop (2001) see this development of empathic relationship as an outworking of an ethic of care, in which integrity, truthfulness, faithfulness and humility are characteristics of the relationship teachers seek to have with all students.

Other writers (eg. Banks, 2001; Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Gibbs, 2006) have ‘unpacked’ this relational quality, and the following characteristics of effective teaching in a diverse cultural environment have been noted.

- The importance of teachers knowing their own cultural origins, beliefs and attitudes (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Gibbs, 2006).
- An enthusiasm for knowing their students and the cultural backgrounds from which they come and a respectful awareness of the different ways in which students may construct their world (Gibbs, 2006).
- An awareness that knowledge construction is never value-neutral (Banks, 2001) and hence finding a variety of methods and activities that use student resources (Gibbs, 2006).
- A belief in the ability of all students to achieve highly, whatever their social or cultural background (Banks, 2001; Gibbs, 2006).
- A social-political consciousness (Gibbs,) that works to reduce prejudice and promote power-sharing (Banks, 2001).
- A willingness to be learners themselves, and an open-ness to critical reflection on their teaching practice (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Hall & Bishop, 2001). Hall and Bishop state, “It is possible therefore for teachers to model a learning process in which they engage as co-learners among other learners” (p.197).

These attitudes and practices are essentially those of the Te Kotahitanga Effective Teaching profile. While this is a formal “means of working with teachers to help them understand how to develop positive learning relationships in mainstream classrooms where young Maori people can engage in learning, have their cultural identities confirmed, and achieve at levels unheard of before” (Bishop & Berryman, 2006, p.274) it is clearly deeply embedded in Maori ways of being.

This section has briefly overviewed the background to the contemporary New Zealand educational environment, and reported on relevant writing which addresses the ways in which the recognised challenges can be addressed.

3. CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND PRE-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION

The third section of the review considers the literature that discusses the preparation of student early childhood educators and primary school teachers for professional practice in cultural diverse environments.

As Wilson (2002) points out, all pre-service teacher education programmes within New Zealand have a responsibility to pay attention to issues of culture if they are to prepare students adequately to teach in the contemporary environment. Wilson's (2002) paper goes on to discuss the historical background to the Treaty of Waitangi/*Te Tiriti o Waitangi*, in the context of initial teacher education. In particular, he makes reference to the principles of Partnership, Protection and Participation as an appropriate and practical framework for the development of a programme.

The new curriculum document (Ministry of Education, 2007) includes reference to the Treaty of Waitangi and cultural diversity as two of its foundations of curriculum decision making.

The curriculum acknowledges the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and the bicultural foundations of Aotearoa New Zealand. All students have the opportunity to acquire knowledge of te reo Maori me ona tikanga.

The curriculum reflects New Zealand's cultural diversity and values the histories and traditions of all its people. (p.9).

The New Zealand Teachers' Council Graduating Teacher Standards (2007) has an introductory statement:

These standards recognise that the treaty of Waitangi extends equal status and rights to Maori and Pakeha alike. Graduates entering the profession will understand the critical role teachers play in enabling the educational achievement of all learners.

Standard Three relates specifically to contextual factors:

- 3(a) have an understanding of the complex influences that personal, social and cultural factors may have on teachers and learners
- 3(b) have knowledge of tikanga and te reo Maori to work effectively within the bicultural contexts of Aotearoa New Zealand.
- 3(c) have an understanding of education within the bicultural, multicultural, social, political, economic and historical contexts of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Additionally, the values explicit within the new curriculum document “to be encouraged, modelled and explored” (p.10) include diversity, equity and integrity. The modelling of such values by teachers requires teacher preparation programmes to go beyond tokenistic addressing of these contextual factors, and to ensure that lecturers also “encourage, model and explore” the cultural dynamics included in the GTS.

Wilson (2002) refers to this deeper-level awareness in his conclusion:

Whatever devices and strategies teachers develop to examine the degree to which their teaching takes into account the implications of the treaties, we know that ultimately these concerns are not just about meeting the expectations of professional sets of professional standards. The standards themselves are just one manifestation of a deeper-level more significant need for schools in Aotearoa New Zealand. That need is to work in a way that might secure a positive and honourable future for the children of this country through clear understanding of the documents that underpin our status as a nation. (p.39-40).

The implementation of such culturally aware teacher preparation presents two challenges. The first relates to attitude and identifying the roots of the difficulties, and the second to issues of relationship.

Connell (2000), in a discussion of gender identity formation within schools, refers to understandings of the school as both ‘site’ and ‘agent’. The notion of ‘agent’ refers to the overt practices and structures within the school that shape ideas of gender. But the school is also site or setting – which includes both the unseen, more deeply embedded institutional history and ethos and also other agencies which are active within the context of the school – as Connell states “especially the agency of the pupils themselves” (p.152). The discussion offered by Connell in the context of gender is easily transferred to the issue of culture.

Bishop and Glynn (1999) make similar reference to the concept of “school as an agent of individual change” (p.135). They comment that such an awareness needs to recognise issues of how the “dominant culture has maintained control of the positions of power...” (p.135), and the impact that such processes have on individual lives.

Writers have challenged the idea that addressing issues of cultural and educational racism simply involves changing previously held misperceptions – that all that is needed is a cognitive re-education (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Sleeter, 2004). Sleeter (2004), writing in the North American context, cites an example of professional development opportunity for student teachers that included more than 100 hours ‘hands-on’ experience in multi-cultural settings. Sleeter reports that these experiences, “reinforced rather than reconstructed” (p.164) the views and attitudes of the students involved. Other studies reported by Sleeter noted changes in attitudes that were both minimal and temporary. Sleeter’s own project involved a two-year programme of voluntary staff development for a group of thirty teachers. She states,

I did not see most white teachers construct a qualitatively new understanding of race over the two-year period. Instead I saw them select information and teaching strategies to add to a framework for understanding race that they took for granted, which they had constructed over their lifetimes... (p.175).

She concludes that ‘re-education’ needs to include “structured immersion experiences” (p.176) of at least one month. She also believes that such staff development cannot substitute for diversifying the cultural mix within any group of teachers, and talks about the need for “multiracial coalitions” (p.176). Her paper concludes with the statement,

An educator qua organizer must directly confront the vested interest white people have in maintaining the status quo, force them to grapple with the ethics of privilege, and refuse to allow them to rest comfortably in apolitical interpretations of race and multicultural teaching. (p.177).

More recently, Keegan, Brown, Hoskins and Jones (2009) presented a paper at the NZARE conference, reporting on their work at Auckland University. They report that one paper in the teacher education programme covers Maori language and culture, and treaty-related issues. Students completed pre- and post-course questionnaires investigating knowledge and attitude. Initial results suggested that the paper created significant gains in knowledge and very small, but statistically significant positive change in attitude. The presenters reported that follow-up interviews with students affirmed that student attitudes were shaped predominantly by previous experiences, and that the course did little to change those pre-existing views.

These reports reveal the challenges involved in addressing attitudes and practices, and provoke teacher educators to challenge the belief that a course in a programme will achieve the hoped-for outcomes in relation to an individual's deeper-level positioning in relation to culture.

The second challenge demonstrated in the literature is in connection with issues of relationship. As previously mentioned, one of the studies included in Hawk et al (2002) was set in the tertiary sector, specifically looking at the experience of Pasifika students in a mainstream provider. The general findings reported by Hawk et al (2002) have already been referred to. Specifically in the context of tertiary education, the writers report on the importance to the students of relationship – as expressed in empathy, care and respect – between students and lecturers. Significantly, Hawk et al state,

While having a teacher from your own culture might seem a valued bonus, this is not necessarily the case. Students were clear that what was important for them was that the teacher could relate to them and teach effectively. Not all Maori, Pasifika or Pakeha/Palagi teachers are able to deliver on either or both of these needs. (p.45).

Hawk et al (2002) conclude with series of questions for further consideration, of which two are particularly relevant to this study:

- What can pre-service educators do to prepare teachers for effective relationships?
- How can schools and universities ensure that their teachers have effective relationships with students? (p.49)

The paper does not provide any attempt to answer the questions but nevertheless they provide a challenge which requires reflection and pragmatic response.

CONCLUSION

The review of the literature has intended to briefly set the context for this study and to report on some of the key challenges facing educational institutions seeking to exist with integrity in Aotearoa New Zealand.