Inakitia rawatia hei kakano mō apōpō: Students encounter with bicultural commitment

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Mihi

E ngā maunga, e ngā reo, e ngā iwi, tēnā tātou. Nei rā he tuhinga mō tātou katoa. Ko te tino tūmanako he tuhinga tēnei hei hāpaitia, hei tautokohia te kaupapa o ngā tikanga rua e pā ana ki a rātou e haere mai ana ki mua i a tātou mokopuna tamariki, rātou e noho ana i ngā kura o te motu.

We hope that one of the outcomes of this project will be that of teacher educators gaining a deeper understanding of and being better informed about the importance of truly integrating a bicultural component in initial teacher education. Our over-riding aim is to contribute to a situation that moves beyond paying lip service to bicultural inclusion and to see it become a reality.

Our project is titled Inakitia rawatia hei kakano mō āpōpō.[1] This whakataukī (aphorism) reflects students' encounters with biculturalism and their understanding of te ao Māori (the Māori world) from their past experiences and the new learning that will occur during their study in the initial teacher education (ITE) programme. As a metaphor, the whakataukī describes students who bring with them the many layers of knowledge, skills and experiences that they will build upon during their tertiary education. By engaging in their studies, ITE students will ideally increase their familiarity with the Māori world, which, in turn, will create a biculturally stronger and more inclusive future for our tamariki (children) and mokopuna (grandchildren).

Part of our anticipated longitude project will require us to investigate aspects of ITE students' engagement with bicultural development and what it means for them, as well as for our children, our families and our workplaces. A particular focus will be on how the current New Zealand education system and environments contribute to students forming positive or negative constructions of Aotearoa New Zealand's commitment to Māori content in their programmes.

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[1] Thatch and cover with overlapping layers [of knowledge] so the seed can sprout and thus offer opportunity for those who follow.

Overview of the Project: Its Impetus and Aims

Titiro whakamuri hei arahi mō āpōpō. We walk backwards into the future, our eyes fixed on the past. We look to the past so we can move forward, understanding where we have come from in order to understand who we are today.

The survey and literature findings featured in this paper are premised by an anticipated Ako Aotearoa research project titled "Inakitia Rawatia hei Kakano mō Āpōpō/Students' Encounters with Bicultural Development: How Will the Past Dictate the Future?" The project has developed out of a smaller recent study, the findings of which indicated the need to expand the research into a longitudinal research project that will span four years. Our aim with respect to the larger study is to track a cohort of initial teacher education (ITE) (early childhood) students through their three years of training and on into their first year in a centre after they have graduated. We particularly want to gain understanding of what compels students to maintain or hinders them from maintaining, beyond their training years, high-quality bicultural involvement with all tamariki within the early childhood environment in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Our interest in conducting both this research and the aforementioned earlier study comes from our experiences—encompassing some 54 years between us —within the field of early childhood education. Both of us have been practising teachers and teacher educators in early childhood mainstream, bilingual and full language-immersion educational settings such as kōhanga reo, Playcentre (a parent/whānau co-operative organisation), primary and secondary schools, and tertiary institutions. Our experiences led us to conclude that while there have been many positive biculturally inclusive gains in Aotearoa New Zealand, there is still a long path to traverse before it can be said that we are nationally and regionally engaged in bicultural education.

When we use the expression "engaged in bicultural education", we mean working earnestly and genuinely toward revitalising te reo Māori (Māori language) and including tikanga Māori (Māori customs and traditions), practices and protocols in all of our country's educational sectors. Through our professional roles, we have found that most of the early childhood centres we have been associated with are still practising and teaching from a monolingual, monocultural paradigm (see also Education Review Office [ERO], 2010; Ritchie, 2003b). We consider that the consequences of this situation for our nation have been—and remain—a less than optimal education system for Māori, with commensurate fewer life and employment opportunities for them. The current state of the system also limits, we believe, the opportunities that Pākehā (New Zealanders of European heritage) have to experience and understand the richness of the culture and world view of Aotearoa's tangata whenua (indigenous people). We therefore think it is critical that the gaps and barriers that we believe hinder the achievement of Māori students and the bicultural development of Aotearoa as a community are investigated and discussed. Our research, although focusing on one group of people involved in education (i.e., our preservice early childhood teachers), will be a contribution to that process.

In determining where and how to begin our research, we deemed it important to find out what skills and understandings students have in regard to he ao Māori (Māori worldviews) when they enter ITE. The research on and information pertaining to those particular points will be included in our four-year project. We also consider it relevant to identify attitudes that might support or hinder students'

development in this area. Finally, we want to understand which aspects of learning might best facilitate ongoing development and progress for graduating students, that is, advance their bicultural development beyond the tertiary education classroom. We briefly document and discuss our earlier research about students' experiences and values in this paper, and how we suspect these might influence their practice. We then explore these early findings within the context of a review of relevant literature.

Pilot Study

Toi te kupu, toi te mana, toi te whenua. The permanence of the language, prestige and land. Without language, prestige and land, Māori will cease to exist.

Early in 2011, we invited all students in our first-year intake to answer an anonymous questionnaire. Anonymity, we decided, was necessary in order to offer the students as safe an environment as possible so that, as respondents to our questionnaire, to be honest and frank with their responses. In the questionnaire, we asked students to recount their past experiences with te reo Māori and he ao Māori, explaining that we wanted to know about their attitudes to he ao Māori. The questionnaire, consisting of 56 questions, asked students about their understandings of and their emotions and experiences with respect to bicultural issues, Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi, Aotearoa New Zealand's founding document) and the principles of language acquisition (Appendix 2). We constructed the questionnaire in a way that we hoped would help us better understand students' particular attitudes (positive or negative) and how these might or might not translate into their ongoing cultural and language learning while they are involved in ITE and once they graduated. We decided to give out the questionnaires right at the beginning of the academic year (typically late February in New Zealand), so that we could "capture" student opinion and attitudes very early during their study and before their tuition could influence those attitudes.

The students, 14 in total from the 25 attending one of the two institutions we had targeted (i.e., Rangi Ruru Early Childhood College), completed and returned their questionnaires. However, the students (potentially 108) at our other institution (the University of Canterbury) were not able to do this because on the day (22 February 2011) they were to receive the questionnaire, Christchurch experienced a 6.3 earthquake, the effects of which disrupted tuition for several weeks. Two weeks after the earthquake, we put the questionnaire online and asked the University of Canterbury students to fill it out there, but only one did so. We can only assume that it was because of the continuing disruptions from ongoing earthquake-related events that we had a practically nil response.

Realising that we would have to rely almost entirely on the responses from the students at the first institution, we decided to extend our project by a year. This delay would allow us to stay true to our original intention of accessing new incoming students, and it would also ensure we had the student numbers required to give greater credibility to our research. The questionnaires we received in February 2011 gave us sufficient information from which to further develop the questionnaire, particularly with regard to the areas we most wanted to focus on (Appendix 3). This process also clarified how we wanted to conduct the study and analyse the data it produced. We accordingly positioned our work as a pilot study, and it is the findings of this study that we report on in this paper.

In February 2012, we again invited Year 1 students at both Rangi Ruru Early Childhood College and Canterbury University to participate in the survey. We received 25 completed questionnaires from Canterbury University students in 2012 and 7 from Rangi Ruru Early Chilodhood College. This gave us a total of 47 responses to work with from an estimated 233.

The ongoing effects of the earthquakes from the previous year meant that students at the university did not receive their questionnaires until after they had participated in a two-day Te Tiriti o Waitangi course. This was unfortunate for the outcome of our survey, because students who had participated in the course were alerted to circumstances that our questionnaire was to cover and which could not have helped but inform them. Indeed, we noticed a change in the responses from those we had already previously recorded in 2011. For example, the 2011 students, who had not had any foregrounding, when asked what came to mind when they heard the words the Treaty of Waitangi or Te Tiriti o Waitangi gave single-word or short-phrase responses, such as peace, misrepresentation, history, British/Maori and rights to Maori. However, the 2012 University of Canterbury students generally gave an historical account of the treaty's development and signing. They noted, for example, that it was an agreement made between two cultures and that not all the words between the two language versions of the document (te reo and English) meant the same.

Ethical approval for the initial (i.e., pilot) study was applied for and approved through both of the contributing institutions, and was again sought in relation to the next stage of it (Appendix 4). The University of Canterbury is a public tertiary education institution, and Rangi Ruru Early Childhood College is a private tertiary education facility. Our decision to follow students from these two institutions was informed by one of the objectives of our study, which is to compare questionnaire responses from students in the two main educational communities in this country (i.e., public sector and private sector) providing early childhood teacher education in New Zealand. Some funding for the study has been procured from Ako Aotearoa, a national organisation that is committed to excellence in tertiary teaching.

Relevant Literature

Colonists' Aspirations

He peka kai, he peka taonga. Some food, some property. Land, language and cultural heritage are the taonga of today.

State funding of the Māori mission schools commenced in 1847. Simon (1998) observes in her research on Aotearoa New Zealand's state schooling system, that the state and missionaries gave low priority to intellectual development for Māori, concentrating instead on the aims of assimilation and industrial training. [2]

The legislative agenda of the colonising government of Aotearoa New Zealand was to assimilate Māori and for them to become "brown versions of our colonisers" (Mikaere, 2011, p. 206). As Simon (1998)

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[2] See Simon (1998, pp. *xv–xix*) for a full account of the key dates and events informing colonising legislation.

indicates, legislation was put in place to keep Māori "content" out and thus the education experience served the purposes of the colonisers:

> In retrospect, it is clear that the Native Schools system played a notable part in developing the general character and shape of education and schooling in Aotearoa: for more than a century state policy on the schooling of Māori was concentrated on the Native Schools. … Schooling for Māori was an important feature of colonial policy in New Zealand. From the time of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, first the British Colonial Office and then the settler government were concerned to "civilise" the Māori population. This was to be done by encouraging Māori to get rid of their cultural baggage and replace it with "the habits and usages" of Europeans. That is, Māori were to be *assimilated* into European culture …These understandings were shared by missionaries who had been attempting to 'civilise' Māori since 1816 through schooling and church. (Simon, 1998, pp. 1–2, emphasis original)

> Simon (1998) goes on to say that "colonisers were concerned to establish British law . . . [which] was used by the state to secure social control and, eventually, to help Europeans gain access to Māori land, the policy of assimilation also served the settlers' interests" (p. 3).

Legislative Requirements

He kurī, he tangata haere, kaore ōna tikanga, ōna aha. A dog, a person on the go, they have no propriety, nothing. Someone who has no standing at home wanders from place to place imposing on the hospitality of others.

The government of Aotearoa New Zealand today "has policies and programmes that explicitly address the needs of Māori as people who are indigenous to New Zealand" (Te Manatū Pūtaiao, 2007, p. 15). These policies and programmes apply to all sectors of society, including education. Accordingly, when student-teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand graduate from preservice education, it is assumed that they have met particular legislated criteria. The Graduating Teacher Standards (New Zealand Teachers Council, 2007) and the Registered Teacher Criteria (New Zealand Teachers Council, 2009) both have sections that speak to the expectation that graduating teachers understand and are committed to he ao Māori, such that it will positively inform their anticipated practice in educational settings. More specifically, the criteria require teachers to "work effectively" biculturally, to practise and develop relevant "te reo Māori me ngā tikanga-ā-iwi" (principals, protocols and practices of the iwi—Māori tribes—of the local community), and to "specifically and effectively" attend to the educational aspirations of Māori students and their whānau (New Zealand Teachers Council, 2009).

Over the past decade, the Ministry of Education has launched a number of guidelines detailing the government's expectations for early childhood education. These "encourage" centres to commit themselves to bicultural development (see, in particular, Ministry of Education, 1996, 2002a, 2002b, 2007 2008, 2009a, 2009c, 2011b, 2011c, 2011d). The licensing criteria for early childhood centres, along with the principles of the early childhood education curriculum document, *Te Whāriki*, which early childhood centres are bound by, convey the importance of honouring culture and identity (Ministry of Education, 1996, 2009c,2011d). These documents state that centres "should" incorporate bicultural

practice in their programmes and acknowledge and reflect the unique place of Māori as tangata whenua (the original settlers of Aotearoa). The documents also draw attention to the need for all tamariki in Aotearoa New Zealand to be given opportunities to develop knowledge and an understanding of the cultural heritages of both parties to Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

As participants in the education system at a variety of levels and also as researchers, we are especially interested in understanding how centres interpret the words "encourage" and "should", as used in the documents mentioned above. Although they are not strong words, we wonder, based on our experiences, if educators interpret the meaning of such words in terms of "if you wish to". We deliberate about this because we consider the intent regarding bicultural practice evident in the licensing criteria and *Te Whāriki* has not been honoured.

Take, for example, the statement "curriculum in early childhood should promote te reo and ngā tikanga Māori, making them visible and affirming their value for children from all cultural backgrounds" (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 42). Also Regulation 43(*iv*) of the licensing criteria, which "requires" that every licensed service provider "encourages children to be *confident* [our italics] in their own culture and develop an understanding, and respect for, other cultures … [and (*v*)] acknowledges and reflects the unique place of Māori as tangata whenua" (Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 8). These, we believe, are very clear working guidelines for educational centres about how they need to behave and involve themselves in relation to bicultural accountability.

The Ministry of Education (2011a) also requires, in line with government legislation, all primary schools to set down in their school charters how they will assess their performance with respect to the policies and practices that reflect New Zealand's cultural diversity and the unique position of the Māori culture … [with] the aim of ensuring all reasonable steps are taken to provide instruction in tikanga Māori (Māori culture) and te reo Māori (the Māori language) for full-time students whose parents ask for it. (Points 1–3)

Confusingly, however, given the published documents from the Ministry of Education, learning Māori language is not compulsory in primary and secondary schools (Hill, 2010b; Ministry of Education, 2011a). There is an obvious problem with this binary, which makes it unsurprising that students, in our experience, are entering ITE with a divergent range of abilities, knowledge and understanding about the place and importance of te reo Māori me ngā tikanga.

It seems to us, as teacher educators, that the educational continuum needs to have clearer standards and stronger expectations about te reo Māori proficiency throughout the school years. When Year 1 students enter ITE, they are taught at Level 5 of the New Zealand Qualifications (NZQA) Framework (Ministry of Education, 2010). This means that by the end of their three-year programme, they should have reached Level 7 of the framework. However, according to the curriculum guidelines (*Te Aho Arataki Marau mō te Ako i Te Reo Māori: Kura Auraki*), published in 2009 in relation to teaching and learning te reo Māori in English-medium schools, many students in their first year of teacher education, while achieving some aspects of te reo proficiency, such as word recognition, do not even manage to meet all of the objectives of NZQA Level 1 Māori assessments. Our experience is that many of our students are not able, for example, to communicate about where they live (Achievement Objective 1.5) or understand and use simple conventions relating to polite interaction such as complimenting people (Achievement Objective 1.6). We wonder how we can expect ITE students to be speakers of te reo

Māori and have knowledge and understanding of what a bicultural curriculum might look, feel and sound like when our school systems are not preparing them for this.

In their report to the Minister of Education (Ministry of Education, 2011c), the Education Workforce Advisory Group, convened to provide government with advice on how to raise the quality of teaching across the schooling system, recommended that ITE programmes pay considerably more attention to ensuring that graduates have a solid grounding and proficiency in effectively teaching te reo Māori (p. 3). The group also emphasized that graduates need to understand *why* they must have this level of competence. We agree, and note in this regard one's student's response to a questionnaire item. She saw te reo Māori as an "enforced" aspect of students' ITE, with no explanation given as to why students needed te reo proficiency. We also deliberate about what it is that preservice teacher educators understand by the term "effective teaching", and furthermore consider that the phrase is one that needs to be consensually understood and applied by those managing, monitoring and teaching ITE programmes.

The same concerns apply to all other educational settings, including early childhood. The document, *Education Workforce Advisory Group: A Vision for the Teaching Profession* (Ministry of Education, 2011c), details that teachers should know and teach their subject well, in a purposeful and orderly environment. The workforce advocates that teachers should identify students' levels of proficiency, and be mindful that ITE is a step in the process of teaching: it is not the destination (Ministry of Education, 2011c). As teacher educators into ITE programs, we would have graduating teachers also *truly* understand that the bicultural competent of their degree is not the destination, it is *a step* in the process of teaching.

Our country is about to reach its second century from the time missionaries applied their teaching strategies of assimilation and so-called civilisation (Bishop, 1996; Milne, 2009; Simon, 1998; Walker, 1990). Even so, current relevant legislation still lacks the oomph, the teeth, the guts that is needed to see the enhanced and equitable theories that the documents espouse translated into practical, effective commitment—and not just by legislators but by all who live in Aotearoa New Zealand. We believe the attitudes and values that are the legacy of the early colonisers towards all things Māori continue to undermine ongoing attempts by Māori and Pākehā language and kaupapa Māori activists to have the type of education system in place that would see all children reaching their full potential.

Values and Deep-Seated Beliefs

He iti pounamu. Small in size is contrasted with great value or beauty.

Paulo Freire (1972) stated that education is charged with subtle and not-so subtle messages that adults, in particular, transmit knowingly but more often unknowingly. Education conveyed in this manner naturally privileges certain values and knowledges over others. In Aotearoa New Zealand, we maintain an early childhood teaching profession where Pākehā teachers are in the majority: 14,269 as of July 2010 as opposed to 1,651 Māori (Ministry of Education, 2011b). It is highly likely that a large proportion of these teachers are monocultural and/or monolingual. The values and knowledges most prevalent in early childhood centres are likely to be those represented by this sector of the community. In our experiences within educational systems over the last 30 years, this dominance has proven hard

to shift. We agree with Freire (1972) that ways must be found to ensure the education community reflects, challenges, and changes patterns and processes that are inequitable because of cultural deficit.

The consequences of continuing on the path we are currently on are enormous, as Maiki Marks implies in the *Waitangi Tribunal Report on Te Reo Māori Claim*: "The frustrations of being a Māori language teacher are essentially summed up in the feeling that the education system has invited you to be a mourner at the tangihanga of your culture, your language and yourself" (Waitangi Tribunal, 2012, p. 1).[3]

Biculturalism: What Is It?

Mā pango mā whero, ka oti te mahi. With everyone moving together, the work will be completed.

Discussions, suggestions, thoughts and ideas about and around biculturalism and bicultural development, what it is, what it means in an Aotearoa New Zealand context, and how to advance it continue to be the focus of ongoing conversations. Metge (1990), for example, stated that bicultural development is a social change that is generated by a person's commitment to social justice and to Te Tiriti o Waitangi (p. 18). Ritchie (2003b) reasoned that biculturalism is about a partnership and respectful relationships between the two treaty partners, Māori and the Crown. She wrote that Māori are bicultural and have no difficulty understanding Pākehā culture because Māori *are* Māori in a Pākehā-dominated society and therefore have learned to walk in both societies. Ritchie (2008) later qualified her earlier statement by saying biculturalism is about being "completely comfortable in either Māori or Pākehā settings [and] … having an understanding of the protocols or expected behaviour in these" (p. 204).

Durie (2005), writing from a legal perspective, described biculturalism as the relationship between founding cultures of a state if there is more than one culture. While Durie acknowledges that biculturalism is an "uncertain tool", he lists a number of objectives and goals that he deems representative of biculturalism. He asserts that a primary goal is "to combine elements of both cultures to forge a common national identity" (p. 43).

Writing from her perspective as a health professional and from a practical position, Manna (2002) stated that, for her, biculturalism means both treaty partners being "treated alike and protected in the same way, to have participation in all things, and to have a say as equals, in partnership" (p. 38). Her perspective particularly resonates with our own views on what biculturalism is and should achieve. Skerrett (2007) supports this position in her article about languages and tino rangatiratanga (autonomy). She emphasises that a strong bilingual, bicultural community is one where everyone takes responsibility for cultural continuation "so that [all] children will lead rich, meaningful, creative lives" (p. 11). Hill (2004, 2010a), May (2002), Salmond (1991), and Smith (2010) also maintain the claim that biculturalism is "a commitment that was founded on this country's postcolonial history" (Smith, 2010, p.

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[3] Marks is the chair of Kororareka Marae in Russell and has written about the implications for Māori teachers who work unsupported and isolated in secondary schools in Aotearoa.

1) and that the significance in terms of education is the articulation "of the partnership between Māori and European [Pākehā]" (Smith, 2010, p. 4).

In 2007, Ritchie addressed a national Playcentre meeting where she suggested that open dialogue is essential in terms of understanding and respecting difference. She reminded the conference that the Treaty of Waitangi guaranteed to Māori "self-determination over their taonga [things of value]" and that it was about a "relationship of mutual status" (Ritchie, 2007, p. 24). She emphasised that the qualities that we would expect from an honourable relationship are "respect, trust, openness, communication, fairness, sharing power, decision making, responsibility, control of resources, ongoing evaluation and planning for the future" (p. 24). These qualities align with the teachings of *Te Whāriki*, Aotearoa New Zealand's early childhood education curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1996), which is a product of Aotearoa New Zealand's intentions to create a bicultural frame that informs and supports pedagogical practice in early childhood centres. The curriculum brings an holistic approach to teaching and places the wellbeing of tamariki (children) and their whānau (families) at the centre of its pedagogical approach. We agree with Ritchie that once the above dispositions are foregrounded and aligned with the principles of *Te Whāriki*, we will have the beginnings of genuine bicultural practice in early childhood education settings.

The above views come from people who work in very different community sectors throughout Aotearoa New Zealand, including teaching, medicine, the law, and community governance and development. The ideas they present provide a picture of true biculturalism in Aotearoa New Zealand as reasoned, understood, and based on effective partnership between Māori and Pākehā. The observations above also add credence to the notion that the manner in which people approach and participate in biculturalism tends to develop according to the personal and professional influences and attitudes that surround each participant and/or that he or she inherits.

Why Biculturalism Is an Issue and Why We Need to Care

Mā te kōrero ka ora ai te tangata. By the language the people will be strong and healthy.

According to Māori elder and politician Pita Sharples (cited in Ministry of Education, 2011b), one of the main reasons why acknowledging, implementing and sustaining biculturalism is important in Aotearoa New Zealand is because, under the prevalent monocultural system of education in this country, tamariki Māori continue to be over-represented among students scoring at the low levels of various educational achievement indices. Ritchie (2003b) argues that Māori children are constantly judged by Pākehā standards. She, along with other educational advocates of biculturalism, agree that the practice and implementation of biculturalism is about seeing Māori tamariki "not as where the deficit is" but in noticing that "Māori children carry two sets of knowledge" (Ministry of Education, 2008; Ritchie, 2003b, p. 51). For Ritchie, to notice, positively acknowledge and validate the "Māoriness" (p. 51) of Māori children is to act inclusively and in accordance with one of the principles of biculturalism—partnership.

Skerrett (2007) argues that, in addition to language and cultural loss, Māori have experienced societal loss, which is a loss to humankind, and that this situation has eventuated "in a thoroughly dehumanising manner" (p. 10). Certainly, events between Māori and Pākehā show a disproportionate dysfunctional relationship, with Māori sitting at the bottom of major milestone benchmarks, including

large-scale studies of educational achievement such as PISA, PIRLS, and TIMSS.[4] In comparison to their Pākehā counterparts, Māori are less likely to attend early childhood education, are leaving school earlier, are less likely to gain school and higher qualifications, are being sent to prison at a faster rate and a younger age, and are dying at a younger age (Caccioppoli & Cullen, 2005; Statistics New Zealand Tatauranga Aotearoa, 2009).

We believe that bicultural acknowledgement and competence on the part of practitioners and managers in all facets and functions of their work may well be the catalyst for positive interactions and learning opportunities between, with and for Pākehā and Māori. Researchers, theorists, activists and advocates of Māori mental, physical and spiritual health endorse this thinking (see, for example, Durie, 2001; Te Whāiti, McCarthy, & Durie, 1997; Penetito, 2010). Any such changes may also mean a shift in the negative statistics for Māori. While modification and adjustment to the way practitioners currently operate in monocultural silos may seem to be a substantial undertaking, the development of the world views of both cultures—Māori and Pākehā—is, we suggest, of paramount significance for effective change.

In her research, Manna (2002) asserts that cultural heritage and identity are, for Māori, of utmost importance and a fundamental right. She proposes that people who work with Māori and their whānau need to see cultural heritage and identity as the "standpoint" for and a "necessary condition" of ensuring everyone's cultural and social safety (p. 38). She also acknowledges that Māori processes and ways of being Māori must be in place for some Māori to feel sufficiently comfortable to express themselves in front of others. Durie (2001) and Penetito (2010) provide evidence to show that Māori bereft of opportunity to function in culturally sensitive and responsive environments are at risk of not being understood and not having their needs met. According to these commentators, culturally ignorant and unresponsive practitioners can unwittingly (or otherwise) maintain racist, unproductive and restraining environments not only for Māori but also for other New Zealanders who may otherwise have had an opportunity to become more culturally aware.

Biculturalism, it appears, is a state that some Pākehā define as what Māori need to achieve, and is therefore something that Pākehā do not need to concern themselves with (Ritchie, 2003a). *Te Whāriki* communicates the importance of *all* tamariki being "given the opportunity to develop knowledge and an understanding of the cultural heritages of both partners to Te Tiriti o Waitangi" (p. 9). For all tamariki to have this opportunity, all practitioners in all communities need to be accountable; Māori cannot and should not be expected to provide cultural knowledges and connections alone. When Pākehā, working collaboratively with Māori, accept and implement culturally inclusive skills and attitudes, they make an important association in regards to rights and responsibilities, not just to Te Tiriti o Waitangi but as practising partners in working communities.

What We May Gain as a Nation by Working Biculturally

He kākano i ruia mai i Rangiatea. It is a seed that originated from Rangiatea.

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[4] Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and the Progress in International Reading Literacy (PIRLS) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement.

Research and experience shows that there is much to gain by acknowledging and working in a biculturally inclusive manner and environment. Ritchie (2003b) and Skerrett (2007), for example, note that biculturalism is inextricably tied in with identity. Ritchie (2003b) asserts that when Māori children are seen as bicultural (and they may often be bilingual as well), they are likely to feel that their knowledge is validated. As the Ministry of Education (1996) points out, responsive validation of a child in terms of who they are and where they have come from sends that child a strong message of confirmation. And because a bicultural kaupapa (subject/topic) is inclusive by its very association with inclusion, it also embraces a multicultural perspective.

Interpretive Analysis of the Study Findings

Whaia te iti kahurangi; ki te tuohu koe me he maunga teitei. Pursue the thing that you have set your heart on. If you bend your head, let it be to a lofty mountain.

The interpretive analysis for this project was based on two different types of questions in the questionnaire we presented to the students. These were 39 scaled questions, where students were asked to provide a number from 1 to 5 (1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree) which showed their attitudes and opinions about statements such as "Children can successfully learn Māori language as a second language in early childhood centres." There were also 17 questions where respondents were asked to provide comments to provocations such as "Think about the word biculturalism. What comes to mind? List as many ideas as you can think of." The responses to these types of questions gave us an idea about students' emotional thoughts. We tried to ensure that there were some similarities across both categories of question types to give credit to our findings. For example, in a provocation question, we asked, "Should every child in New Zealand learn about Māori culture?" The corresponding scale question was "Māori culture is a significant part of learning in early childhood." This method allowed us to measure both students' attitudes and opinions and also their emotional responses towards biculturalism and biliteracy.

The pilot study identified that students enter ITE training with a variety of values and beliefs regarding te reo Māori and he ao Māori, and that these appear to be a product of the social and educational environments in which they have been immersed. Returned responses revealed that 23 of the 47 students had experienced minimal or no contact with ngā āhuatanga Māori (Māori aspects), including exposure to Māori language and visits to marae (Māori communal meeting place) and other Māori spaces. More commonly, these students had participated in kapa haka (Māori performing arts) at school or had attended a school-organised visit to a marae. This highlighted for us that there was minimal involvement and/or opportunity to be present at or to interact with Māori cultural events. For those students who had experienced this opportunity, the school environment was the initiator of the occasion.

We found that half of those students who responded to the questionnaire had never attended a te reo Māori course nor had exposure to the language through any other event, yet in their first year of ITE, as we noted earlier in this paper, they would be taught at Level 5 of the New Zealand Qualifications (NZQA) Framework. Furthermore, Māori language is not compulsory in primary and secondary schools, a situation which adds to the explanation of why students are entering ITE with a divergent range of abilities, knowledge and understanding about the place and importance of te reo Māori me ngā tikanga. It seems to us, as teacher educators, that the educational continuum needs to have clearer standards and stronger expectations about te reo Māori proficiency and its place throughout the

school years. This finding is supported by research already undertaken by Aotearoa New Zealand's Education Review Office (2008, 2010), which states that many teachers are not competent or confident to use te reo Māori.

How, then, can we expect ITE students (and inservice teachers) to be speakers of te reo Māori and have knowledge and understanding of what a bicultural curriculum might look, feel and sound like when our school systems are not preparing them for this. It is our belief that the Graduating Teacher Standards (New Zealand Teachers Council, 2007) and the Registered Teacher Criteria (New Zealand Teachers Council, 2009) expectations cannot be met within the current three-year teacher training structure.

While the findings of our pilot study are based on the responses of a small sample, they indicate how preservice teachers might respond to course content that could be construed as challenging. Studies focused on teacher education tend to show that when teacher education students, who hold deep-seated beliefs about particular matters, are confronted by course content that challenges those beliefs, some of them struggle to reconcile what their ITE course considers important content with their own convictions, which have typically developed in childhood (Freire, 1972; Leaupepe, 2009).

The students in our pilot survey presented a range of understandings about what biculturalism is, understanding it, for example, as "many cultures" (multiculturalism). One student stated it meant being able to enjoy areas of two cultures. Another wrote that while she respected the purpose behind biculturalism within New Zealand, she thought that other cultures must also be respected and acknowledged. Another response was that "it" was too enforced, but she did not explain why she thought this. She also wrote that too much emphasis is placed on ancestry and protocols. Because of comments such as these, we believe that further work must take place within ITE courses for students to be able to unpack these ideas further, and specifically in regard to what a bicultural commitment means for Aotearoa New Zealand as a nation. These understandings can be usefully compared against what biculturalism looks like for members of culturally competent community sectors and practitioners, people such as Mere Skerrett (2007), Jill Smith (2010), Jenny Ritchie (2003a, 2007), Mason Durie (2001) and Eddie Durie (2005), for example. Their views provide a picture of what we also consider to be true biculturalism in Aotearoa New Zealand—a state of affairs where perspectives are reasoned, understood and based on effective partnership between Māori and non-Māori. The observations will also add credence to the notion that the manner in which people approach and participate in biculturalism tends to develop according to the personal and professional influences and attitudes that surround each participant and/or that he or she inherits.

A high proportion of those who answered the questionnaire thought that all lecturers and tutors should include te reo Māori in their programme, and the majority of students believed it was important for teachers in this country to learn te reo Māori. When students were asked if they thought it was important for them, as student-teachers to learn te reo Māori, all but one agreed that it was. Their reasons varied, but overall it centred on the notion that te reo Māori should be fostered because it identifies New Zealanders and is part of our history. The one student who responded with a "no" qualified the response by saying that although teachers needed to have an understanding and respect for te reo and that they (the student) would like to learn it, all that teachers needed with respect to the language were "some phrases that can be used in everyday classroom use but not at a fluent level."

All but one student thought having some knowledge of te reo Māori was important for themselves for a variety of reasons. For example, they said it was important to keep the language alive because it is part of New Zealand's history, and that language is an intrinsic part of culture that should not be lost. One respondent stated that te reo proficiency would help them better understand the Māori children they were likely to teach. We considered that most of the responses to this question showed willingness at least on paper towards engagement with the topic.

A minority of students thought that Māori children only should learn about Māori culture, and some thought teaching all children to count in te reo Māori would be acceptable. One or two comments showed deeper thinking behind the acquisition of a second language, saying it is a great skill to have and that, as New Zealanders, we should cherish te reo Māori, as it is native to our country. While most students said they would like to be able to converse and understand te reo Māori, they were also concerned with saying and pronouncing te reo Māori incorrectly. This was also highlighted in an Education Review Office report, *Māori Children in Early Childhood* (ERO, 2008). This pilot study found that some teachers lacked the confidence and competence to integrate te reo and tikanga Māori into their practice. This is an area for service managers to address through professional learning and development.

Responses also indicated that some of the students would like to keep their learning to a basic level of colours, numbers, shapes, waiata and prayers only. And almost all of the students would not like to see te reo Māori made compulsory for people residing in Aotearoa New Zealand, which does not correspond to the comments they made in relation to the importance of all teachers learning te reo Māori. Further ongoing course content will need to be explored in order to empower students to identify with how equitable outcomes for all children can be achieved, as well as the effort it may take for revitalising a language that has been submerged.

In terms of projecting their study into teaching in early childhood centres, most of the students who answered our questionnaire thought it would be too difficult to use te reo Māori consistently while interacting with tamariki, and the majority thought that single words and directives would be adequate for teachers. The Graduating Teacher Standards (New Zealand Teachers Council, 2007) and the Ministry of Education (1996, 2008, 2011d) requirements, however, have greater expectations than these.

Students who participated in our study said one of the things that they hoped to experience and learn about in their teacher training in regards to biculturalism was to have a greater understanding and acceptance of other cultures.

From the responses we received in the second year of our project, we identified that the University of Canterbury students who answered the questionnaire following a Te Tiriti o Waitangi course seemed to have better appreciation of biculturalism than the students who had answered the questionnaire the previous year and without the benefit of this course. The second-year group understood that biculturalism is about two cultures. Their comments included that biculturalism is when a country has two recognised cultures, and they considered New Zealand to be a bicultural country because Māori and Pākehā cultures are represented. These students envisaged biculturalism as a situation in which two cultures live in harmony with each other—as a situation where neither culture drowns out the other,

and where everyone understands and participates in both cultures. In terms of what this meant for them in their practice, the students thought biculturalism would mean the lore, mores and precepts of both cultures actively associated with and used in education settings, and with both cultures melded together such that they complemented each other.

Summary

When conducting our initial research project in 2011, we found that half of the responders had not studied any form of te reo Māori (waiata, history, interaction with Māori community) before entering ITE. This finding led us to reframe some of the questions for the 2012 intake. For example, we asked students if they had heard about the Graduating Teacher Standards, let alone the standards relating to he ao Māori before entering teacher training. Only one person acknowledged that they had. Also, although half of the responders had been involved in learning some form of te reo Māori at some stage in their earlier education, only 11 students had experienced formal lessons at secondary school for a year or more. We concluded from findings such as these that the attitude and the aptitude of those entering ITE relative to he ao Māori and te reo Māori could differ if they had opportunity prior to applying for entry to teacher education to meet with career advisors able to outline the expectations and requirements of competency in these matters for educators. We consider that such a development would also support the notion of compulsory study of te reo Māori as a school subject for all students in all schools within Aotearoa.

Conclusion: What we need to do

Mā te huruhuru ka rere te manu. With feathers the bird will fly (with support and knowledge anything can be achieved).

Pita Sharples (cited in Ministry of Education, 2011b) emphasises the need to shift the focus on Māori taking responsibility for under-achieving Māori away from Māori. Having queried and considered how much teachers really know about their students' history, culture and world view, he calls for a sociocultural learning environment across the education sector. He argues that without an essential and central knowledge of our students, teachers and teacher educators are probably destined to continue our country's appalling rate of over-representation of Māori in the many negative statistics stated earlier in this paper. We agree. It is more productive, we believe, that we put our energies into embracing a bicultural commitment. For us, as teacher educators, this means monitoring incoming student teachers' attitudes and values and being aware of the likely bicultural commitment and practice of the schools that they have graduated from. It means scrutinising and then helping to ensure students' suitability to work and teach in an Aotearoa New Zealand context that is informed by the principles of biculturalism, which are mandated and upheld by legislation.

More immediately, our small pilot study and associated literature review has confirmed for us the importance of a larger research project directed at identifying and documenting the attitudes and values relating to biculturalism that students bring into their teacher education. Moreover, the responses from the students who completed our questionnaire just after attending a course exploring the Treaty of Waitangi indicate to us the fruitfulness of further such work throughout each year of our ITE programmes. How such work might play out for our students and their commitment to bicultural

thinking and practice during their program of study and on into their teaching is another strand we want to weave into our research project.

While we consider it unquestionably true that the current status of te reo Māori in our schools and early childhood centres is due to the ongoing effects of colonisation, we suspect our findings will confirm that greater value needs to be placed on te reo Māori me ngā tikanga in our education systems than is presently the case. We look forward to the project findings with enthusiasm as we work to progress what we know and what we stand to learn. Most particularly, we look forward to exploring how we and other teacher educators can best facilitate (where needed) attitudinal change amongst our incoming student teachers in relation to bicultural competence and knowledge that holds throughout their years of study with us and beyond.

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