

Pakeha students and a Pro-Treaty analysis: Teaching issues in a Diploma of Clinical Psychology Programme

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Helen Yensen:

Though with a distinct Dutch accent, we are both speaking as Pakeha. We hope to briefly report on what we do with students and staff of the Diploma of Clinical psychology at the University of Auckland. We hope that in the coming days this will be opening lots of questions and challenges and perhaps extra contributions.

We ran Treaty/biculturalism workshops for the Diploma on an ad hoc basis in 1990, 1991, and 1992. This year we have contracted for a fuller package which involves work with first and second years and staff. Next year this will continue with third year students.

We believe biculturalism training for non-Maori has two major aspects and, although they overlap in various ways we think that it is useful to separate them: the first one is awareness of Maori cultural practices, values, etc, which can perhaps be called 'cultural sensitivity training'. This needs to be under the control of Maori and have major input from Maori.

The second aspect is where our focus is, and that is awareness of the effect on the Maori world of the loss of sovereignty by Maori; of their marginalisation over the last one hundred and fifty years by Pakeha; of their oppressed status; loss of economic base, and the implications for change that flow from those events. We believe that, at least initially, Pakeha have the responsibility for educating themselves and other pakeha in this area.

There are several reasons for this. The first one is that the main change has to take place on the Pakeha side. We have to take responsibility for depowering ourselves and for honouring the Treaty. We should not use Maori energy for this. Then too, the work involves confronting our personal racial prejudices and power hang ups. We question whether Maori should have to be faced with this. Also, Pakeha participants often do not express their real feelings and opinions if they are faced by Maori facilitators. In addition, as Pakeha facilitators we can talk in terms of "we" have to change rather than "you" have to change, and that is more effective in terms of lowering barriers to learning.

Our main aim is to introduce students to pro Treaty analysis of historical and contemporary issues, and then to encourage and support them in the practical applications of this analysis to issues of relevance to the theory and practice of psychology generally, and clinical psychology in particular.

The programme is an evolving one, based on ongoing experience, evaluation of the impact, and feedback from the participants. We would like to just share a little about both the content and the process of what we do.

Tim Creanor:

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If I could just talk about the issues of content and then Helen will pick up and talk about some of the process issues.

As Helen said in her introduction, this is the first year that we have taken a larger responsibility for this input into the programme. The work that we've been doing has so far reached year one and two students for the first time and we've been doing some work with staff as well. Towards the end of this year (1993), - basically after it ends - we will work with next year's year 3 students to negotiate the kinds of projects that they'll be doing for their third year so at that stage we'll be reaching all the way across the programme as well as working with staff.

But I just want to go back to talk about what we do with year one students. Our main goal in year one is to lay or consolidate a foundation for a pro-Treaty analysis and what it means for the Pakeha position in Aotearoa. Basically, that means coming to grips with the meaning of Maori sovereignty as guaranteed in the Treaty of Waitangi within our current situation. So our course with year one students looks especially at the evidence from pre-Pakeha times and times of early contact between Maori and Pakeha. It looks at the colonial process to round out the historical perspective. It then moves into the more contemporary setting to look at the language that Pakeha use to talk about Maori-Pakeha relations; the role of science, and then specifically the role of psychology and clinical psychology, in order to really try to lay a very solid foundation.

For the year two students, when they move into a more practical stage of their training, they complete two placements in which they work with an agency. For year two students, this was the first year (1993) that we worked with them. We negotiated with the diploma and the students that rather than their course work consisting of a case study of their two placements, that the first placement case study be replaced by an observation based on a pro-Treaty analysis. It was to look at the hierarchies, the power relations, the resource divisions, down to client base and the physical environs of the placement that they're working in. All of that was to be a structural analysis and based in the pro-Treaty ideas of year one.

As I said earlier, we haven't worked with the year three's at this stage, but our prospective idea is to shift from them making a pro-Treaty observation to an intervention based in this analysis and the kinds of observations that flow from it. So the challenge will be to negotiate with them ways in which they can actually do something within their internship that will actually lay it on the line as to where they are coming from and how their analysis works.

That's the outline of the work that we do with the students. When we made the proposal that led to the work that we're doing, one of the things that we included in it was a segment of work to be done with the staff on the Diploma. Our basis was that it was inconsistent, or not sensible, to work with students and assume that the staff are up to speed. We have negotiated with the staff a role in which we guide and facilitate them to shift from a reactive stance to a proactive stance on Treaty issues. That process is still in train and I can report at this stage that the work that we have done has covered areas such as coming to an agreed version of the Diploma's history and actions on bicultural and Treaty based issues. They are moving towards a shared vision of where they want to go in the future and how they're going to do it. Also, the beginnings of a discussion as to how structures and resources for accountability and consultation with the Maori community can now begin to be put in place. This is still under negotiation, but it will be valuable to articulate, in consultation with the Maori community how these processes can be implemented. That is the content of what Helen and I have been doing.

Helen Yensen:

We consider the process very important. One of our major goals on the process side is getting the students trusting each other and trusting us so that they can work in a collaborative fashion and develop a supportive group process.

In year one we encourage work in pairs and in small groups both within the workshops and in doing the assignments. In year two we rely heavily on peer feedback and peer review. Our reason for this is that when participants do our workshops they think they've learned a lot, but when they go out into the real world they come up against some really tough challenges. We hope that this group building method will allow them to support each other, not just during the course, but also in the future so that they will have one of their peers to contact when they feel overwhelmed, hopeless and helpless. We find indeed this is happening already with the second years. We found that lecturing is not really effective, that it needs lots of interaction and so we use a workshop format. One in which participants have an opportunity to express feelings and opinions, explore stereotypes and racial prejudices, and share experiences and learnings in a safe environment.

We consider grading and assessment inappropriate. For a "pass", the participants commit themselves to full and active participation in the sessions as well as in doing the assignments. With grading and formal assessment there is a danger that students do not voice their real feelings and opinions, fearing that they may not be politically correct! They may also worry about challenging facilitators, and so acquire a superficial patina of jargon and acceptable opinions and none of that is very useful.

We spend considerable time trust building between the students and ourselves. For that we use a non-judgemental approach accepting the many prejudices etc., as that is where participants are at. At the same time, of course, we subject these to analysis and challenge. Also, we share our own vulnerability and our learning process, and that it is painful and it is ongoing. Most importantly, we guarantee confidentiality. Both of what is said during the sessions and of the written assignments.

The effective participation by students requires small groups and in terms of time we find that 3-4 hours is a minimum. We have run full day 9-5 workshops That is okay if shorter sessions can't be timetabled close together. At present we have been using about 20 hours each for the first year and the second year.

Feedback from our current first years suggests that we need an increasingly negotiated approach to this and what we do in our course, because many Diploma students are older and have a lot of work experience behind them.

Note: Waikato Contact - Evolution of a conversational style.

In 1994 we have expanded our work with the year three student of the Auckland Diploma and embarked on a comprehensive programme for students, staff and clinical associates with the Clinical Psychology Diploma at Waikato University. As a result of our commitment to negotiation, we have also developed what we call a "conversational" style of working which covers the same content but in a naturalistic, informal way which has been enthusiastically received by the group we have worked with so far.