Putting 'Maori' in the Mainstream: Student Teachers' Reflections of a Culturally Relevant Pedogogy

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Abstract: This paper reports on student teachers experiences of an education program that was explicitly designed to be grounded in both Kaupapa Māori and mainstream pedagogy. This program started from the Kaupapa Māori view to be Māori as Māori. This was then supported by mainstream epistemology of New Zealand focused good teaching practice. A Kaupapa Māori approach was taken in this qualitative study that used participant driven spiral discourse. The paper suggests that this combined Kaupapa Māori and mainstream approach allowed these student teachers to find their place in education. Conclusions suggest that a culturally relevant pedagogy modeled as good teaching practice was needed for these student teachers to develop an understanding of not only how learning occurs but also how their teaching relates to learning.

Introduction

By 2007, Betty had been trying to obtain her teaching qualification for ten years. She entered teacher training against the wishes of most of her husband's family, as they believed it would earn her greater mana (pride, self-esteem) than what they thought she deserved. She began with a distance learning program at one of New Zealand's large mainstream universities, defined as an educational system developed by and predominately for the dominant culture (Bishop, 2003) of the New Zealand Pākehā (originally used to refer to British settlers but is now applied to any non-Māori of western heritage). After initial success in the first semester, Betty found that the program was becoming increasingly difficult personally, academically, socially and culturally and she eventually withdrew. To prove to herself she was capable of becoming a qualified teacher, she then switched to another mainstream university and completed a degree in Te Reo Māori (the language of New Zealand's indigenous Māori population). Betty then returned to the first university to complete a post-graduate teacher qualification. Once again, however, she found the initial teacher training program to be too difficult to complete on her own.

Like Betty, Normanda began her teacher education at a large mainstream university. She had been working in an intermediate school (students aged 12-14) for the past several years as a teacher aide directing the Kapa Haka (traditional Māori performing arts) team. She was encouraged by the school to pursue formal qualification. While at university, Normanda found that the large crowded lecture theaters and tutorials with so many different students meant she never felt she was able to form the relationships she needed to fit in. When she discovered that not only would she be required to take a Pacific Island language but also this

initial teacher education program had minimal Māori content, she felt she could not continue the course.

Aroha thought she would not be able to attend university as she had left high school when she was 15. She grew up in New Zealand under the Taha Māori program, which was designed to introduce into the school curriculum aspects of Māori culture that would best suit the school community. For Aroha, this was waiata (song) practice once a week. The rest of the time she found herself at the back of the class ignored and feeling unwelcome. Aroha refused to have her children experience school as she had and saw teacher education as a chance to make a difference in her, and other children's lives.

The child of a Māori mother and European father, Amanda found herself living in two different worlds. While she looked European, she had grown up on the marae (ancestral land of the family governed by traditional roles and etiquette). School was a constant source of frustration, as Amanda wanted to be herself and found that she had to choose which parts of her world she wanted to express. For instance, while she was passionate about drama, it consistently clashed with Māori in the school's timetable. The high school guidance councilor told her why waste her time and talents in Māori when she could easily pass for a Pākehā and go on to greater things. Amanda refused to compromise who she was and what she wanted to be. She sees teacher education as providing a means to help other students express who they are.

These four women subsequently enrolled in a 2007 wānanga (Māori focused tertiary provider) initial teacher education program, after mainstream education could, would or did not meet their academic, personal, social and cultural needs. These women wanted a program that was based on Māori tikanga (customs, practices, traditions of Māori) and Māori āhuatanga (characteristics, aspects, the way of being Māori) and which also provided the necessary skills and knowledge to meet the New Zealand graduate teacher standards (Council, 2007). What they did not want was a 'Māori' qualification that was seen as second rate (Walker, 2005). They wanted to be Māori, for Māori as Māori in New Zealand primary schools.

While the Māori population of New Zealand is currently approximately 15%[1] this program is delivered in an area that has one of the highest concentrations of self-identified Māori in New Zealand at approximately 40%[2]. Amanda, Aroha, Betty and Normanda are four of the thirteen members enrolled in their cohort. All four self-identify as Māori. Their Te Reo competencies range from Aroha's basic to Normanda's fluency. Their ages range from Amanda's 20 to Betty's 46. They have all endured negative mainstream schooling experiences due to being Māori.

This paper focuses on the experiences of these four tauira (student teachers) in a wānanga initial teacher education program in New Zealand. In particular, it describes the impact of a program explicitly designed around a culturally relevant pedagogy grounded in Kaupapa Māori (philosophy, tenets of being Māori). This program presented initial teacher education from a Kaupapa Māori perspective and then drew upon mainstream epistemology that supported Kaupapa Māori. The research question this study sought to address was: How do marginalized student teachers' experiences of a culturally relevant pedagogy inform their view of self-as-teacher?

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[1] http://www.stats.govt.nz/Census/2006CensusHomePage/QuickStats/quickstats-about-a-subject/maori/maori-ethnic-population-te-momo-iwi-maori.aspx
[2] http://www.gdc.govt.nz/assets/Files/Surveys/Sample-Profiles-and-Appendix-Community-Satisfaction-Survey-2011.pdf

Kaupapa Māori as a Research Methodology

Numerous researchers have made great strides towards locating indigenous culture within education (Harrison, 2007; Menzies, 2001; Pember, 2008; Steinhauer, 2002; Wilson, 2007). In New Zealand, Pihama, Cram, and Walker (2002) presented the theoretical foundations of Kaupapa Māori by tracing its etymology and the principles that inform it. As the affirmation and legitimation of being Māori, Kaupapa Māori has become, "an influential, coherent philosophy and practice for Māori conscientization, resistance, and transformative praxis, advancing Māori cultural and educational outcomes in education" (Pihama, Cram, & Walker, 2002, p. 33). It does so by challenging, questioning and critiquing Pākehā hegemony, rather than rejecting or excluding Pākehā culture. As a result, Kaupapa Māori can be regarded as a critical theory that seeks to expose the historical power structures that place Māori in opposition to Pākehā. Bishop (2003) further clarified the effects of these power structures on Māori in mainstream education and demonstrated the need for new power-sharing relationships that addressed Māori aspirations for self-determination. Kaupapa Māori is built upon six tenets: Tino Rangatiratanga (autonomy, self-determination), taonga tuku iho (treasures from the ancestors), ako Māori (to teach and to learn), kia piki ake i ngā raruraru o te kainga (school life reflects the home), whānau (be like an extended family) and kaupapa (collective vision, philosophy) and supported through whakawhānaungatanga (the building of relationships).

Tino Rangatiratanga

Bishop (2003) argued that Tino Rangatiratanga is the most fundamental aspect of Kaupapa Māori. In an educational context, this means that tauira must be allowed to take part in the decision-making. In this study the involvement of the four tauira was a negotiated process.

These tauira were approached to be included as their stories of personal struggle in mainstream education offered four different perspectives: Betty against her husband's family's perception of her as someone trying to rise above what they felt was her position in their family; Normanda with her own self-perception of limited academic ability; Aroha with invisibility and Amanda with her cultural clashes. These interviews focused on their prior schooling experiences and how this programme affected their view of self-as-teacher. Interviews were conducted one-on-one in the classroom as it was a familiar environment and were semi-structured and unstructured. They occurred in the final weeks of their initial teacher education programme in 2009. The interviews began semi-structured around their own prior experiences of school and teachers then became unstructured as participants began expressing their own opinions about this initial teacher education programme and their experiences in it. To facilitate conversation the interviews were video-taped to allow the researcher to attend to the tauira and not note-taking. These interview sessions were then transcribed by the researcher and transcripts handed back to the tauira for authentication and permission to include in research publication. The owners of the information have authority over all aspects of what and how much of their story is presented to outsiders as such the participants were explicitly told they could edit, modify or delete any of the content material. It is only their authorized transcripts that are used in this paper.

As part of the individual interviews, this paper also reflects upon three years of spiral discourse (Bishop, 2003). In spiral discourse, discussions are whole group and occur when there are no time restrictions as dictated by cultural protocols. Therefore, a meeting is allowed to run until a natural conclusion is reached by all participants whether it takes three minutes or three hours. In spiral discourse, many of the ideas may be repeatedly addressed by

various members until everyone has had their opportunity to express their view. Bishop (2003) highlighted that, "meanings are contextually grounded" (p. 23). As the participants are expressing how the experiences impacted, affected and made sense to them; their interpretations are taken to be valid, normal and accepted. These sessions occurred twice a year after each practicum placement (student teaching experience). In the first year of the programme, they were group discussions in which the researcher took paper based notes. In the second year, the tauira were asked if they could be tape-recorded to allow for more detailed note-taking at a later date. In the third year, the sessions were video-recorded. It is through the individual interviews in conjunction with their post-practicum sessions that a process of continuous analysis of the tauira's consciousness of how their sense of self-as-teacher was developing as they experienced culturally relevant pedagogy. These spiral discourse sessions formed the basis for each of the semi-structured interviews.

Taonga Tuku Iho me Ako Māori

In addition to Kaupapa Māori's Tino Rangatiratanga, taonga tuku iho or treasures from the ancestors, recognizes that to be Māori, one must live as Māori. Central to this is the expectation that Māori language, knowledge, culture and values are regarded as valid, legitimate and normal. Rather than generalize all Māori culture as homogenous, it acknowledges individual identities with their own experiences, ideas and beliefs. Similarly ako Māori allows the role of tauira and kaiako (lecturer) to alternate back and forth, such that learning is more a conversation, one that is often conducted through active participation in the learning.

Kia Piki Ake i Ngā Raruraru o te Kainga me Whānau

Kia piki ake i ngā raruraru o te kainga means home and school should be seen as being of similar importance. Tauira experience fewer transitional problems when the experiences of the home are mirrored in the classroom, for example, any difficulties that do arise are dealt with in a culturally familiar manner. Likewise, whānau or family affects the relationships that ground the classroom environment, as all members of the classroom act as members of a family. In addition to ensuring that class members interact in culturally familiar ways, whānau relationships imply that all members support, encourage and progress with one another.

Kaupapa

Finally kaupapa refers to the vision that all students will achieve to their best abilities. It seeks to ensure that education benefits all participants by establishing a learning environment built upon a common set of goals, principals and practices (Sexton, 2008a). This program approaches initial teacher education for Māori, as Māori in a culturally responsive way instead of mainstream New Zealand's tradition of assimilation education to Māori (see for example Marshall, Coxon, Jenkins, & Jones, 2000 for a discussion on how New Zealand's 170 years of formal education has been designed around the deliberate enculturation of Māori into the mainstream). In order to present initial teacher education for Māori as Māori culturally relevant pedagogies are not treated tokenisticly or superficially, they are embedded as normal.

Whakawhānaungatanga

Kaupapa Māori acknowledges the importance of meeting people face to face. As part of this, one should look and listen first, so that a better sense of understanding grounds the place from which you then begin to speak. Kaupapa Māori is a collaborative approach that respects, provides for, and supports all the participants through whakawhānaungatanga (the building of relationships). It is whakawhānaungatanga that is the foundation of an effective initial teacher education built on Kaupapa Māori, as discussions are conducted in not only a physically, mentally and emotionally but also culturally safe place so that no participant's mana is trampled. All participants work together in sharing and using skills and abilities to benefit the entire learning community. Therefore, the process is culturally safe and acknowledges the insider and outsider status of cultural perspectives.

As this paper reports on teacher education as 'be Māori in Māori by Māori', as both their kaiako for the past three years and this paper's researcher, I acknowledge that I occupy a subjective position and reject the possibility of value free objectivity or neutrality. I have been allowed to situate myself in this research process as a member of the whānau community even though I was born and raised in America of English (mother's side) and Swedish (father's) ancestry. I am not Māori but neither am I Pākehā. I am tauiwi (non-Māori) in a Māori tertiary provider. I have been given the privilege to share these four women's stories. It has taken three years of whakawhānaungatanga to facilitate a non-indigenous person learning how to take an appropriate 'indigenist' (Sexton, 2008b; Wilson, 2007) perspective.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995a) proposed a theoretical framework termed culturally relevant pedagogy. This initial framework rested on the three criteria of academic success, cultural competence and critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995a). This was then further developed to provide more practical access by interested parties with three theoretical underpinnings that continuously intersect and overlap: conceptions of self and others, social relations and conceptions of knowledge (Ladson-Billings, 1995b). Ladson-Billings (1995b) concluded that a culturally relevant pedagogy does not serve to, "exoticize diverse students as 'other'" (p. 483), rather it encourages teachers to question the relationships among the students and the teacher, the school curriculum, and the school and society as a whole.

To weave this theoretical framework into Kaupapa Māori, this study's program (Sexton, 2010) also drew upon the following perspectives. Korthagen (2001) highlighted that teacher education should start, "from student teachers' experiences and their gestalts rather than from the objective theories on learning and teaching" (p. 8). Further to this, he argued that:

> The relationship between gestalts evoked by taking the teacher's role can be related to the student's experiences as a child in school. . . . These concerns are a more productive starting point for learning about teaching than theories coming from outside the student teachers. (p. 9)

This focus on student's experiences complements Giroux's (2005) conception of what he terms 'border pedagogy.' The metaphors of borders and border crossings are central to Giroux's work. Giroux contends that epistemological, political, cultural and social borders

structure the language of history, power and difference. Within an educational context, these borders effectively exclude the histories and difference of those who fall outside the margins of the dominant pedagogy, for example the self-identified Māori students in this study who did not fit into the mainstream educational system. Border pedagogy makes visible the inherited and socially constructed borders which frame discourses and social relations. To make these crossings, students and in particular the students in the present study needed a supportive and locally grounded pedagogical environment.

Border pedagogy provides students with the opportunity to speak and locate themselves in history. It confirms and critically engages the knowledge and experiences through which students' author their socially constructed identities. At the heart of this process, students are given the time and space to present their thoughts about the prior experiences that helped to construct their identities. The present study's students needed to reclaim and remake their histories, voices and visions as part of a wider struggle to change social relationships that deny diversity, i.e. Kaupapa Māori.

This form of pedagogy empowers the teacher and the students. The teacher is able to engage in open and critical reflection about how knowledge is taught, how knowledge relates to students' lives and how students can engage with knowledge (Morrison, Robbins, & Rose, 2008). The teacher helps the students find a language to critically examine the historically and socially constructed norms by which they live. This means that teachers are not simply motivating students to learn but establishing the conditions of learning that enable them to locate themselves in history (Chubbuck, 2010). This allows students to question their position pedagogically and politically. As students strive to make sense of their world, their identities, cultures and experiences provide the basis for learning (Cochran-Smith et al., 2009).

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy in Teacher Education Practice

This program was designed to prepare its tauira to be New Zealand registered teachers (Council, 2007) and not limited to kura (Māori schools) or Māori programs within mainstream schools. As such, the program explicitly wanted to integrate Kaupapa Māori with Hattie and Timperley's (2007) concept of the power of feedback, Nuthall's (2002) idea of effective teaching, Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, and Fung's (2007) theory of teacher professional learning and development, and Timperley and Alton-Lee's (2008) inquiry cycles for developing teacher knowledge and effectiveness. This meant that for these tauira that their way of being Māori was reflected in their education program.

Feedback was specifically targeted, as it has been identified as one of the most powerful influences on learning and achievement for both Māori (Hemara, 2000; Pere, 1982) and mainstream (Diez, 2010). Hattie and Timperley (2007) provided a thorough analysis of feedback and proposed a model that identifies the particular properties and circumstances that make it an effective tool for learning. Nuthall (2002) reported that teachers need to understand both how learning occurs and how teaching relates to learning. This is reflected in the concept of ako Māori. The reciprocal nature of teaching and learning required classroom discussions on feedback and then discussions on the four types of feedback put forward by Hattie and Timperley (2007). Following this, explicit references to these types of feedback in their own initial teacher education activities and assessments were identified and discussed.

The effective use of feedback is just one aspect of what it takes to demonstrate good teaching practice. One of the main objectives for the 2009 Year Three class was teacher professional learning and development. Initial teacher education is the beginning of formal teacher professional learning (Timperley & Alton-Lee, 2008). As such, much of Timperley et al.'s (2007) Best Evidence Synthesis on teacher professional learning and development is

relevant. Although this synthesis drew on a wide range of evidence, its purpose was to inform the New Zealand educational context.

The program supported tauira gestalts, defined as, "personal conglomerates of needs, concerns, values, meanings, preferences, feelings and behavioral tendencies, united into one inseparable whole" (Korthagen, 2001, p. 6). The tauira needed time and more than one opportunity to express their reflections on what they wanted to accomplish. As stated, Tino Rangatiratanga placed the tauira in the position of co-contributing to decisions concerning their initial teacher education program and not just being told what they needed to learn. Tauira also needed time and space to discuss what happened while teaching and what these experiences meant to how they saw their own developing sense of self-as-teacher. This reflects kaupapa or the collective vision of how these tauira and kaiako were working together to best support and encourage all members of the whānau.
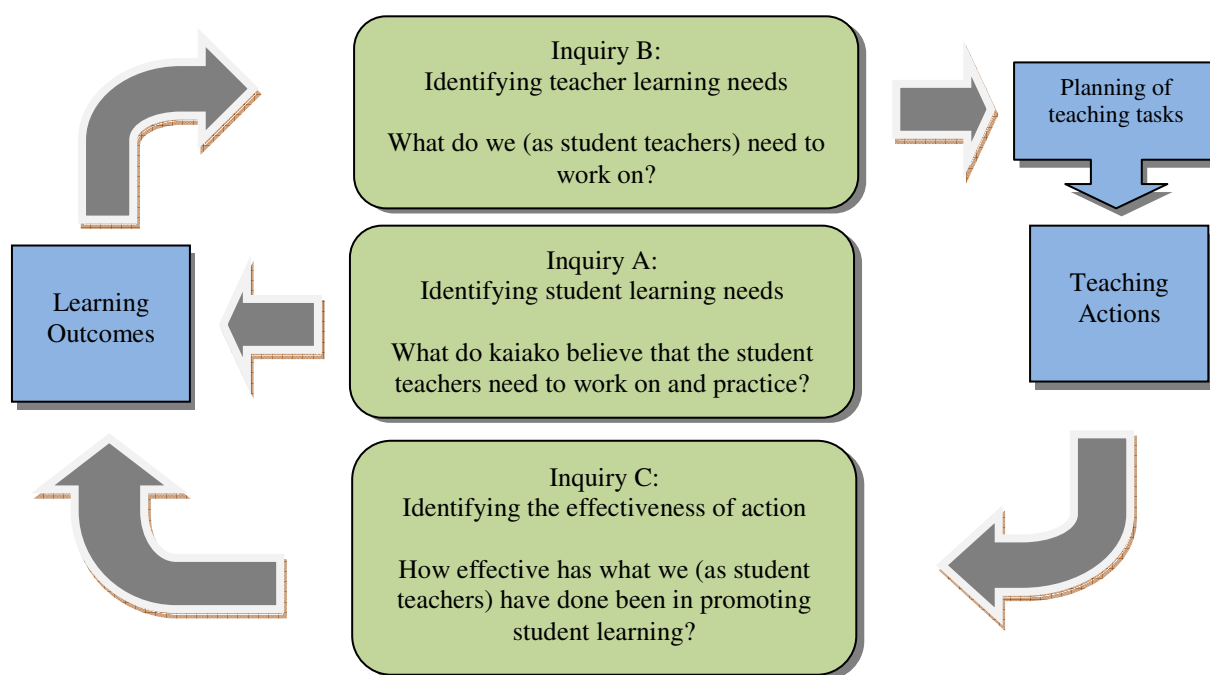

Figure 1: Inquiry Cycles
(Adapted from Timperley and Alton-Lee, 2008)

The kaiako explicitly incorporated Timperley and Alton-Lee's (2008) cycles of inquiry, see Figure 1. Their model was developed to incorporate both co- and self-regulatory elements. They argued that this provides students, collectively and individually, with opportunities to identify those issues that are deemed important. Students also then become the principle agents for acquiring the knowledge needed to address these issues. These inquiry cycles direct students into exploring how their attempts to address these issues are perceived as well as providing opportunities to modify their actions. Tauira are individuals with their own pasts and that these experiences can be used as tools for teaching and learning and not road blocks.

The kaiako identified the tauira's learning needs (Inquiry cycle A) and the tauira identified their own learning needs (Inquiry cycle B). Specifically, tauira expressed concerns over their teaching practice based on perceived weaknesses in effective teaching. This was compounded by concerns over what they saw as insufficient opportunity to implement the theory being discussed. The tauira wanted more opportunities to practice the theory being discussed. They requested more in class teaching sessions to identify the effectiveness of their planning and teaching (Inquiry cycle C). At this point, the tauira are working together

for the support and benefit of the learning environment of both themselves and their own students.

Tauira Inquiry Cycles

To allow for these inquiry cycles, permission was sought at a local school to allow these tauira to go back into the classroom for additional teaching practice. A local primary school agreed to allow the tauira to come in once a week over the ten weeks of Term Two, 2009, for a language and mathematics lesson. The language lessons were 75 minutes and the mathematics 50 minutes.

The tauira worked in pairs with three to five students in established reading and mathematics groups. Each lesson was planned and prepared in pairs and required a comprehensive lesson plan to include the anticipated questions to be asked. One of the tauira presented the lesson while the other acted as a critical friend making written annotations on the lesson plan for later feedback. All lessons took place in a large open-planned room within the school that allowed space for each teaching group. The kaiako was able to freely roam around gathering and recording additional information for comments on the lessons. After each lesson the tauira discussed what happened and then decided how to prepare for the next lesson. Only after their reflections and peer discussions were complete would the kaiako offer comments or suggestions on each critical friend's feedback and the proposed next learning experience. For these lessons, the tauira alternated roles as the teacher and critical friend. The alternating allowed each tauira four opportunities as both the teacher and critical friend.

The tauira were now getting the time for reflective teaching practice. Working in pairs, they determined how best to approach the identified needs and then addressed these needs in actual classroom practice. Time was now provided to reflect on this teaching practice and to determine whether their planning allowed them to address perceived deficiencies or if further modifications would be needed for the next learning experience.

The tauira had earlier reported that most of their time on previous practicum placements was spent trying to get through each day and to manage until the weekend. They highlighted a lack of time for reflection on their teaching practice or how their teaching was impacting on the students' learning. They felt most of their energies were focused on behavior management issues and working with the associate teacher to establish routines. These issues impacted on their ability to take the time they felt was needed for reflective thought on what the learning intention was for the students and what teaching and learning was actually occurring in the classroom. These student teachers believed that they were able to plan effective learning experiences but did not seem able to put them into practice. They wanted more time with students to work on their teaching practice. These weekly sessions allowed time to reflect on the teaching practice. The reflection included critical feedback from a peer who had helped to plan and prepare the lesson before any comments were offered by a more expert teacher. The discussions about teaching practice started as tauira discussed working with their students and then developed into discussions as tauira with tauira about the lesson. It was not until this took place that the discussion became one of kaiako with tauira. As a result, the tauira stated that they now had the time to begin to understand how learning occurs and how their teaching relates to student learning (Nuthall, 2002; Pere, 1982).

Discussions

As stated, these four tauira agreed to be included in this paper. Normanda explained that she joined this program after transferring from a large mainstream provider. She had completed her first year but did not think she was going to be able to manage the rest of the program. She sensed that she was being isolated and marginalized by the mainstream system. She wanted to return home and sought family advice and support. Her mother-in-law suggested she transfer to the wānanga program as it was in the area and maintained small class sizes to support whakawhānaungatanga. Normanda visited the wānanga, talked to several tauira and then applied to enroll.

Normanda had a strong sense of cultural identity through Māori performing arts and her te reo. She stated she had sought out practicum placements in schools where she could concentrate on her musical talents. As a result, she felt she was not prepared to take on all the roles and responsibilities that are required of a classroom teacher. She did not want to be the school's Kapa Haka teacher; she wanted to be a teacher who had Kapa Haka as a skill she could bring to the school.

When asked how these sessions helped her overcome this, she explained it was not as easy or fast for her as it was for her partner, "it took five or six times (meaning the 5th or 6th teaching session, which was her 3rd session as the teacher) but they got it." Normanda reported that these teaching sessions made her realize how her own teaching practice was impacting on the students in her class. She could not just cover the basics and expect her students to respond. As she put it, "it helped me think about how I could extend them more and if I had started extending them earlier."

When asked what she had gained the most from these sessions, she bluntly stated it was guided reading with school journals. In class, working with peers, role playing often turn into silliness unlike working with actual nine-year old students. These sessions impacted on her professional development as, "the journals were now actually working for me as we learned how to really use them." Normanda was developing a critical awareness of herself and how it was affecting her students. For her students to be able to achieve and gain a sense of academic success in school she needed more than a social relationship built on performing arts. She saw that she needed to demonstrate that she could bring the same confidence, commitment, and capability to the academic side of school. Once she was able to make this connection, she realized just how much more her students were capable of as well as how much more she was capable of as a teacher.

Amanda was one of the youngest on the program and full of contradictions. She has had some pretty negative experiences in her life but has chosen to refuse to allow them to hold her down or back. She explained how the targeted lessons were impacting on her and her view of teaching, "starting to think about how my actions affect students is just one of the ways I think this program is helping me quite a bit." She then went on to elaborate what she meant:

> For me I see making it more meaningful as probably more important than
> understandable. If I can put it into their everyday life situations and scenarios
> then they can relate to it. I can see myself doing that for my students.

Amanda thought one of the better aspects of the sessions was that they allowed her to overcome a perceived weakness in her own abilities around content knowledge. While she accepted that, "I know that you are supposed to think that you don't have to know it all," she then immediately stated, "but I need to know more." The sessions allowed her to concentrate on each session and what was needed in the next session. It was by taking each session with

time to reflect that allowed her to focus on student learning and not her own self-perception of limitations. By the final session she felt she was better prepared, "I don't know what is coming up next but I am ready for it."

Amanda finally began to grasp a much deeper understanding of knowledge and how other people learn. Education for her had always been nothing but a repetitive cycle of study then take a test. She was now looking at education from a holistic approach by focusing on bringing the students' personal lives and experiences into the classroom and relating the content to their world. Education was no longer seen as a never ending stream of assessments, now it was going to be curriculum that students saw as relevant, useful and meaningful to their lives.

As stated, Betty had been trying to further her education for the past decade. She began by undertaking her teacher training by distance learning until working alone became too much of a stumbling block and she could not continue. She felt that she needed face-to-face communication with other tauira and kaiako to discuss the topics that were in her head. Betty explained how these sessions were different to practicum placements:

> It was good to have hands on experience to put into practice what we are taught here, to actually have students unlike placement where we did get to spend more time with the students but you have to plan and implement the next day.

When asked to explain what she meant by put into practice the theory, she explained, "it was like PD (professional development), it was good." Betty placed a great deal of emphasis on her own academic success and she saw students' abilities as a reflection of what she was able to accomplish. It was through these peer reflections that Betty finally saw how her sense of self was impacting on students. She realized she placed too much focus on what she was able to accomplish rather than her students. While it is important for Betty to see herself as a life-long learner, it is now also showing students that they are also capable of learning.

Aroha started the program full of self-doubt and burdened with family commitments that put a strain on her mental, physical and emotional reserves. She stopped going to school almost a year before she was legally able to leave. When her mother went to formally withdraw her, the school had not even bothered to track down a student who had missed almost an entire year. She knew she was invisible at school and this only confirmed her impression of school. She did not want her children to have this same experience. She wanted to be the first member of her family on her and her husband's sides to gain a degree qualification. She also wanted all four of her children to be next.

Aroha acknowledged how these teaching sessions impacted on her and her teaching with the statement, "having these opportunities to focus on only one lesson let me finally bring it all together." When asked to explain what she meant, she stated, "I finally figured out what to do, that was awesome." She also provided what I believe is the best summary of how these sessions were different from practicum teaching, "I knew I could plan for my final placement but now I know I can teach my final placement, this really allowed me to put it all together."

Aroha's sense of herself as a teacher finally began to emerge. It was not because she consistently ranked at the top of her class in every academic paper or worked longer and harder than any other tauira that allowed her to see herself as a teacher. It was sitting back after a lesson and having a group of eight-year old students smiling and one hugging her. Aroha finally realized that being a teacher was not going to be like it was when she was a student, as she was making a difference in students' lives.

Implications

In a study of the implementation of a culturally relevant pedagogy, Young (2010) identified the following three critical challenges:

a) raise the race consciousness of educators and encourage them to confront their own cultural biases;
b) address systemic roots of racism in school policies and practices; and
c) adequately equip pre-service and in-service teachers with the knowledge of how to implement theories into practice.

The program that is the focus of this paper attempted to address all three of these critiques while explicitly incorporating Nieto's (2000) suggestions for placing equity at the front and centre of teacher education. Not only did this program take a stand on social justice and diversity, it is initial teacher education as social justice for transformative praxis (Sexton, 2010).

This initial teacher education program may have been Māori focused, but it still required the tauira to confront their own cultural biases. These tauira may have come from diverse backgrounds but all experienced marginalization by the dominant Pākehā culture of New Zealand. As such, their views and understanding of political, cultural, and social (Giroux, 2005) relationships, not only in education but also in society as well, were explicitly explored and discussed. As Aroha stated when reflecting back upon the history of New Zealand's assimilation based educational system, "It was hard, you know, there was a lot of hurt but we had to talk about it to get through it so we could start to move on." Aroha supported Korthagen's (2001) notion that student teachers needed the time and several cathartic opportunities to verbalize their own experiences to help them come to terms with the previous policies and practices that governed their own schooling experiences. Similarly, these tauira needed the time and several opportunities to put into practice the new culturally relevant policies and theories of practice that were being covered.

Kaupapa Māori as a culturally relevant pedagogy enabled these tauira to engage in the critical reflections needed to begin to develop a deeper understanding of knowledge and how students learn (Morrison, et al., 2008). Normanda, like several others in her cohort, were finally gaining the insight of how, as teachers, they could make their teaching relevant, useful and meaningful to their students. They then began to see how they could make a positive difference in each child's life (Chubbuck, 2010).

Most importantly for Amanda was her discovery that she could be Māori, for Māori as Māori. This supports the assertion by Cochran-Smith et al. (2009) that how students' make sense of their world provides the basis for their learning. Amanda and those tauira like her began to use their personal histories as building blocks for who they are as teachers instead of road blocks to them becoming teachers.

It must be noted that as a small scale study of only one year group at a small tertiary provider, these findings cannot be generalized to the wider educational community. However, this study did highlight what happened to these student teachers and gives hope that other initial teacher education programs could take a similar culturally relevant pedagogical stance.

Conclusions

This paper has shown how a culturally relevant pedagogy enabled four student teachers to embrace how knowledge is taught, how knowledge relates to students' lives and how students can engage with knowledge. Initial teacher education is complex and multi-

faceted. In addition to expecting its primary classroom practitioners to establish safe and caring environments that are supportive of students, initial teacher education also expects teachers to be capable of modifying their programs to allow each and every child the opportunity to access the curriculum in meaningful ways.

This paper's program was designed around Māori pedagogies and embedded Māori values into its conceptual framework. For the tauira, the whakawhānaungatanga proved to be the key in forming their identity in the role of teacher. It is because of this the wānanga was able to deliver a Kaupapa Māori program supported with mainstream epistemologically to meet the needs of its tauira. This whakawhānaungatanga has been the driving force behind using a culturally relevant pedagogy to model good teaching practice.

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