He Hui Whakatika

Culturally responsive, self determining interventions for restoring harmony

Sonja Bateman
Practice Leader, Services to Māori, Ministry of Education, Special Education, Professional Practice

Mere Berryman
Manager, Poutama Pounamu Education Research and Development Centre, Ministry of Education, Special Education, Tauranga

ABSTRACT

The time has come for kaupapa Māori[1] ideology and epistemology to move from the margins and claim legitimate space within the discipline of education. Kaupapa Māori ideology provides a dynamic framework within which Māori are better able to make meaning of the world and work for change. Increasingly, kaupapa Māori is being used to inform policies and practices across a range of sectors and initiatives. Research carried out by Bevan-Brown and Bevan-Brown (1999), indicates that for special educational policies and practices to be more responsive to and effective for Māori, there is a need to incorporate Māori values and philosophies.

Bishop (1996a) contends that the solutions for Māori do not reside within the culture that has traditionally marginalised Māori; rather, the solutions are located within Māori culture itself. An example of one such solution is the hui whakatika[2] process (Hooper, Winslade, Drewery, Monk & Macfarlane, 1999), a process which is underpinned by traditional Māori concepts of discipline, and one which is able to be likened to more recent and contemporary notions of restorative justice.

This paper highlights the role of a kaitakawaenga[3] as he works collaboratively with whānau[4] members to seek resolution and restore harmony by facilitating a hui whakatika process.

Practice Paper
Keywords
Behaviour problems, culturally appropriate strategies, discipline, Māori culture, parent school relationship, restorative practices, self determination, sociocultural factors.

INTRODUCTION

Despite the obvious renaissance that has transpired for Māori over the past 20 to 30 years, and Durie's (1997) assertion that Māori knowledge has integrity of its own, Māori epistemology is still regularly relegated to the margins, or simply dismissed. Within education, there needs to be an ongoing commitment to developing and maintaining learning contexts within which Māori students are able to bring their own cultural realities (Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai & Richardson, 2003). This paper will illustrate how kaupapa Māori ideology can provide a dynamic framework within which Māori are better positioned to understand the world and to achieve more effective outcomes.

KAUPAPA MĀORI

According to Mead (1997), the term "kaupapa" implies a structuring for how ideas are perceived and practices are applied. Kaupapa Māori locates this structuring within Māori preferences and practices and grew out of a strong sense of frustration about the effects of rapid urbanisation on Māori post-World War II. This culminated in heightened political consciousness by Māori, as well as a shift in mindset by large numbers of Māori away from the dominant western dialogue, particularly during the 1970s and 1980s (Awatere, 1981; Bishop, 1996a; Smith, 1990; Walker, 1989). This renewed consciousness, described by Bishop (1996a) as 'the revitalisation of Māori cultural aspirations, preferences and practices as a philosophical and productive educational stance and resistance to the hegemony of the dominant discourse' (p. 11), has been responsible for producing many societal changes.

Kaupapa Māori theory requires challenging western notions about what constitutes valid knowledge, so that Māori epistemology is neither denigrated nor marginalised (Smith, 1999). Kaupapa Māori opens up avenues for critiquing western perspectives and practices, whereby Māori are empowered to lead and determine the revitalisation and protection of Māori-preferred perspectives and practices (Bishop, 1996a, 1996b, 2005). Bishop (1996a) suggests that kaupapa Māori provides 'the deconstruction of those hegemonies which have disempowered Māori from controlling and defining their own knowledge within the context of unequal power relations in New Zealand' (p. 13).

As a means of responding to unequal power relations, Bishop (1994, 1996a, 1996b, 1997) developed a model for evaluating research which responds to Māori demands for self-determination by identifying and addressing the locus of power and control. There are five critical areas of questioning.

[1] Māori philosophy
[2] A meeting that seeks to resolve issues and make amends
[3] Facililitator and broker of relationships and services of support for Māori
[4] Immediate or extended family

The first explores how the research is *initiated*; the second determines who *benefits* from the research. Locating research within Māori cultural perspectives is essential for ensuring positive benefits accrue for Māori. The third element, *representation*, challenges whose ideas and realities are represented. The research must be located within the discourses of Māori whereby Māori metaphors, concepts and social realities are represented. For decades, Māori knowledge has been deconstructed and reconstructed by western researchers from a functional limitations or "expert" perspective in order that it might be more easily understood by western readers. The fourth area, *legitimation*, defines whose needs, interests and concerns the research is representing. A Māori voice must be used if appropriate meanings are to be made from Māori experiences and social realities. Finally, the area of *accountability* ascertains to whom the researchers are accountable.

Bishop's (1997) model maintains that Māori must be the ones to authenticate the language and cultural content. By maintaining power and control over these critical issues in the past, traditional western research has been viewed with suspicion by many Māori, who refuse to participate in research where they are without a voice.

Smith (2003) asserts that the Māori language revitalisation movement that began at the same time produced mindset shifts that were 'away from waiting for things to be done for them, to doing things for themselves; a shift away from an emphasis on reactive politics to an emphasis on being more proactive; a shift from negative motivation to positive motivation' (p. 2). Smith observes that these shifts involved many Māori moving from merely talking about de-colonisation, to talking about "conscientisation" or consciousness-raising which places Māori in a position from where changes can be made.

This enables Māori to take greater responsibility for their own situation by dealing with the "politics of distraction" (Smith, 2003). A critical element to this is the rejection of hegemonic thinking and practices (Gramsci, 1971) and becoming critically conscious about one's own aspirations and preferences. Friere (1996) notes that in order to achieve critical consciousness, it is necessary to own one's own situation; that people cannot construct theories of liberating action until they no longer internalise the dominant discourse. Smith notes that rather than working from a reactive standpoint, kaupapa Māori is a proactive transformative stance. Kaupapa Māori repositions Māori away from places of deficit theorising to positions of "agency", able to take responsibility for transforming their own condition (Bishop et al., 2003). Drawing from te ao Māori[5] for the myth messages, discourses and metaphors is an important part of repositioning (Walker, 1978). It involves looking back in order to provide guidance moving forward - to source solutions that ensure cultural identity is strengthened rather than rendered invisible (Smith, 1997).

A range of definitions of what constitutes kaupapa Māori theory exists, however most researchers agree that Māori must determine and define what this is (Cram, 2001, Glover, 2002, Smith, 1999). Reid (1998) and others (Bevan-Brown, 1998; Jackson, 1998; Mutu, 1998) argue that kaupapa Māori theory must endeavour to address Māori needs while also giving full recognition to Māori culture and value systems. Kaupapa Māori theory must therefore be underpinned by Māori epistemology, reflecting Māori cultural realities, values, and unique life experiences. This indigenous body of knowledge is based around concepts such as tapu[6] and noa[7], which work to regulate life. Often these expressions are tribally specific (Cram, 2001; Te Awekotuku, 1991).

Smith (1997) identifies that the essence of kaupapa Māori:

- relates to being Māori
- connects to Māori philosophy and principles
- takes for granted the legitimacy and validity of Māori
- takes for granted the legitimacy and validity of the Māori language, beliefs and practices
- is concerned with the struggle for Māori autonomy and thus the reclaiming by Māori of both cultural and political space.

MĀORI CULTURAL SOLUTIONS

Bishop (1996a) and Bishop, et al., (2003) argue that solutions for Māori do not reside within the culture that has marginalised Māori; rather, the solutions lie within Māori culture itself and draw from both traditional and contemporary cultural knowledge. Currently, kaupapa Māori theorising and metaphors are being used to inform policies and practices across a range of sectors and initiatives (Bishop, 2005; Mead, 1997; Smith, 1999). As a dynamic framework, kaupapa Māori enables Māori to work for change, and to better understand the world.

Phinney and Rotheram (1987) argue that there are ethnically-linked ways of thinking, feeling and acting that are acquired through socialisation. The message implicit in this statement has profound implications for all sectors of education, given that education provision needs to be responsive to the intricacies of individuals' and groups' sociocultural and learning needs. Understanding others depends on three specific components: engagement; ways of thinking and theorising; ways of analysing (Durie, 2006). Durie explores the marae atea[8] as facilitated during the process of pōwhiri[9], as a metaphor for engagement, wherein aspects such as space, boundaries and time take on exacting significance.

Durie (2006) describes the notion of *space* whereby a realistic degree of distance is necessary until a relationship has formed. Acknowledging distance provides an effective stage for clarifying the terms under which parties come together. Conversely, diminished distance may precipitate fear and panic, leading to withdrawal, thus impacting negatively on the process of building relationships and

[5] Māori wordview

[6] Sacred
[7] Removed from tapu
[8] Space in from of the wharenui, or meeting house.
[9] A ritual of encounter

establishing engagement. The concept of *boundaries* explores particular distinctions between groups, that is tangata whenua[10] and manuhiri[11]; the living and the dead; the right and the left; safe and unsafe; men and women; old and young. Appreciation of these distinctions enables mutually-respected boundaries to be defined without pretence, providing a platform upon which respectful engagement may emerge. The *domain of time* means that being "on time" is less important than allocating, taking or expanding time.

For many Māori, the same phases of engagement - guided by notions of space, boundaries and time - are adhered to during other situations of encounter. These phases broadly include:

- Opening rituals (respecting space and boundaries, determining who speaks and when).
- Clarifying who you are/where you have come from.
- Declaring intentions.
- Coming together as a group.
- Building relationships and making initial connections (including sharing whakapapa or genealogical connections).
- Addressing a particular kaupapa[12], using open and frank discussions, face-to-face interactions, reaching decisions and agreements, defining particular roles and responsibilities, allocating time.
- Sharing kai[13].
- Closing; summarising decisions and agreements, upholding mana.

HUI WHAKATIKA

Pōwhiri and hui whakatika are kaupapa Māori processes that are also Māori cultural solutions. Macfarlane (1998) proposes that the traditional hui[14], guided by Māori rituals of engagement, provides a supportive and culturally grounded space for achieving resolution, and restoring harmony. Hui whakatika is a unique kaupapa Māori process for restoring harmony from within legitimate Māori spaces (Hooper et al., 1999). Hui whakatika follows those same phases of engagement, and is also underpinned by four quintessential concepts of traditional or pre-European Māori discipline. These are:

1. *Reaching consensus* through a process of collaborative decision-making involving all parties.
2. *Reconciliation*; reaching settlement that is acceptable to all parties rather than isolating and punishing.
3. *Examining* the wider reason for the wrong with an implicit assumption that there was often wrong on both sides; not apportioning blame.
4. Having less concern with whether or not there had been a breach; more concern with the *restoration* of harmony. (Olsen, Maxwell & Morris, cited in McElrea, 1994).

These features are critical to an effective hui whakatika, and continue to guide contemporary Māori society when responding to issues of concern or conflict. The four distinct phases to a hui whakatika process include:

1. *The pre-hui phase* – preparing the whāriki[15].
2. *The hui phase* – the hui proper:
   - Beginning
     - Mihimihi[16]/karakia[17]
     - Response from manuhiri
     - Reiterating the purpose of the hui
     - Whakawhanaungatanga[18]
     - Sharing kai
   - Developing
     - How we are being affected, how we are feeling
     - Successes to date, strengths
     - Barriers/enemies to success
     - Seeking out a new story (restorying)
       Determining and agreeing on the way forward
       What we will do, who will do what …
     - Setting a time/venue for forming/consolidating the plan
   - Closing: poroporoaki[19]
     - Whakakapi[20]
     - Final comments by members
     - Karakia[21]
     - Sharing kai
     - Informal discussion
3. *Forming/consolidating the plan.*
4. *Follow-up and review* – at a later date.

Each of these phases is critical to the overall success of a hui whakatika (Macfarlane, 2007). Sufficient time and effort must be invested in the pre-hui phase, as this is equally as important as the hui itself. This involves determining who needs to be involved, establishing a willingness from all parties to participate, meeting with all parties separately in order to explain the process and prepare them for what will happen, hearing their stories, and selecting a venue and time. Phase two, the "hui proper", follows the protocols of engagement as represented by a pōwhiri process. Effective facilitation of this phase is crucial.

This paper now focuses on the role and experiences of a Ministry of Education, Special Education kaitakawaenga. The role of the kaitakawaenga is to work alongside non-Māori specialists who are working with Māori families. Their cultural expertise and knowledge is invaluable as they are able to draw from kaupapa Māori ways of knowing and engaging.

The kaitakawaenga had been engaged in order to assist a special education advisor (SEA) working in a mainstream primary school with two brothers (Māori), who had been referred for their severe and challenging behaviours at

[10] Hosts
[11] Visitors
[12] Issue
[13] Refreshments
[14] Meeting

[15] Foundation
[16] Greetings
[17] Prayer
[18] Introductions/making connections
[19] Departure ceremony/rituals of farewell
[20] Summing up
[21] Prayer/blessing

school. The brothers, less than a year apart in age, were in the same Year 6 class. Their parents were separated, and custodial arrangements meant that they had both boys, week about.

Due to the apparent severity of the boys' behaviours at school, the SEA had hastily put in place a behaviour intervention plan with little input sought from the whānau. Subsequently, they had ceased to engage in any of the tasks that had been allocated to them in the plan. The boys' behaviours had escalated since the plan had been initiated; the class teacher and principal were extremely frustrated and wanted immediate action in order to prevent the boys from being suspended or excluded. The SEA therefore sought help from the kaitakawaenga.

Phase 1: The Pre-Hui Phase

It was determined that a hui whakatika would be convened. The kaitakawaenga met with both parents, initially separately, and then together, to ensure that there was willingness on their part to attend. The parents explained that they wanted to resolve the issues but were suspicious of the school's motives, and were consequently reluctant to meet at the school grounds. The kaitakawaenga listened to the concerns and aspirations that they both had for their sons. He explained the hui process mentioning that he would facilitate with the support of his kaumātua[22], who would welcome them and any other whānau members they wanted to bring with them. The kaitakawaenga also met with the class teacher, the principal, and the SEA and went through the same process. These meetings were critical to gauge commitment, and to clarify the protocols and purpose of the hui. The venue was then organised, the room set up, and food ordered.

Phase 2: The Hui Phase

The hui was held at the Ministry of Education, Special Education office, in a room that was regularly used for hui, and reflected many of the cultural icons of the local iwi[23]. The parents and boys opted to bring along whānau support, including the maternal grandmother, the paternal grandfather, an aunty, and an older cousin. The classroom teacher, senior teacher, principal, SEA, kaitakawaenga and special education kaumātua were also in attendance; 14 people in all.

The kaumātua began the meeting with mihimihi and karakia in order to clear the pathway for the rest of the hui. The grandfather responded in te reo Māori, declaring the family's willingness to contribute and participate. The kaitakawaenga briefly reiterated the kaupapa and intended flow of the hui, and then started the process of whakawhanaungatanga, whereby everyone introduced themselves, and made a brief comment about what they hoped to achieve at the hui. Everyone then had a cup of tea and a biscuit.

The members listened to everyone else's stories and perspectives without interruption. Although initially whakamā[24], whānau members, including the boys, began to contribute more as the hui progressed. The hui worked from a strengths-based approach, where positive perspectives were shared. Honesty was also a key component, and people were encouraged to share how they were feeling. The kaitakawaenga observed the ahua[25] of the group gradually change as they listened to each other's issues and frustrations. Several constructive and affirming statements were shared, which challenged many previously held assumptions.

Members started offering positive and supportive comments which became solution-focused; they also began to see where they perhaps needed to take more responsibility for their own attitudes and actions. There was an obvious willingness to remain respectful of each other, and to remain committed to the kaupapa. A list of possible actions was then brainstormed and collated, to be reconstructed into a more formal plan at a subsequent meeting attended by all members. Both of the boys contributed to the final discussion, and offered some suggestions, which were added to the planning list. The kaitakawaenga then summed up, everyone was given a final opportunity to comment, and the kaumātua concluded with a karakia. Formulation of the plan (Phase 3) took place two days later.

Phase 3: Forming the Plan

At the request of all members, the planning meeting followed the same pōwhiri process. Several members of the group commented that having the two days interim space allowed them to reflect on the things that had transpired during the hui. According to the whānau, it had also enabled them to gain even greater strength and resolve moving forward.

The plan focused on three key areas:

1. Achieving a consistency of routines and expectations
2. Maintaining regular and ongoing communications
3. Developing and maintaining positive and productive relationships.

Both parents openly discussed the inconsistencies that existed between the respective home settings, and defined some new kawa[26] that would be put in place across both contexts. These kawa included being more clear and consistent in their instructions and expectations of the boys, and also included the boys taking on greater responsibility for their actions, with incentives and rewards playing a role. The boys agreed that this was fair and reasonable. Communication protocols were also constructed collaboratively. These involved setting up home-to-school positive notebooks, regular phone calls both ways, and an end-of-week group debrief for the first four weeks. Building positive relationships required all parties to make time for each other. The teacher made adaptations to the classroom

[22] Elder
[23] Tribe
[24] Shy, reserved
[25] Demeanour
[26] Protocols

programme (content, lesson structure, pace, classroom responsibilities) and promised to provide more regular and specific feedback. The teacher and principal wanted the parents to feel welcome at school, and reiterated the "open door" approach that they wished to maintain. Weekly debriefs were planned for Friday lunchtime, and would include all group members, and kai. A follow-up and review meeting was scheduled for four weeks time, with the option of calling one sooner should the need arise.

Phase 4: Follow-up and Review

The hui whakatika took place early in April. At the follow-up and review meeting in May, feedback from all parties was extremely positive. The boys were much easier to manage in both home settings as well as at school, and were actively engaged in learning. Both parents had been using positive and consistent strategies in their respective homes, and the boys had achieved several small rewards. Over the next few months, both boys also received achievement awards at school.

There were only two minor incidents that occurred at school post the hui whakatika. School staff said that both incidents were easily dealt with and were no more challenging than others that they had to deal with regularly. In early October that same year, the boys were transitioned to the Resource Teacher Learning and Behaviour (RTLB) service over a two week period.

The parents both stated that they finally felt as if they had a voice in their sons' education, and were now in partnership with the school. They put this down to the barriers that had been broken down during the hui whakatika. School staff felt more inclined to approach the parents and seek their ideas and perspectives in terms of the boys' education needs, something they would not have actively done prior to the hui whakatika. At the last RTLB transition meeting, one of the boys mentioned that he had not been in much trouble lately. When asked by the kaitakawaenga if he thought that was better, he said "Yeah, cos I get to learn more stuff, so I am getting more clever".

CONCLUSION

O'Sullivan (2007) declares that Māori have regularly been relegated to the position of *junior* partner within our society. A determination to reclaim legitimate Māori cultural spaces at the nexus between indigenous Māori and Pākehā[27] cultures is a responsive pathway forward if power sharing and self determination are to be rightfully distributed (Durie, 2003).

Within such spaces, cultural constructs such as pōwhiri and hui can provide solutions, determined by Māori culture and protocols; new learning and cultural strength may be derived for both Māori and non-Māori. By developing relationships based on mutual respect, opportunities to see oneself in relation to others and to learn from these relationships may arise. People can bring their own experiences, in order to contribute to the kaupapa[28]. Power is able to be shared between self determining individuals and/or groups. Participants are able to determine their own actions; actions that are culturally prescribed and understood within relationships of interdependence (Bishop, Berryman, Powell & Teddy, 2007; Young, 2005). From relationships of interdependence, independence can emerge.

Bishop and Glynn (1999) suggest that the reassertion of Māori cultural preferences and practices can lead to more effective participation and learning for Māori students in mainstream settings. Te Kōtahitanga (Bishop, et al., 2007) has shown that the reclamation of cultural spaces can also benefit non-Māori students. For many professionals this may require a shift in mindset away from familiar and preferred practices to those which uphold and respect the legitimacy of Māori cultural spaces.

Although the epistemological paradigms emerging from the experiences of indigenous minorities such as Māori may challenge mainstream education (Gordon, 1997), continuing to disregard such alternatives will leave the discipline of education impoverished. Paying attention, however, will surely enrich and benefit education, enabling those who access education services to achieve more positive outcomes.

[27] Non-Māori; settlers, people descended from settlers
[28] Agenda

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AUTHOR PROFILES

Sonja Bateman

Sonja Bateman

Sonja Bateman affiliates to the Ngāi Tahu tribe from New Zealand's South Island. Her passion for improving educational outcomes for at-risk students has seen her move from a Resource Teacher: Learning and Behaviour (RTLB) to her present position of Practice Leader, Services to Māori, a national position within the Ministry of Education, Special Education. Her work focuses on enhancing professional practice, and the outcomes that are achieved by learners who are Māori.

Email

sonja.bateman@minedu.govt.nz

Mere Berryman

Mere Berryman

Mere Berryman is researcher and manager of the Ministry of Education, Special Education Poutama Pounamu Education Research and Development Centre. Her work aims to investigate and develop culturally responsive approaches for supporting Māori students and their families in a range of Māori and English language educational settings. Sociocultural approaches to learning and development acknowledge the importance of learners developing relationships, and engaging in learning interactions with more skilled others, from within their own cultural experiences. She has found this to be of fundamental importance if students are to assume autonomy over their own learning.

Email

mere.berryman@minedu.govt.nz