

Research Articles and Essays**Biculturalism in Action: Opening Teachers' Hearts and Minds**

Lesley Robinson,¹ Sandra Tuhakaraina,² & Dr. Judith Loveridge³

¹ Te Rito Maioha Early Childhood New Zealand

² Te Rito Maioha Early Childhood New Zealand

³ Victoria University of Wellington

Abstract

This article reports on a New Zealand Aotearoa study of a graduate program, developed and taught by two tertiary lecturers who endeavored to work in a partnership as espoused in Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Findings highlighted ways in which the students' thinking shifted as a result of the program.

Keywords: bicultural, tertiary, teacher education

Bicultural teaching practice is viewed in education in Aotearoa New Zealand as a strategy towards addressing social inequities and as a pathway to social justice (Jenkin, 2017; Lourie, 2016; Stewart, 2018). The study contributes to the small body of scholarship which examines bicultural practice of those in tertiary institutions, who teach teachers. The setting for this study is a graduate qualification for in-service, infant and toddler teachers that was taught in a teacher education institution in Aotearoa New Zealand. For the purpose of clarity in this article, the teacher educators will be identified as lecturers and the students in the program who were qualified early childhood education teachers will be identified as teachers. Two of the authors of this study are lecturers, who endeavored to uphold the principle of partnership as espoused in Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the foundational document between the British Crown and Māori the Indigenous peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand.

This focus of this article is the impact of a co-teaching arrangement whereby two teacher educators from differing cultural backgrounds (Sandra Pare Tuhakaraina

is Māori and Lesley Robinson is of European background) endeavored to present a balance of Indigenous and Western knowledge ensuring that Indigenous knowledge was not subjugated by Western knowledge. We were particularly interested if the co-teaching by the lecturers, within a bicultural model, led to new understandings and learnings for the infant and toddler teachers.

The article is presented in three parts. Part one provides context for the study, locating it within the literature of biculturalism and teacher education and provides details about the qualification on which the study was carried out. Part two details the methodology and includes the research questions that were the focus for the study. Finally, part three outlines the key findings and discussion. The context of this article is professional learning for teachers but we believe that this study has relevance for all those teaching teachers, that is those teaching in initial teacher education (ITE), graduate and post-graduate courses.

Biculturalism, Social Inequities and Te Tiriti o Waitangi

The re-claiming of Indigenous knowledge in education is part of a global movement to counter the effects of colonization (Hart et al., 2012). Education as a key site of colonial power inevitably reflects the power dynamics in society. Whilst the movements to re-claim Indigenous knowledge differ according to the specifics of each particular context, the authors maintain that Indigenous knowledge is always competing with dominant Western knowledge and hence always located in a 'space of tension' (Hart et al., 2012). Accordingly, in Aotearoa New Zealand the hegemony of Western thinking in education has been evidenced in the education sector at all levels (Buissink et al., 2017; Durie, 2013; Fitzpatrick & Berman, 2016; Ritchie & Rau, 2010). In relation to tertiary education, there have been some improvements which have led "to the point where a palpable Indigenous dimension can be felt both within and beyond the sector" (Durie, 2013, p. 1). However, in spite of these improvements, it is

widely acknowledged that the history of power imbalance between Māori and Western world views is still very much 'alive and kicking' in education, including tertiary education in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The notion of biculturalism in Aotearoa New Zealand is rooted in Te Tiriti o Waitangi (The Treaty of Waitangi), the overarching document which frames the relationship between government and Māori. This foundational document signed by the British Government and a large number of Māori chiefs in 1840 signalled the colonization of Aotearoa New Zealand by the British Crown (Bishop, 2003). The dispossession of land, culture and language led to a strong sense of aggrievement and Māori have engaged in an enduring struggle with government for justice in light of historical injustices arising from Te Tiriti. According to Ritchie and Rau, "the impacts on Māori childhoods are so pervasive as to be incalculable" (2010, p. 358). Even though Te Tiriti was signed before the middle of the 19th century, it was not given kudos by succeeding governments until the middle of the 20th century. Increasing calls for the terms of Te Tiriti to be honoured led to an increased awareness of its significance and led to it becoming 'centre-stage' in the 1950s (Belich, 2001). This foregrounding of Te Tiriti and this development contributed to the rise of the discourse of biculturalism which has become a dominant discourse in Aotearoa New Zealand education policy since the late 1980s. The discourse refers to the parallel development of Indigenous Māori and Pākehā (European settler) worldviews.

There has been critique of biculturalism and its promise to narrow the achievement gap between Māori and non-Māori. Lourie argues that "while biculturalism policy might symbolise fairness, in practice, biculturalism is a complex and contested concept" (2016, p. 640). Lourie (2016) contends that the policy oversimplifies the demographics of Aotearoa New Zealand, that particular communities such as Asian, Pacific and other non-British are

excluded by the policy and that exaggeration of the ‘promise’ of biculturalism results in insufficient attention to socio-economic factors and that the notion of biculturalism inherently fixes Māori as the lesser partners with the colonizer. The term was first used in 1968 when it was defined by anthropologist Eric Schwimmer as the “conscious confrontation and reconciliation of two conflicting value systems both of which are accepted as valid” (Schwimmer, 1968, cited by Lourie, 2015, p. 133). Different conceptions of biculturalism have developed over time which has contributed to contradictions and lack of clarity in policy documents. Lourie (2015) maintains that this has contributed to teachers being unclear about what the term means for their practice.

We are aware of concerns of some scholars regarding use of the term biculturalism based on the view that it does not convey the political aspects of the relationship between Pākehā and Māori. Jenkin (2017) states a preference for the term Tiriti-based practice over biculturalism, seeing it as more directly capturing the power relations between Pākehā and Māori. The term biculturalism, however, remains common parlance in our teacher education institution and in many areas of early childhood education and for these reasons we have chosen to use the term in this article. Moreover, we do concur with Jenkin (2017) that power relations between Pākehā and Māori are critical to inequities in education and for this reason have selected a definition of the term which embodies these power relations. Thus the definition of biculturalism utilised in this article is the “ambition of establishing Māori and Pākehā as groups of equal standing rather than one being subjugated by the dominance of the other” (Spoonley, 1985, as cited in Jenkin, 2017, p. 3). In spite of critiques, the bicultural education policy has continued to have had broad appeal in the education sector.

Teacher Education and Biculturalism: The National Policy Context

The importance of a Māori/Pākehā Te Tiriti partnership whereby efforts are made to foreground both worldviews has been endorsed and communicated through a number of government institutions and policy documents. Government's responsibilities as a Tiriti partner in tertiary education and the important role of teacher educators in relation to mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) are outlined by the Tertiary Education Commission, a funding entity tasked with administering Government funding to tertiary organizations. The *Tertiary Education Strategy 2014-2019* outlines the expectations for tertiary educators stating "TEOs [Tertiary Education Organizations] will be contributing to the achievement of this strategy when they work in partnership with Māori and iwi [tribe] to:

- provide culturally relevant teaching and learning
- contribute to the growth of mātauranga Māori research" (2014, p. 21).

Likewise, the Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, which sets out the Government's expectations for teachers, highlights the requirements for all teachers in relation to Te Tiriti in *Our Code, Our Standards* (Education Council, 2017). Te Tiriti is positioned centrally in the document; Māori values and concepts are foregrounded, and the Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership is the first of six standards in the document. This commitment is echoed at a teacher education level in the *ITE Programme Approval, Monitoring and Review Requirements* (Teaching Council, 2019) which now expects teacher education provider programmes to assess students' knowledge of Te Tiriti, students' use of Māori concepts and to monitor students' growth in the Māori language over the course of their program.

The Government strategy for teachers of Māori learners is laid out in *Ka Hikitia: Accelerating Success 2013-2017* (Ministry of Education, 2013); this document is designed to shift teachers from a deficit to a credit approach to Māori learners. Te Tiriti o Waitangi is one

of five principles and tertiary education is one of five key areas identified as critical for success in education for Māori. The document states that “tertiary education has an important role to play in sustaining and revitalizing Māori language and mātauranga Māori” (Ministry of Education, 2013, p. 43).

Resources such as *Tātaiako: Cultural Competencies for Teachers of Māori Learners* (Ministry of Education & Education Council, 2011) is designed for those who are teaching in early childhood education and schools although it is described as an important resource for ITE. Teachers are expected to have knowledge of Te Tiriti and understand what this means for practice and to have “the tools and strategies to develop successful relationships with Māori learners, whānau [families], hapū [extended family], iwi [tribe] and communities” (Ministry of Education & Education Council, 2011, p. 6).

It could be argued that these latter two documents ‘other’ Māori learners and families as these resources fill a gap that is not filled by the current status quo. If English medium education truly included Māori learners and families, culturally relevant content and processes would be woven through curriculum rather than presented in separate documents. In some sense, these documents attempt to retrofit the expectations and requirements for teaching biculturally. The early childhood curriculum document is possibly an exception as it was designed from the onset as a bicultural curriculum, as will be discussed later.

It is likely that a range of factors impact on the effectiveness of Government policy in relation to Te Tiriti. Hetaraka (2019) raises broad concerns about education policy such as *Tātaiako* (2011) and *Ka Hikitia* (2013) pointing out that a more radical and structural approach is required for any transformation. Hetaraka (2019) maintains that the overlay of Māori concepts to what is inherently a colonial framework will not be effective and that “there remains a serious need for the issues and implications of education success of Māori,

as Māori, within the context of our colonized society to be examined critically from a Māori perspective” (p. 159).

Lourie (2015) maintains a lack of a shared understanding of what biculturalism means for practice has contributed to teachers being unclear about what the term means for their practice. Different models of biculturalism implicit in policy documents have developed over time which has contributed to lack of clarity. Whilst biculturalism is part of the education landscape in Aotearoa, there does not appear to be a visible, shared understanding or commitment to it across the sector.

Whilst there is a clear expectation for teachers at all levels to foreground mātauranga Māori and to be familiar with Māori language and Māori customs and values, it is evident that this expectation is not always reached ‘on the ground’ both in ITE and in ongoing professional learning. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the level of Māori content is left to the passion of individual organizations or indeed individuals.

Teacher Education and Bicultural Education: Research Findings

In 2005, Kane carried out a major report into ITE and reported that there was a critical need for those teaching in ITE to critically examine their practices in relation to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Māori language and inclusion. Kane (2005) warned against the adding on of courses in Māori language and Māori customs and values as opposed to Māori content being woven through all papers as potentially this former approach could reproduce inequities that they sought to overcome.

Teacher educators face some barriers as they endeavor to support the bicultural development of both student teachers and in-service teachers. Research shows that attitudes and beliefs in relation to diversity and social justice can be deeply rooted and resistance to

change. McMillan et al. (2017) carried out action research on their training teacher program for early childhood education students, with a view to increase students' knowledge and use of Māori language, customs and values and Māori epistemologies. Findings revealed that students identified three elements as being crucial to their gaining the confidence to using Māori language: importance of repetition of Māori language; for the same language Māori to be introduced across all courses; for the Māori language to be used by all teacher educators (by those who are confident as well as those who are less confident). One outcome of the research was the decision to change the usual arrangement of Western theory being privileged over theories from Māori worldviews. There was a realization that “‘Māori theory’ was tagged on the end, so it appeared almost as an afterthought” (McMillan et al., 2017, p. 30). The research prompted a more complex and multi-faceted approach whereby Māori language, Māori values and customs and Māori epistemologies are now incorporated across this ITE program.

Gordon-Burns and Campbell's (2014a) longitudinal study explored the bicultural journey of two cohorts of early childhood students from their first year in an ITE program to the end of their first year as a qualified teacher. Findings showed that students had little understanding about the what biculturalism might look like in practice on enrolment in the program (Gordon-Burns & Campbell, 2014b). Self-assessments showed their confidence and competence in bilingualism and biculturalism did grow over the course of the program however students experienced considerable issues in maintaining their bicultural practice once they had graduated (Campbell & Gordon-Burns, 2017). The authors recommend curriculum content such as the history of Aotearoa New Zealand (including legislation) and second language theories be included in teacher education programs. The authors highlight the opportunities for teacher education programs claiming that “‘students’ hearts can be

warmed to biculturalism if all their classes engage with and promote bicultural programs” (Gordon-Burns & Campbell, 2014a, p. 27). The authors concluded by asserting that “it is vitally important for students to hear and see all tutors and lecturers, other than only Māori, speaking te reo Māori [Māori language] while positively and openly discussing and theorizing Māori cultural beliefs and practices” (2014a, p. 26).

Implementing a Bicultural Program for Teachers of Infants and Toddlers

In 2014, the organization for which the first two authors’ work acquired an existing well-known qualification from another teacher education institution. The institution from which the program was acquired had decided to cease delivery of the program. The original qualification was well known and had a good reputation in the early childhood sector. However, the qualification needed to be revised so that it more closely aligned with the bicultural imperatives of the organisation and also to broaden the theoretical informants of the program as the qualification has hitherto been underpinned primarily with the theories of neuroscience and psychology. Two of the writers of this study collaborated together and rewrote the program. Thus the program was re-developed with aspirations to role-model bicultural practice and to enact the partnership as espoused in Te Tiriti o Waitangi. This was evidenced in co-designing and co-delivering the program, drawing on the strengths, knowledge and cultural expertise of each partner.

Efforts were made to balance Indigenous content and pedagogies with those emanating from a Western perspective. Ongoing conversations focused on what constituted a balance of content; the intention was to have an even balance of Indigenous and Western-based content. This meant consideration was given to the space allotted to content and to the positioning of content. It was hoped that a paralleling of Māori and Western content would

disrupt the more usual privileging of Western knowledge and facilitate a more relativistic approach whereby diverse worldviews could be viewed alongside each other.

In designing the program, the national early childhood curriculum also needed to be positioned as a foundational source within the program. The bicultural nature of the first early childhood education curriculum document *Te Whāriki: He Whāriki Mātauranga mō ngā Mokopuna o Aotearoa: Early Childhood Curriculum* was lauded both nationally and internationally when it was disseminated in 1996. The document had two equivalent parts, one in Māori and the other in English but not translations of each other. It was heralded as an innovative and exemplary document, particularly, in relation to its acknowledgement of Māori and Pacific perspectives. The document's central metaphor of a 'whāriki' meaning a traditional Māori mat made from harakeke (flax), embodies beautifully the bicultural aspirations. The authors of this first curriculum explained that "the bicultural partnership between Māori and the so-named 'Pakeha' European settlers became the blueprint for developing the first genuinely bicultural curriculum in Aotearoa New Zealand" (May & Carr, 2015, p. 316). It is recognised that early collaboration with Māori education and cultural leaders was powerful in that it ensured that "the final form of *Te Whāriki* had its beginnings in Māori pedagogical and philosophical beliefs" (Te One, 2013, p. 11). As would be expected, Te Tiriti o Waitangi is positioned centrally within the document and iterates the overarching importance of this foundational document of Aotearoa New Zealand for early childhood education.

This curriculum document was updated in 2017. According to the then Minister of Education Nikki Kaye, the strengthening of a Māori world view in the document was identified as one of the key areas for the update. This was explained as a focus on "strengthening the bicultural framing, focus on identity, language and culture, and inclusion

of all children” (Kaye, 2017, p. 6). The expectations for teachers were made more explicit than in the 1996 document. In essence, teachers are expected to normalise Māori, knowledge, language and culture, to address Māori expectations and to understand their responsibilities for working in a bicultural curriculum document.

Although a te ao Māori world view is foregrounded in *Te Whāriki*, it can be challenging for teachers to access and practice mātauranga Māori specifically in relation to infant and toddler caregiving practice. Currently, there is in infant and toddler settings, a dominance of theory and practice that emanates from a Western perspective. The “universal truths” of child development have held sway in infant and toddler pedagogy and have only recently begun to change. Furthermore, in recent years, there are been considerable interest in RIE (Resources for infant educators) which is a philosophy and practice that is inspired by Dr Emmi Pikler and her work with orphans after World War II in Budapest and in Magda Gerber who further developed Pikler’s work later in California (Education Review Office, 2013). Professional learning opportunities in Aotearoa New Zealand and in Budapest on the RIE/Pikler approach are influential and accordingly there has been significant interest and acceptance of the approach which had led to the uptake of RIE Pikler pedagogy in many infant and toddler settings.

Critiques of the hegemony of Western viewpoints in infant and toddler caregiving highlight the tensions between Western and Indigenous infant and toddler pedagogies in infant and toddler settings:

Western perspectives of infants and toddlers are not universal “truths” and there are tensions between those perspectives that have been espoused and normalised and the cultural practices of traditional Māori, and, in particular, Pacific peoples with terms

of reference and worldviews that differ to those located within a Western educational paradigm (Rameka & Glasgow, 2015, p. 137).

Rameka and Glasgow's study into the enactment of traditional caregiving practices by Māori and Pacific early childhood teachers support the need for bicultural programmes in ITE. They found that appropriate teacher training and professional development opportunities were key enablers of teachers implementing traditional cultural practices. The researchers concluded that "if teacher education and professional development provision are underpinned by Western values, theories and practices, it will impede teachers' abilities to deliver pedagogy and practices that reflect culturally authentic ways" (2015, p. 13).

The scarcity of literature on traditional infant and toddler caregiving practices is a further factor facing teachers in implementing traditional Indigenous practices. Rameka and Glasgow state that "unfortunately there is little research on Māori infant care that is informed by Māori and Pacific cultural practice" (Rameka & Glasgow, 2015, p. 4). The authors note that this lack of literature is in spite of the the growth of this growing demographic as more infants and toddlers enter group settings.

At the time the organisation acquired the programme for teachers of infants and toddlers, it was focused solely on teaching programs for early childhood education, although this has currently been extended to include primary education. The organisation has historically played a key role in leading the way in bicultural approaches to teacher education and early childhood education and is widely acknowledged as having strengths in the promotion of biculturalism across its ITE and post-graduate programs. This study focused specifically on a one year graduate qualification, namely, the *Graduate Certificate Infant and Toddler Wellbeing and Learning: Te Puāwaitanga o te Rito*. This qualification was designed for those teaching or having aspirations to teach infants and toddlers in group settings. It was

taught from 2014 – 2018 and has since been re-developed to become part of a Master's program. It appealed chiefly to those already working with infants and toddlers in early childhood education although graduates from related fields were eligible to apply. Access to an infant and toddler setting was a requirement of the program.

Methodology and Methods

The focus of the study was to explore the experience of teachers in the program. We were interested to know how teachers had experienced Indigenous worldviews, and the co-teaching.

- *What were the outcomes of a program with a balance of Western-based and Indigenous-based theories and pedagogies.*
- *How was this co-teaching arrangement experienced by teachers in the program?*

Kaupapa [content] Māori theory guided this small study. Kaupapa Māori theory is Indigenous to Aotearoa New Zealand (Smith, 1999) and arises to readdress power imbalances of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Bishop, 2003). Kaupapa Māori was developed by Māori for Māori.

A principle of kaupapa Māori theory that we adopted is whakawhanaungatanga. Whakawhanaungatanga is the process of creating connections and relationships. This principle guided our engagements with participants. Within the principle of whakawhanaungatanga is aroha (love) and mana (respect) when interacting with people. Bishop (1996) states that whakawhanaungatanga has emerged as a kaupapa Māori research strategy as a way of allowing the voice of participants to share their encounters using qualitative and quantitative data. This principle highlights the importance of relationships and includes:

1. Establishing whānau (family) relationships

2. Participant-driven approaches to power and control
3. Researcher's involvement is a lived experience (Bishop, 2003)

The establishment of whānau (familial) relationships between lecturers and teachers started at the beginning of a one-year program with a two-day face to face learning on content and getting to know each other. This set the scene for connectedness, engagement and involvement in the weekly online program and a further three two-day face to face learning in the year. At the completion of the program some teachers retained a level of connection with lecturers. For example, one lecturer was contacted seeking advice on supporting a child and whānau in relation to the physical and spiritual wellbeing of child.

In terms of participant-driven approaches to power and control, researchers waited until the academic year had finished before contacting and inviting teachers to participate in the research. This also avoided potential conflicts of interests in the roles of teachers' and researchers. Researchers were respectful if teachers selected to participate in one or both modes of data methods. Researchers were guided by teacher's convenience as to when individual interviews would happen.

The latter element, researchers' involvement, is a lived experience acknowledges researchers bring their own worldviews into teaching and learning practices of biculturalism. Teachers were encouraged to bring who they are as "partners in the conversation of learning" (Bishop, 2003, p. 226).

The first and second authors, who designed and taught the program, were also those who gathered and analysed the data for the research after the program was completed. The third author acted as a critical friend throughout the conception and execution of the research, discussing ethical issues and being involved in the analysis of the data and co-generation of understandings. A critical friend is understood to provide a good balance in such research,

countering the closeness of those researching their own practice to their data and participants with the questioning eye of an outsider and potentially bringing clarity to blind spots or grey areas (Stieha, 2014).

Participants

The research conducted was reviewed and approved by ethics committee of Te Rito Maioha Early Childhood New Zealand. Teachers who had been enrolled in a one-year program were invited to participate in this study. They were emailed written information to explain the focus of the study and how the data was to be collected. Teachers could select to participate in the online survey and/or semi-structured interviews. Six teachers who were all females agreed to participate. Four teachers lived in the North Island and two lived in the South Island. All teachers were working in early childhood settings in Aotearoa New Zealand at the time of the research. Two teachers identified as Māori and living in communities with a high population of Māori. Four teachers identified as Pākehā who worked in diverse communities.

Data gathering

The interviews were conducted after the survey was completed. Interviewing allowed the researchers to gain insights and knowledge through open questions that enabled teachers to share their ideas and thoughts. An online web conference was used to conduct three interviews and one interview was completed, face to face. The two researchers interviewed two teachers each and a set of questions were formulated and given to teachers prior to carrying out the interview. The interview was recorded with permission and transcribed by the researchers. The data was then coded using a thematic approach to explore themes and patterns in teachers' responses and allow their voice to be more evident in the analysis.

Findings and Discussion

Teachers' responses in this article are presented from the semi-structured interviews. The data was analyzed through a thematic coding process. Three main themes were generated from the coding: Hearing directly from Indigenous speakers: Cultural affinity and openness: Modeling the partnership.

Hearing directly from Indigenous speakers: "It really comes from the heart, I think"

A key pedagogical point that emerged from the interviews was that the teachers found it a powerful experience to hear about Indigenous knowledge and experience directly from Māori and Pacific people themselves. Being face to face (in the room or on skype), being able to interact with and hearing directly from Indigenous people was highlighted by teachers as significant in shifting their thinking.

Kerry, a Pākehā teacher commented:

When she [an Indigenous academic/researcher] was speaking she was really interesting to me as well. It really comes from the heart I think. When you are reading it as a student as someone looking for information but when you are listening to it-listening to the passion, to the heart and the knowledge behind it...it is completely different.

Kerry is making a clear distinction between reading about Indigenous peoples and hearing directly from Indigenous peoples themselves. 'Heart' is mentioned twice, suggesting the teacher had had an experience which engaged her emotionally.

This experience of being personally touched by the speaker was similar to that of Joy who is another Pākehā teacher who appreciated the same presentation for similar reasons.

You know like...how different cultures look at it from a different point of view and it was really great for that to be put into perspective because we can always come up

with how we interpret it as tauwiwi [non-Māori]. We can come up with how we interpret some-one else's culture but to get that from a Māori perspective and from the research that was being done up North in those centres was really good to get them- what it is like for them...I think unless you have had that presentation from Māori on how that is...yet again, it can come across like an assumption of how this can be...

Joy indicates that hearing it directly from the Indigenous person gives validity to what the speaker is saying. She has heard directly 'from the horse's mouth' and she has heard 'what it is like for them'. This suggests that she views the knowledge and experience that is being shared as authentic and trustworthy.

For Linda who is Māori, being able to hear directly from a Pacific academic had a different but not dissimilar effect on her approach to Pacific people.

The Pasifika perspective was most helpful. It helped that it actually came from an actual ...a Pacific Island person who was speaking from the heart, their experiences and from her research so to get the combined of those three things was the real thing basically. For me that was the Pasifika content.

Furthermore, for Nora who is Pākehā and working in a Pacific (Samoan) early childhood education centre, the experience of hearing directly from Indigenous speakers Pacific and Māori was inspiring and validating.

And, it was good to have the speakers Diana Mara [Pacific academic] and Author Rameka [Māori academic] was great. Like to have that personal communication with them particularly. I went back full of energy to share all information and things that

my colleagues already know as they live it every day. Yeah, I enjoyed it so much the whole course, but the Pasifika and Māori focus made it better for me.

The responses of all four teachers reflect emotional engagement rather than compliance. The importance of teachers being open and emotionally engaged is expressed by Ritchie (2003) who identified ‘creating heart’ as critical to fostering the bicultural development of teachers.

Cultural affinity and openness: “I opened up my eyes so much more to different relationships”

The emphasis on the cultural perspectives of infant and toddler wellbeing and learning appeared to create a space for teachers to extend their level of comfort with cultural diversity. Teachers commented on their different positioning in relation to diverse worldviews.

In the example below, Kerry re-evaluates her practice considering what she has learnt:

Once I had processed what we had been learning I thought oh my God koro [grandfather] is super important in that family and I was really able to reflect on koro’s relationship with his mokopuna [grandchild] I could look at it so much differently and I think from there on in. I just changed I was able to see, I opened up my eyes so much more to different relationships and I just always thought I was OK with it but maybe this just really opened up my eyes so much more. I apologised to koro and he did not think I had done anything wrong but I still felt...most likely I wasn’t rude (laughs) but I just thought i could have handled that much better...I think the course has enabled me to be far more cultural where I am working...I am far more accepting and respectful.

As Kerry explains her changing perceptions of a grandfather's relationship with his grandchild, she realizes that she could have responded more respectfully to the grandfather. Kerry can shift her practice "to be far more cultural."

Joy, in her explanation below, shows how she is able to foreground culture more fully in her practice and able to see differing worldviews in a given situation.

It made me feel more comfortable to bring it up as a conversation with others especially in my team to talk about and say you know this is how Māori or Pasifika look at it and how we can make sure that we are including the culture as a normal part of our program. And that it is okay to do it with other children as well so say if we did have to carry a pēpi [infant] around...that it is...quite often in Western culture it can be interpreted is that we are just giving them somebody to lean on and doing/taking their independence away or you can look at in a different light...they [infants] are observing everything from a comfortable space with someone they feel comfortable with and getting emotional security.

As a Māori woman who had grown up and been immersed in Māori culture, Linda admits that she has not always been responsive to Pacific families in the past:

Absolutely, now it's like they are included and just as important and every culture is important that what we do as ECE teachers. We have to acknowledge in our country we do have firm identities so to acknowledge our Pasifika up there alongside Treaty historical identities – they are up there too. We can put them up there too. Hey step back stop all the jandal jokes. Be more respectful. Pasifika is a very deep culture, and we need to get our act together people!

It is evident that Linda is extending her comfort with Pacific culture as she now affords a new level of respect and openness to Pacific families and Pacific culture. She encourages those who also may have ‘othered’ Pacific families to step up saying “we need to get our act together people!”.

According to Ritchie (2003), when parallel perspectives are able to be viewed and appreciated this is not only a challenge to the superiority of Western knowledge but also the positivist view that there is one truth and in this way, space is opened up for further cultural perspectives.

Modeling the partnership: “I felt it was the only way”

The third key theme from the data is modeling the partnership. It appears that the teachers’ experience of being taught in a bicultural partnership led to increased confidence and commitment to biculturalism.

Linda expressed that co-teaching of bicultural practices was felt to be the only way for teaching and learning:

“I felt it was the only way to present it. When you have a Pākehā teacher sharing that knowledge alongside a Māori tutor I feel that for Pākehā students even Māori students they see the importance of Māori culture. It helps to make them a little more open is what I am thinking...it is vice a versa for the Māori student when you have a Māori tutor sharing a Western perspective...we have got to know each other’s culture... kind of helps the Māori to say okay open our minds and have a proper listen”.

Linda’s comments were further supported by Kerry, a Pākehā teacher: *“I think we got it from both of you...you have your core strengths, but you can crossover.”*

Data shows that both teachers were able to experience a shared teaching approach that modeled a live partnership of bicultural teaching in action. This showed to teachers that we, the lecturers not only worked alongside each other, we also crossed over into each other's cultural spaces. At times, Author would lead the prayers or songs or contribute to discussion of theory and research. When Author shared something about a Māori worldview, the teachers felt that this conveyed the importance of the Māori culture to the Pākehā teachers. At other times Author would teach one of the Western concepts or theories and Linda refers to this also, saying that when a Māori lecturer teaches Western content it helps the Māori teachers to be more open culturally too. The impact of Author and Author crossing over into others' spaces appeared to be dynamic and significant for teachers.

In response to a question about the co-teaching, Kerry indicates that seeing the partnership in action motivated Kerry to put the partnership into practice in her own setting:

“the right thing to do...we are Aotearoa – it is te ao Māori [the Māori world]. I am in a different place now because we put so much of that into practice. I thought it was fantastic. The course has enabled me to be far more cultural...my two-year olds are saying their mihi (introduction) we are talking and playing games in te reo Māori. I just got stuff up on the wall everywhere now. I think if you walked in here as Māori, you will see it! I was just enabled from the course to know this is okay.”

As early childhood teachers in our country we do have firm identities to acknowledge that every child has the right to know and enjoy the dual cultural heritage of Te Tiriti o Waitangi partners along with their own cultural heritage. Kerry appears to be clear and confident about affirming bicultural practices with infants and toddlers that includes mihi and games. A commitment to develop the use of te reo and tikanga Māori as shown by Kerry in her practice is a key indicator to meeting standard one of *Our Code Our Standards*

(Education Council, 2017) as well as the strand communication in the early childhood curriculum of New Zealand (Ministry of Education, 2017). The data signals a sense of ethical responsibility, it “is the right thing to do.”

The data above supports the research finding of Gordon-Burns and Campbell that “it is vitally important for students to hear and see all tutors and lecturers, other than Māori, speaking te reo Māori while positively and openly discussing and theorizing cultural beliefs and practices” (2014b, p. 26). Data findings assert that modeling the partnership or “walking the talk” in action as an effective way to giving teachers a model for how it could work in practice and this led to confidence and commitment to biculturalism.

Conclusion

Shifting the thinking of teachers from a Eurocentric view of teaching to one that is more inclusive of Indigenous culture is a perennial and challenging issue. Innovative approaches are needed as pre-service preparation and in-service teacher education are challenged to address the dominant and traditional culture in teaching (Glazier & Bean, 2019). The enactment of bicultural practice by lecturers provided teachers with an experience that supported teachers to re-evaluate their own bicultural practice. In effect, teachers are presented with a visible and tangible example of biculturalism in action. There is congruence between theory and practice as approaches which are advocated for in the program are enacted by lecturers. Hearing directly and being able to interact with Indigenous speakers gives teachers an actual experience which potentially engages their hearts and minds. The emphasis placed on cultural perspectives by lecturers leads the way for teachers to become emboldened and in earnest in their own bicultural practice with children and families. The modeling of bicultural practice demonstrates real and authentic possibilities for teachers to

emulate. The usual power relations, whereby Western ways of being and knowing subjugate Indigenous ways of knowing and being, are disrupted in plain sight.

A critique of the Western hegemony argues that colonial processes have privileged Western knowledge and positioned Indigenous peoples as ‘other’ which has led to Indigenous peoples being ‘objects to be known rather than the knowers’. This results in “an unequal distribution of Western knowledge systems and approaches, characterised by ‘learning about’ Indigenous peoples and their knowledges, rather than ‘learning from’” (Hart et al., 2012, p. 14). The findings from this study indicate that when teacher educators model biculturalism and co-teach in ways that are authentic and that align with the partnership as espoused in Te Tiriti o Waitangi, that this helps to shift teachers’ thinking in relation to biculturalism and their own practice.

A Māori proverb, ‘ahakoa he iti he pounamu’ translates as even though it is small it is of importance. Even though the research reported on here was small in size it is worthy of consideration for all those who teach teachers and student teachers and emphasizes the need for more research in this area.

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