

## LITERATURE SCAN – GIVE NOTHING TO RACISM IN EDUCATION

### Summary

This report discusses current research and professional development initiatives that are related to addressing racism and/or increasing cultural competencies in our education system. For this literature scan we have focussed specifically on Māori learner experience.

Racial inequality and bias in New Zealand's education system is well-documented. A UNICEF study ranked New Zealand 33rd out of 38 OECD and EU countries in terms of educational equality with further analysis revealing Māori and Pasifika students were disproportionately represented in the children who underachieved (MacGregor-Reid, cited in Carroll 2020).

New Zealand schools do not operate in isolation from society and many factors contribute to discrimination and bias in our education system. These include negative bias in teacher judgements, low expectations of ākongā Māori, devaluing mātauranga Māori and te ao Māori, and poor knowledge of and access to te reo Māori (Carroll, 2020). It is time to recognise racism and instigate systems, policies and practices that respect the multiplicities of worldviews that exist in Aotearoa – especially in relation to tangata whenua.

Racial bias has finally begun to make it 'into the official policy papers as one rationale for reforming the school sector' (Workman, 2018, p. 1). It is an exciting time, as this inclusion of conversation around racism, at a policy level, has taken a long time to eventuate. This report parallels a growing movement towards owning racism in teaching practice, and perhaps in owning it, be able to start the actions to address it. As Jackson (2018) stated,

Refusing to name something is always a barrier to finding a solution, and it's certainly clear that until women named sexism and the patriarchy, or gay people named homophobia, it was almost impossible to begin the journey that might resolve their oppression. Being honest about the past — and the present — is the first step a people have to take to settle injustice, and there is much hope in the way that so many people have challenged the recent weeds of racism. (p.1)

Addressing racism in teaching practice is a complex task. This review summarises the compelling evidence behind the need for courage, and then for action.

## Purpose of review

The aim of this review is to support the Teaching Council's knowledge base around issues of racism and cultural competence in relation to professional development in education contexts in Aotearoa New Zealand.

This review provides background for the Give Nothing to Racism project. It will be used as an appendix in a board paper seeking approval for the project, as well as a literature scan for the provider.

The review is intended to:

- give readers easy access to research on addressing racism in the New Zealand education system. This will be done by selecting high quality articles or studies that are relevant, and summarising them into one complete report
- ensure that we do not duplicate work that has already been done
- provide clues as to where future research is heading or recommend areas on which to focus
- highlight key findings
- identify inconsistencies, gaps, and contradictions in the literature.

The report is organised in two parts. The first section identifies some of the key themes in literature and professional development initiatives. The second section looks at some of the implications of these for the Teaching Council and the Give Nothing to Racism project.

## Focus of review

This report has 'zoomed-in' on literature and initiatives that develop the cultural competence of teachers in English-medium settings, particularly as this relates to Māori learner success.

This focus is because when comparing Māori with non-Māori in terms of educational achievement, Māori do worse than non-Māori (Else, 1997). The addressing of this disparity is of utmost importance, if the promise of Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership, as outlined in *Our Code, Our Standards | Ngā Tikanga Matatika, Ngā Paerewa*, (Education Council, 2017) is to be in any way honoured.

There are strong mandates for culturally competent practice as part of a skillset for teachers within Aotearoa New Zealand. This is specified already within *Our Code, Our Standards | Ngā Tikanga Matatika, Ngā Paerewa* (Education Council, 2017), *Kā Hikitia – Ka Hāpaitia: the Māori education strategy* (Ministry of Education (MoE), 2021), *Tātaiako: cultural competencies for teachers of Māori learners* (Education Council and MoE, 2011), *Te Whāriki: He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa Early childhood curriculum* (MoE, 2017), and *The New Zealand Curriculum* (MoE, 2015) documents. There is a discrepancy, however, between the words of these documents and the actions of successive governments in relation to their implementation in education (Lourie, 2016). New Zealand continues to provide a learning experience for Māori, in English medium, that does not provide for their success. It is crucial that this racial bias is addressed.

The scope of this review, therefore, is fairly narrow, focusing in on research and practice related to systemic racism and cultural competence, primarily in Aotearoa New Zealand. There are many other bodies of work which relate to these areas but these have not been considered in detail at this stage.

## The issue

In the past, Māori educational achievement was seen as a multifaceted issue, where reasons for disparities were difficult—not only to define, but also to question. More recently, causes and consequences are much more regularly agreed upon. The shattering effects of Pākehā colonisation on Māori culture certainly cannot be contested (Jackson, 2018). These include the effect of the Treaty of Waitangi and the conflict, invasion, and confiscation of land that followed; the educational assimilation and destruction of tikanga Māori. There is also the marginalisation of Māori from the nation's affairs in governmental level. These effects have been documented by countless historians as well as educational researchers and policy makers (Orange, 2015; Jones, Marshall, Matthews, Smith & Smith 1995; Bishop, 2005; Penetito, 2002; Tuuta, Bradnam, Hynds, Higgins & Broughton, 2004).

This process of colonisation has resulted, not surprisingly, in huge Pākehā advantage and long-standing Māori impoverishment. This is represented in education by the proportion of Māori learners expelled, suspended, who leave school early, and Māori NCEA results (Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh & Teddy, 2009; Lourie, 2016). In comparison to learners from the majority culture in Aotearoa New Zealand, Māori are also over-represented in special education programmes for behavioural issues. They also continue to enrol in early learning and tertiary programs in lower proportions (Bishop et. al., 2009). The make-up of the education workforce itself must also have implications for sustaining hegemonic systems, whether intended or not. An example of this is that there were 42,107 Pakeha teachers in 2019, compared to 7,403 Māori kaiako (MoE, 2019).

## Themes in research and professional development related to combating racism and addressing Māori achievement

### Doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different response

While understanding the impact of colonisation helps to put today's situation into historical context, it has done little else. Any attempt to redress our damaging history has had little impact on Māori achievement levels. Prominent researchers, such as Bishop (2005), Milne (2013), Penetito (2002) and Smith (2005), assert that this is because these attempts have remained within a Western, or colonising, frame of reference. Indeed, attempts have been introduced to redress Māori education achievement, such as assimilation, integration, multicultural, and bicultural strategies (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). However, addressing the inequities in the educational achievement of Māori, and other minority groups, within the mainstream education system continues to leave much to be desired (Bishop, 2005).

Indigenous education outcomes are inevitably compared with, and measured against, national and international norms, benchmarking tests, and surveys embedded in Western hegemonic values and ideals (Tomlins-Jahnke, 2007). In Aotearoa New Zealand, we focus on measurable, known, and quantifiable outcomes such as NCEA results, literacy and numeracy data, and levels of engagement in education.

Milne (2017) assumes that educational achievement and success can be measured in physical, concrete terms and is not related to more holistic understandings of social and cultural wellbeing. Secondly, when 'problems' are identified, interventions, are then 'based on assumptions about values and behaviour indigenous to Western but not local societies' (Gegeo & Gegeo, 2000, p. 3). Finally, within such research, there is an even more basic assumption made—that the Western system of education is one that all peoples should aspire to attend and succeed within. Smith (2005) wrote that there is still 'an underlying assumption that [mainstream] schooling is inherently good for indigenous children' (p. 94). As Durie (2003) has pointed out, the continued comparison of Māori progress with non-Māori is problematic. This is because it assumes that Māori 'are aiming to be as good as Pākehā when they might well aspire to be better, or different, or even markedly superior' (p. 202). Durie (2003) also queries whether such comparisons do in fact provide any useful information in terms of Māori progress.

Some educational reforms go further than fixing the deficit of our Māori learners and focus on their whānau also. As Milne (2013) identified, initiatives such as family literacy programmes which encourage quiet spaces for homework and reading ‘imply to parents and whānau that the natural, noisy, busy, environment of a large extended family is not conducive to learning, and to parents that they lack the skills to support their children’s learning’ (p. 26).

Pedagogies in English medium are often monocultural and so Māori have had to make what Bishop (2005) termed a cultural ‘leap’ to succeed. He asserted that many Māori learners have been unable to make this ‘leap’ and as a result have felt disconnected from the learning experience. Therefore, they do not achieve as well as they are indeed capable of doing. Asking for this ‘leap’ from Māori learners goes directly against Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership principle embedded as the foundation stone of *Our Code, Our Standards / Ngā Tikanga Matatika, Ngā Paerewa* (Education Council, 2017).

Teaching in Aotearoa, by necessity for Māori, needs to look different.

## **Using the r word**

Racism, as a concept and as a word, remains difficult to stomach. Aotearoa New Zealand is perhaps the only European-colonised nation that continues to recognise a treaty with indigenous people as the foundation of its sovereignty. Due to this, significant aspects of our national identity are based on ideals of egalitarianism and an absence of racism (Liu, Wilson, McClure, & Higgins, 1999). Indeed, many Pākehā still think of New Zealand as an egalitarian, classless society—a place where Māori culture is at best celebrated, and at worst, made invisible (Harris, 2018).

But this position is not backed up by the evidence. A 2014 report for the Race Relations Commissioner stated that Māori ‘experience multiple types of discrimination 10 times more often than Pākehā’ (Rankine, 2014, p. 19). Racism, and both Māori learners’ and Māori leaders’ experience of racism, has been documented over and over again. The compelling education series by the Children’s Commission (2018), *Education Matters to Me*, provided much of the impetus behind this review.

Racism is certainly not solely a teaching profession issue; it is a societal one. This has been evident, for example, through the breadth of scope of the Waitangi Tribunal kaupapa cases. These address allegations of discrimination experienced by Māori ranging from health services and outcomes, housing provision, child protection, and the criminal justice system (Isaac, 2015). Damaging stereotypes of Māori, which New Zealanders are steeped in from an early age, have impacted on the quality of our teaching practice. This is evidenced most powerfully, not so much in the achievement results of these learners, but in research that shows that many teachers in English-medium settings have developed lower expectations of Māori learners (Bishop, Blank, Houkamou & Kingi, 2016; Meisel, Meyer, Yao & Rubie-Davies, 2017). These low expectations are creating a self-fulfilling prophecy—as all learners will live up to, or down to, what is expected of them (Peterson, Rubie-Davies, Osborne & Sibley, 2016).

Things are changing. The idea that Māori news is bad news (Nairn, Barnes, Borell, Rankine, Gregor & McCreanor, 2012) is now only one representation of Māori in the media. There is an increasing visibility of te reo Māori and positive Māori leadership across popular culture (Roy 2018). The more successful professional development initiatives like Te Kotahitanga: Addressing educational disparities affecting Māori students in New Zealand (MoE, 2021c), restarted in 2019 as Te Hurihanganui: A Blueprint for Transformative System Shift (MoE, 2021a), and Kia Eke Panuku: Building on Success (University of Waikato, 2016), have also helped Māori learners to directly challenge the negative stereotypes that they encounter. Student voice brings into sharp reality the impact of these stereotypes on our young people: ‘It’s a bit of a challenge with stereotypes but our mind-set now is thinking that our being Māori is not a disadvantage’ (Berryman, 2018, p. 1).

**Appendix One** provides a compelling student voice poem about expectations and representation.

The term unconscious bias has been used by some to refer to the implicit nature of our subjectivities (Blank, Houkamou, & Kingi, 2016). Indeed, assumptions, stereotypes, and biases form because of lived experiences (Kahneman, 2011). There are several reasons, however, for why it might be more productive for us to use the term ‘racism’ rather than ‘unconscious bias’.

John Powell (2018), Director at the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society in the United States, states that unconscious bias is constructed socially, not individually. We can absolutely, consciously, deconstruct them as a society too: ‘We change the we, and we change the I, with the emphasis being, on changing practices, not [on changing] biases’ (p. 1).

When teachers hold biases, they can cause real harm to students. These can be in the form of low expectations that then go on to affect the student’s academic performance, social and emotional wellbeing (Pérez & Brown, 2022). Teachers make numerous decisions every day that are affected by their biases, e.g., who to call on, how to interact with whānau, and who to push the hardest (Pérez & Brown, 2022). It might be human to have bias, but we can be conscious of the racial inequalities that extend from these biases and address them directly.

To not do so is to accept a racist system.

## **Culturally sustaining pedagogies**

An influential body of revisionist research is asserting that indigenous values and knowledges are essential to redressing the impact of colonialism in our education system. Further, it asserts that the continued exclusion of these, amounts to racism (McCreanor & Came, 2017; Milne, 2017; Bishop, 2012). These ideas have been around for a very long time. More recently, we have seen a tide turn—a growing acceptance of the validity of these ideas from within the system. There is growing momentum behind them.

The impact of such research reflects a change in the wider research world. Warner (2006) wrote that digital technologies have resulted in indigenous knowledge research moving from being ‘voices in the wilderness’ to a recognised global phenomenon. Dei (2011) aligns the retention of indigenous knowledge with resistance:

Today, Indigenous knowledge is about the struggle to retain one’s identity in the call for a global sameness. ...Indigenous knowledge is about resistance, not in the romanticized sense, but resistance as struggle to navigate the tensions of today’s modernized, globalized world while seeking to disrupt its universalizing, hegemonic norms. (p. 168)

We have an indigenous understanding of education already—and it is clear that English medium in Aotearoa has much to learn from Māori medium. Harrison and Baba (2005) reflected on the Māori epistemology of teaching and learning within an immersion environment as one that has a ‘holistic view of fostering the students’ confidence, spirituality, and physical well-being as well as their academic development’ (p. 63). Prominent researchers such as Mere Berryman (2018), Russell Bishop (Bishop et al, 2012) and Ann Milne (2016) have all identified that reciprocal, trust-based relationships are essential for this to occur. Milne (2013) identified the fundamental need to develop culturally located learners, and then from that, achievement naturally occurs. We know that learning through the exploration of identity is an effective way to improve participation and learning (Berryman, Lawrence & Lamont, 2018; Bishop, 2012). This goes right back to Maslow’s ‘hierarchy of needs’ (1943). Humans cannot self-actualise and realise their potential before they have a sense of belonging and self-esteem. The ill-informed focus in English medium, on what a learner can achieve, without addressing the need to ground our learners in who they actually are, is bound to continually fail.

Place-based education also provides an avenue for growth (Manning, 2012). Ongoing research is identifying place-based engagement with local iwi and hapū and quality teacher practice (Wylie, McDowell, Ferral, Felgate, & Visser, 2018). Harrison and Papa (2005) noted this through Te Wharekura o Rakaumangamanga, a Māori medium setting which makes sure learners knew they were Waikato-Tainui first, then Māori, and then New Zealanders. Penetito (2002) wrote that by paying attention to local knowledge, learning settings would mend the connections that exist with local whānau, hapū and iwi. This sense of place, and connection to our earth, is as important for non-Māori as it is for Māori. This is especially so because education for sustainability become more and more integral to our understanding of, and success within, our contemporary world.

We know there is an intrinsic relationship between quality teaching and diversity (Alton-Lee, 2003). Quality teaching, including the importance of high expectations, has been identified as the key to quality outcomes for students (Alton-Lee, 2003).

## **Implications for the Teaching Council**

An understanding that organisations play a role in its perpetuation — including at the level of policy and other system-wide decision-making, needs to be developed (Lourie, 2016). The Tomorrow's Schools Review (MoE, 2018) and the evidence briefs which informed this, recognises that the current system has its strengths. At least as importantly, however, it isn't adequately serving some of our learners, particularly Māori and Pacific ones. In this review the Government has asked Boards of Trustees to take all reasonable steps to eliminate racism, stigma, bullying, and discrimination within their schools. Ākonga Māori and their whānau will have access to free local complaints and dispute resolution panels for serious disputes with a school. The Teaching Council, as the professional body for teachers, has an active and important role in supporting teachers to identify and confront racism. This is in tandem with the whole system of education reforms towards equity. Already the Teaching Council has reviewed the Initial Teacher Education (ITE) requirements to enable more flexible pathways into ITE to grow workforce diversity. The Council has also reviewed the policy for registration and practising certificate renewal to enable te reo me ngā Tikanga Māori capability development for teachers.

The critique of the current system does indeed run deep, and extends right through the Teaching Council itself. To authentically support teachers to address racism, the Teaching Council needs to interrogate its own practice too. The Teaching Council has begun this with Ka Hikitia (MoE, 2021b) modules, te reo Māori capability development, and the development of a Te Tiriti o Waitangi and values-based organisational strategy. These include, for example, a review of conduct and competence processes and a Tikanga Māori guide for all kaimahi. But more is to be done, if the Teaching Council is to be an authentically bicultural institution.

In addition to this, we know that teachers are more inclined to engage effectively when they feel their role and status is respected (Timperley & Alton-Lee, 2008). Integral to any response in this space, therefore, is the need for the Teaching Council to explore and engage in changing its own practice, as well as teachers. We are as much on this journey as our teachers are.

Although the majority of New Zealand's population espouse fairness and equity, the continued disadvantage for Māori remains unexplained (Blank, Houkamou, & Kingi, 2016). The Teaching Council is well placed to address this issue, given its role in supporting teachers to meet the Code of Professional Responsibility and the Standards for the Teaching Profession | Ngā Tikanga Matatika, Ngā Paerewa (Education Council, 2017). The development of Tātaiako (Education Council and MoE, 2011) further strengthens this position.

The range of literature associated with these issues is considerable and this review isn't necessarily an early view of some of the more prominent research in this area. While the research is comparatively rich in defining the problem, professional development approaches that have been taken to improve cultural competence are relatively thin on the ground, and evaluations of their success, even thinner.

That leaves the Teaching Council with some risks in thinking about how it might support teachers in changing professional practice. Te Kotahitanga (MoE, 2021c) is the best known and well evaluated approach (Ladwig, 2012). As a research-led, professional development and engagement programme of five years' duration, the Teaching Council is unlikely to have the resource to replicate such a programme. However, there is an opportunity for the Teaching Council to align its initiative to the Te Kotahitanga restart, Te Hurihanganui (MoE, 2021a). This would ensure a cohesive approach in our respective anti-racism supports.

The challenge for non-Māori teachers to lead the learning of cultural identity is real – but not insurmountable. Self-directed, self-managing, and self-regulated learning all synergise around the importance of learner choice and voice, of agency, of ako. They also synergise around creating multiple ways for learners to engage, to know, to act, and express (Charteris & Smard, 2017). Indeed, all the evidence we have around what good teaching looks like for the future supports this call for more than the dominant discourse to exist. The Teaching Council has a role in manifesting these multiplicities in our teaching practice in a way that is cohesive across approaches and honours Māori as tangata whenua. A learning setting in Aotearoa should be unique to its context and look like no other learning setting in the world.

## **Implications for Give Nothing to Racism**

Give Nothing to Racism is an important opportunity for the Teaching Council. We plan to use a strong co-construction approach, in concert with teachers and leading thought leaders in this area. Through this, we hope that the teaching profession will see the Teaching Council as leading the soon-to-be chorus that our education system can and must be better. There is a beginning momentum around calling racism out, around interrogating privilege, disrupting the status quo, and no longer tolerating inequity.

It won't be easy. Reading the comments of any article related to this topic is enough to turn the most intrepid champion from the challenge ahead (Van Beynen, 2018). It would undoubtedly be easier to do nothing and continue to operate half-heartedly to address Māori achievement within existing teaching practices. It is foolish to do the same thing repeatedly, though, expecting something different to eventuate.

Perhaps then it is easier to remain neutral. Let another organisation lead this inevitable charge. Paulo Freire (Freire, Giroux, & Macedo, 1985), the seminal champion of decolonising methodologies, stated that to be neutral in the battle between those with the power and those without the power is not to be neutral at all. Choosing neutrality is a position that comes from having power. The Teaching Council must consciously choose between the status quo of inequality and something better. Let us imagine something better.

## **Conclusion**

This brief review of literature as it relates to cultural competence and racism in New Zealand teaching and learning lights a somewhat uncharted path for the Teaching Council to forge. Addressing racism in education, understanding privilege, and breaking down the oppressive walls of colonial power is not only essential for the wellbeing of Māori learners, but also crucial if we are to honour our commitment more meaningfully to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Given the demographics in Aotearoa New Zealand, the risk of doing nothing is simply too high if we are to work toward a more equitable future for our tamariki and rangatahi.

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# APPENDIX ONE

## Whakatakētanga, by Azriel Ritchie-May, Year 12, Rangitoto College.

To those who tell me that  
racism towards Māori does not  
exist,

Where the hell have you been?

While our culture has been  
sentenced for breaking and  
entering our own land,

You say our future is safe in  
government hands,

But why do I still get scared to  
pronounce my pepeha,

Neglected cos it often ends  
with looks of discouragement

You can tell me that pointing  
out injustices towards Māori is  
not mine to preach, but it is,

Because it's hard to hold a  
brother up when stereotypes  
have beaten instability into our  
bones,

High school dropout, on the  
lookout for some easy money

Consistent confrontations,

Laced with silent racism

To conform to our stereotypes,

Outright racists yell from  
across the street, spitting out  
sounds that starts with the  
letter brown,

Racism is here in classrooms,  
bathrooms, workplaces, and  
safe spaces

You can't tell me racism  
towards Māori does not exist

Cause it is homegrown  
colonisation,

Still traced back here to  
modern day gentrification

Māori pride demanded to bow  
down to the western world

Turning iwi to individuals

Fogs of intolerance telling you  
to sink or assimilate

I can think of 13 reasons why  
our Indigenous people are still  
struggling because of our race,

Māori suicide rates are still  
higher than any other ethnicity  
in New Zealand

And in the classroom I am  
still required to protect my  
language and defend my  
culture,

the only difference now is they  
won't belt me for it

Constantly hearing hates  
speeches echo through  
corridors,

Bouncing from bus walls,

And out into the streets,

I am hidden under a white  
sheet,

I am made translucent,

blood boiling with every word  
of equality to travel through  
bodies who walk not knowing  
who oppression is,

Don't tell me that racism  
towards Māori does not exist,

Don't you see Māori  
representing in New Zealand's  
most troubling superlatives,

Most likely to grow up abused  
and underprivileged,

Most likely to come out of  
school under qualified and  
unemployed

Most likely to be imprisoned

Most likely to fall victim to  
nationals yelling encore to  
social stigma,

Like the problems don't exist,

Like Māori don't exist,

You cannot tell me that racism  
towards Māori does not exist  
anymore,

because it's roots have tied  
knots around our fists

but Papatūānuku has taught  
the branches to steer clear of  
our mouths and so here I am to  
use it

Carry my whakapapa in my jaw,

Ko Te AngoAngo te maunga  
Ko Te Kupuru te awa

Ko Waikeri te whenua

Ko Ruia te Aroha nga marae

Ko Tumoana te tangata

Ko Te Parewhero te hapu

Ko Te Rarawa te iwi

Ko Azriel Maraea Ritchie-May  
ahau.

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