Reflective Practice: Building a Culturally Responsive Pedagogical Framework to Facilitate Safe Bicultural Learning

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ABSTRACT

Two Indigenous educators, from Aotearoa New Zealand and Canada, endeavoured to enhance the pedagogy of a second-year social work course at the University of Auckland. This article outlines the reflective practice approach and the literature that was used to develop "Porotaka Kōrero: A culturally responsive pedagogical framework". Throughout its implementation, the educators reflect on the resultant reciprocal learning environment in the classroom, and the space cultivated for deeper reflection on cultural competence material. These experiences are presented in this article, highlighting that Porotaka Kōrero holds promise as a method to facilitate safe bicultural learning, noting that further evaluative research is needed in this area. They further emphasise the importance of taking a reflective practice approach in the development and application of culturally responsive pedagogy.

Keywords: *Culturally responsive; Indigenous pedagogy; Critical pedagogy; Reflective practice; Social work education; Bicultural practice*

INTRODUCTION

This article explores the use of culturally responsive pedagogy in a bicultural social work education course. The framework, Porotaka Kōrero (Te Reo Māori for "talking circles"), was developed and implemented to create a safe and respectful co-learning environment among students. This model emerged from a reflective practice process between two Indigenous educators while teaching "Bicultural Social Work Practice" to social work students at the University of Auckland. It was through this approach that a need for practical, culturally responsive, pedagogical research was observed.

To begin this work, a literature review examined various pedagogies. Culturally responsive/culturally relevant pedagogy is a focus of this research, particularly relating to the theme of identity (Theobald, 2013). Since this term is context-specific, the pedagogy will be relevant to Māori in Aotearoa: *ako* (Māori pedagogy), Indigenous pedagogy, and critical pedagogy are therefore explored as the methodological roots of this work. In relation to an essential feature of Indigenous pedagogy, Biermann and Townsend-Cross (2008) state, "[o]verall, the pedagogical space is important – a space that is 'culturally safe', respectful and conducive to shared learning." (p. 150). Yet, overall, there was a notable gap in the literature on the methodology to cultivate a safe learning environment for bicultural education to be delivered. The literature informed the following guiding questions for the educators:

- How can the pedagogy of the course impact social work students' attitudes, skills and knowledge around bicultural practice?

- How can this research contribute to practical Indigenous pedagogical research?

CONTEXT

"Bicultural Social Work Practice" is a Stage 2 Year required course for the Bachelor of Social Work program at the University of Auckland. *The Course Booklet* (School of Counselling Human Services and Social Work, 2014) highlights that the course provides students with: "[a]n introduction to study of the personal and professional impact of the Treaty of Waitangi in social work practice and social workers' obligations to bicultural practice. Development of an understanding of the principles of bicultural practice and articulation of their professional stance." (p. 6).

The intended learning outcomes are for students to be able to discuss theoretical and practical approaches to bicultural social work practice and describe competent social work practice with Māori. This includes understanding culturally competent practice and the competency standards set by the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW) and the Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB). It is important to note that, in this article, the terms "bicultural practice" and "biculturalism" are used interchangeably and in reference to these cultural competency standards. Biculturalism includes supporting and sharing another culture's values, allowing people to choose the language that they communicate in (e.g., English or Te Reo Māori), and the accountability of an institution to meet their clients' needs based on their cultural background (Ministerial Advisory Committee, 1988).

This article is a result of collaboration between Matt Shepherd (Ngati Tama) and Samantha Tsuruda (Spuzzum First Nation). Matt is the coordinator of "Bicultural Social Work Practice", and, at the time of writing, Samantha was completing her Master in Public Health with a focus on Indigenous health from the University of British Columbia.

Matt

My *whakapapa* (kinship) links are to Ngati Tama, a hapü from the Taranaki area. I am registered as both a social worker and a clinical psychologist, and currently work as a senior lecturer in the School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work at the University of Auckland. I continue to maintain a small clinical practice and am a trustee member on a local school board and also the chairperson for an organisation that works with young people who engage in challenging behaviours. For approximately 20 years, I have worked for a number of large non-government agencies and district health boards, primarily focusing on therapeutic roles with young people and their whānau. Over this time I have witnessed first-hand the challenges that both staff and organisations face when trying to practise from a bicultural perspective. I am interested in how organisations can challenge themselves to encapsulate many of the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi).

Samantha

My *whakapapa* (kinship) links are to the Spuzzum First Nation in the Fraser Valley of British Columbia, and I was raised on un-ceded Coast Salish territory in Vancouver, Canada. Throughout my graduate education, I have become increasingly passionate about Indigenous cultural competency within all sectors of society. This stems from my work in evaluation and health care, as well as from experiencing racism in the classroom. I agree with Harms et al. (2011) who state that the decolonisation of hearts and minds, for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, should begin in education. It is important to note that I am approaching this work with the assumption that cultural competency education is improved when it is delivered in a safe learning environment. This is the type of open environment I attempted to foster within "Bicultural Social Work Practice".

Rationale

Aotearoa New Zealand has a strong and robust history of entering into a discourse that discusses colonial history while at the same time building a capacity for *te tino rangatiratanga* (self-determination) (Pōhatu, 2003). A "partnership attitude" is needed whilst maintaining the focus on competent bicultural practice. Social work theories provide a way of learning about how one should practise. There are key theorists, both Māori and non-Māori, who have contributed much to this field. Theorists who have included *tikanga* (Māori cultural practices) with social work practice include Ruwhiu (2009) and Munford and Sanders (2010). They have sought to highlight how effective social work practice with Māori can be achieved with the impetus on the inclusion of cultural competencies within one's professional practice framework (Herewini, 2000; Tapiata, 2004).

This course is considered to have a foundation in structural social work and anti-oppressive practice, which provides a rationale for social work to embrace culturally responsive pedagogy. It further approaches learning from a holistic and individualised standpoint, acknowledging the cyclical process of knowledge exchange between the

person and environment (Kolb, 1984). "Structural social work" is a term that originated in Canada (Fook, 2003) from Moreau and Mullaly (Heron, 2007) and is defined as focusing "… on how wider socio-economic structures produce personal troubles" (p. 343). It acknowledges the power hierarchies that exist within and among institutions and structures, and argues that oppression is sustained within them given the dominant ideology (Desyllas & Sinclair, 2013).

Anti-oppressive practice thus aims to address structural power dynamics to promote equity among all social groups (Desyllas & Sinclair, 2013). However, this practice is arguably more a feature in social work in the United Kingdom compared to other countries (Fook, 2003). Anti-oppressive practice includes social workers acknowledging the socio-political context of their service users, and integrating this knowledge into their practice; a kaupapa Māori approach has emerged over the past three decades to underpin anti-oppressive practice (Eketone, 2008; Walker, 2005). Since critical pedagogy has the central goal of equalising power relations, it plays a strong role in the development of a culturally responsive pedagogical framework. Desyllas and Sinclair (2013) note that creating dialogue, critique and a student voice can challenge social inequality.

This article seeks to capture the current thinking about culturally responsive pedagogy while simultaneously rediscovering vital foundations, such as the epistemological underpinnings, of this particular field. It further aims to posit some key fundamentals when thinking how to facilitate safe bicultural teaching, not just for Indigenous students but also non-Indigenous students and lecturers. The holistic approach taken in this work acknowledges each learner's unique journey, and is crucial to work towards the ultimate goal of authentic bicultural practice.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE APPROACH

The work was guided by an iterative and reflective practice approach; the Indigenous educators met on a weekly basis. Before the course implementation began, research on theoretical frameworks, teaching approaches and pedagogical models were discussed at length. These discussions informed the pedagogy and culturally responsive design of the course. Through its implementation, the Indigenous educators reflected on the following questions after each lecture in an exploratory fashion:

1. What factors contributed to a safe learning environment?

2. What factors hindered a safe learning environment?

3. How can the pedagogy be improved?

These questions build on the transfer of learning theory (Cree & Macaulay, 2000) who researched what helped and what hindered learning. In addition to the above questions, the physical environmental conditions, curriculum, educator behaviour and learner behaviour were all noted. The educators discussed and recorded their responses in a reflective log, and used this information to inform the course pedagogy. This approach was taken as a notable practice: "[b]ecause of the adaptability of critical reflection as a self-researching tool, reflective processes may be successfully adopted by Indigenous

groups in researching their own experiences" (Fook, 2003, p. 128). These factors will be explored in the reflections section of this article.

To assist educators develop a culturally responsive pedagogy, Table 1 outlines example questions for reflective practice that have been informed by the literature and developed by the authors. In particular, three aspects of pedagogical design are discussed: the teaching approach, curriculum, and methods of delivery.

Table 1: Example Questions for Reflective Practice

PEDAGOGICAL DESIGN	THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS FROM THE LITERATURE	QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTIVE PRACTICE
Teaching approach	"Kaupapa Māori seeks to work against the negative impacts of colonization and the ongoing assertion of deficit based theories that dominate explanations of Māori underachievement" (Pihama, Smith, Taki, & Lee, 2004, p. 51).	How can we take a strengths-based approach to work towards epistemological equality?
	Pere (1994) stated, "Traditional Māori learning rested on the principle that every person is a learner from the time they are born (if not before) to the time they die", where everyone was in a constant state or learning and teaching – benefiting the collective as well as the individual (as cited in Pihama et al., 2004, p. 16).	How can we take a learner-centred approach and encourage students to enter a life-long journey with cultural competency?
	Sinclair (2004) discusses the inherent danger of doing nothing by focusing solely on raising awareness of issues. When Indigenous context may be poorly addressed, inappropriately conveyed or misrepresented, or omitted altogether which contributes to a "culture of silence" (Freire, 1970, as cited in Sinclair, 2004).	How can we ensure that this course appropriately addresses bicultural practice models, and goes beyond raising awareness of issues?
Curriculum	Theoretical concepts and explanations are needed to develop cross-cultural competencies (Magnus, 2009)	Does the curriculum include theories such as Indigenous knowledge and Māori epistemology?
	Critical pedagogy and the three stages (Theobald, 2013): • To name • To reflect critically • To act	Does the curriculum encourage students to apply critical pedagogy (or a critical lens) for working with Māori?
	Indigenous pedagogy and the key principles and values (Biermann & Townsend-Cross, 2008): • Identity • Relatedness • Inclusiveness • Reciprocity • Nurturance • Respect	Does the curriculum include the principles of Indigenous pedagogy, and encourage reflection or discussion on their importance?
	Broadening the concept of "culture" can help mitigate the risk of generalising culture to an entire group, explain individual preferences, and demonstrate the impact of socioeconomic factors (Boutin-Foster, Foster, & Konopasek, 2008).	Does the curriculum include a discussion on the broad definition of culture and its continually evolving nature?
	Education on the term "cultural humility" to go beyond cultural competence, emphasising a continual learning experience rather than a skill set that can be completed (Isaacson, 2014).	Does the curriculum explain and encourage students to begin a journey of cultural humility in their social work practice?
Methods of delivery	Harms et al. (2011) suggest teaching about: • History of Indigenous peoples and the intergenerational impacts of colonisation on families, communities, and their health • Cultural knowledge • Impact of social work interventions – including the history of negative relationships with social work and welfare inter-ventions, and the legacy of fear and cynicism around social work	Does the curriculum incorporate: • How the State contributed to the detriment of Māori? • Māori cultural knowledge and family/community structures? • The history of social work in Aotearoa?
	Using resources including food, music and dance, and culturally specific audiovisual materials (Harms et al., 2011). Celebrations and rituals can also cultivate students' feelings of connection to their community (Hatcher, Bartlett, Marshall, & Marshall, 2009).	n what ways can MĐori culture – such as mihi whakatau (welcome), waiata (MĐori song) and karakia (prayer) – be integrated into the course delivery?
	Desyllas and Sinclair (2013) discuss that creating dialogue, critique and student voice can challenge social inequality: "At the very heart of critical pedagogy is the goal to equalize power relations – between students and teachers, institutions and communities, as well as researchers and subjects," (pp. 297-298).	How can this course instigate dialogue and critique, while creating a safe space for students to share their opinions?
	Heron (2007) notes that self-reflection is crucial to structural social work practice, as it brings about "reflexive knowledge" on our identities and place in the social order.	How can this course encourage self-reflection among students?

Building culturally responsive pedagogy

The Indigenous educators have identified essential literature for building culturally responsive pedagogy. This section will review the key areas: (1) pedagogical foundations; (2) upholding Indigenous knowledge and cultural humility; and (3) exploring concepts of safety.

Pedagogical foundations

Ako, Māori pedagogy, was traditionally an educative process in Māori society, based on Māori epistemologies, knowledge values and worldviews, and was the process of their transmission (Pihama, Smith, Taki, & Lee, 2004). Ako was based on the knowledge that pertained to the interests of the wider group, "knowledge that ensured the physical and spiritual wellbeing, the uniqueness of the each iwi (tribe)" (Pihama et al., , 2004, p. 16). Metge (1986) refers to ako as "education through exposure", and describes teaching and learning as "informal, semi-continuous, embedded in the ongoing life of the community, open and inclusive" (as cited in Pihama et al., 2004, p. 17). Unlike colonial institutions, ako was not traditionally bound by age, gender or social status in Māori society. Processes of colonisation and the formalisation of educational structures, however, have disrupted the use of ako.

Indigenous pedagogy is a fundamental shift in relation to the teaching and learning process in which "both the educator and the student must involve themselves in the process of healing, learning and developing along the path guided by Aboriginal epistemology. Colloquially, one must 'walk the walk'" (Young et al., 2013, p. 192). According to Biermann and Townsend-Cross (2008), Indigenous pedagogy is founded on the principles of identity and relatedness, situated amidst contextual values of reciprocity, inclusiveness, nurturance, and respect. It is characterised by reflective practice, and noted as integral for reclaiming Indigenous knowledge and decolonising the teaching process (Biermann & Townsend-Cross, 2008). Additionally, a tenet of culturally responsive/culturally relevant pedagogy is cultivating positive student–teacher and student–student relationships, which can promote connections with what students are learning and who they are learning with (Theobald, 2013).

Critical pedagogy includes a process of questioning what we have done, which involves *un*learning to an extent in order to obtain a new perspective (Theobald, 2013). Unlearning can be applied to the concepts of western epistemologies, approaches and models. Biermann and Townsend-Cross (2008) posit the active unlearning from the enculturation of western education systems. They further note that including curriculum on historical accounts and social commentary can create a space for "productive learning" (Biermann & Townsend-Cross, 2008, p. 150). Three stages have been identified in critical pedagogy: (1) to name or identify current practices; (2) to reflect critically, identify the purpose and goals of such practices, and question best practices; and (3) to act and possibly adapt current practices based on these critical perspectives (Theobald, 2013). This final stage in critical pedagogy is central to change, allowing for transformative potential.

Upholding Indigenous knowledge and cultural humility

Indigenous wholistic theory has been posed as a necessary knowledge set for Indigenous social work practice. Derived ecologically and from an anti-colonial perspective, Indigenous wholistic theory is "whole, ecological, cyclical and relational" (Absolon, 2010, p. 76). Absolon (2010) suggests that knowledge of this theory can help one initially understand

Indigenous people's experiences, contextualizing them within a historical, social, political and economic framework. "In essence, practice and programming based on Indigenous theory ought to support workers to be strong and healthy in terms of clear minds, strong spirits, healthy bodies and healing hearts" (Absolon, 2010, p. 85).

Young et al. (2013) describe the notion of epistemological equality, whereby Indigenous social work aims to uphold the "practices and knowledges of First Peoples in many countries, as well as to the adaptation of Western social work to suit local, and by implication, non-Western, countries" (Young et al., 2013, p. 184). Therefore Indigenous knowledge is *lived* knowledge, meaning that social workers must practise what they know and be what they do. In short, "…. Indigenous knowledge is a way of life" (Absolon, 2010, p. 85).

The literature notes that teaching the concept of cultural humility is essential in the field of bicultural practice (Boutin-Foster, Foster, & Konopasek, 2008). Cultural humility has been characterised in the following ways:

- The commitment to address power imbalances in the patient–clinician dynamic (which requires lifelong dedication to self-evaluation and critique) (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998).

- We take responsibility for our interactions with others, by actively listening to those from differing backgrounds, while at the same time being attuned to what we are thinking and feeling about other cultures (Isaacson, 2014).

- Continual self-reflection and critical thinking about issues such as one's own behaviours, cultural values, the term "culture", and one's own practice (Schuessler, Wilder, & Byrd, 2012). Self-reflection can foster self-awareness, and possibly transform learners' prior assumptions (Boutin-Foster et al., 2008).

- It requires giving up as the "expert", and being able to recognise when one does not know what one does not know.

- Cultural humility embraces the belief that one's own culture is not the only culture, nor the best.

Exploring concepts of safety
In researching how to facilitate safe bicultural learning, we wanted to explore concepts of what safety in the classroom means. In this context, two concepts of safety are applicable: cultural safety in an educational context, and ensuring students felt safe in the classroom. To the former point, Milliken (2008) states:

[c]ultural safety in the social work practice or education environment, therefore, need not refer to only large scale, political, historical, economic, and social issues as they relate to [Indigenous] and [non-Indigenous] people as a whole. Cultural safety also refers to the issues as they appear in the smaller microcosmic environments of a meeting room, a classroom, a school, a faculty or a university. (p. 38)

As to the latter notion of safety, two resounding points for creating a safe classroom included self-reflection and learning circles. "Reflection ultimately fosters thinking in action and encourages students to have a critical eye and promote a safe environment," (Schuessler et al., 2012, p. 96). A learning circle is an Indigenous practice that can be used to share stories and helps create community in a classroom (Hatcher, Bartlett, Marshall, & Marshall, 2009). Story sharing has been noted as a powerful tool in the classroom: the educator shares their stories, and then students are given a chance to share theirs in order to draw on everyone's own culture and knowledge (Yunkaporta, 2009).

Porotaka Kōrero: A framework for safe reciprocal learning
Desyllas and Sinclair (2013) note that learning in social work education should be transformative: "a process that produces a shift in the way we see and make meaning of the world, and which guides subsequent understanding, appreciation and action" (p. 297). Furthermore, practical and stimulating exercises are necessary to integrate learning (Cree & Macaulay, 2000). It is from this position that our particular framework was developed.

Based on the literature, it was identified that self-reflection, story sharing and critical pedagogy are instrumental for engaging in cultural competence education. It was further noted that learning circles are a method to foster safety in the classroom. Since critical thinking and reflection begin with questioning, it was decided to have dedicated questioning and small group discussions during each class in the format of talking circles: in Māori, this framework became entitled "Porotaka Kōrero", which literally translates as 'circular talking'. Porotaka Kōrero is hence founded on the principles and values of Indigenous pedagogy (Biermann & Townsend-Cross, 2008), specifically:

- *Identity:* students learn about themselves as critical to their learning journey;

- *Relatedness:* students feel a sense of belongingness as they relate to their peers;

- *Inclusiveness:* students acknowledge and consider other identities, perspectives and life experiences;

- *Reciprocity:* students engage in reciprocal learning and participate in a give-and-take process of sharing and listening;

- *Nurturance:* students foster patience and caring within the group; and,

- *Respect:* students cultivate a respectful community by acknowledging and accepting each other.

In the explanation of Porotaka Kōrero to students, two key concepts were conveyed using the metaphor of a pair of glasses. The first concept was critical pedagogy, where students were encouraged to critique, reflect, and question the material; in that they were asked to put on a critical lens during their learning journey. The next concept was "two-eyed seeing": "Two-Eyed Seeing refers to learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous ways of knowing and from the other eye with the strengths of Western ways of knowing

and to using both of these eyes together" (Hatcher, Bartlett, Marshall, & Marshall, 2009, p. 146). This particular approach stems from acknowledging that many different ways of knowing exist on our planet, and the importance of building bridges between them (Hatcher et al., 2009).

Figure 1 visually depicts the Porotaka Kōrero pedagogical model. It is encompassed by Indigenous pedagogy, and reflects Indigenous wholistic theory. The critical lens encourages deep thought on issues: deep learning is an approach that seeks to integrate new ideas with previous knowledge (Entwistle, 1987, 1990, as cited in Cree & Macaulay, 2000). The concept of two-eyed seeing is inherently strengths-based, teaching one to be an observer and life-long learner (Hatcher et al., 2009). Within the Porotaka Kōrero, students are encouraged to reflect, share stories and engage with the material and each other.

Figure 1: Porotaka Kōrero Framework
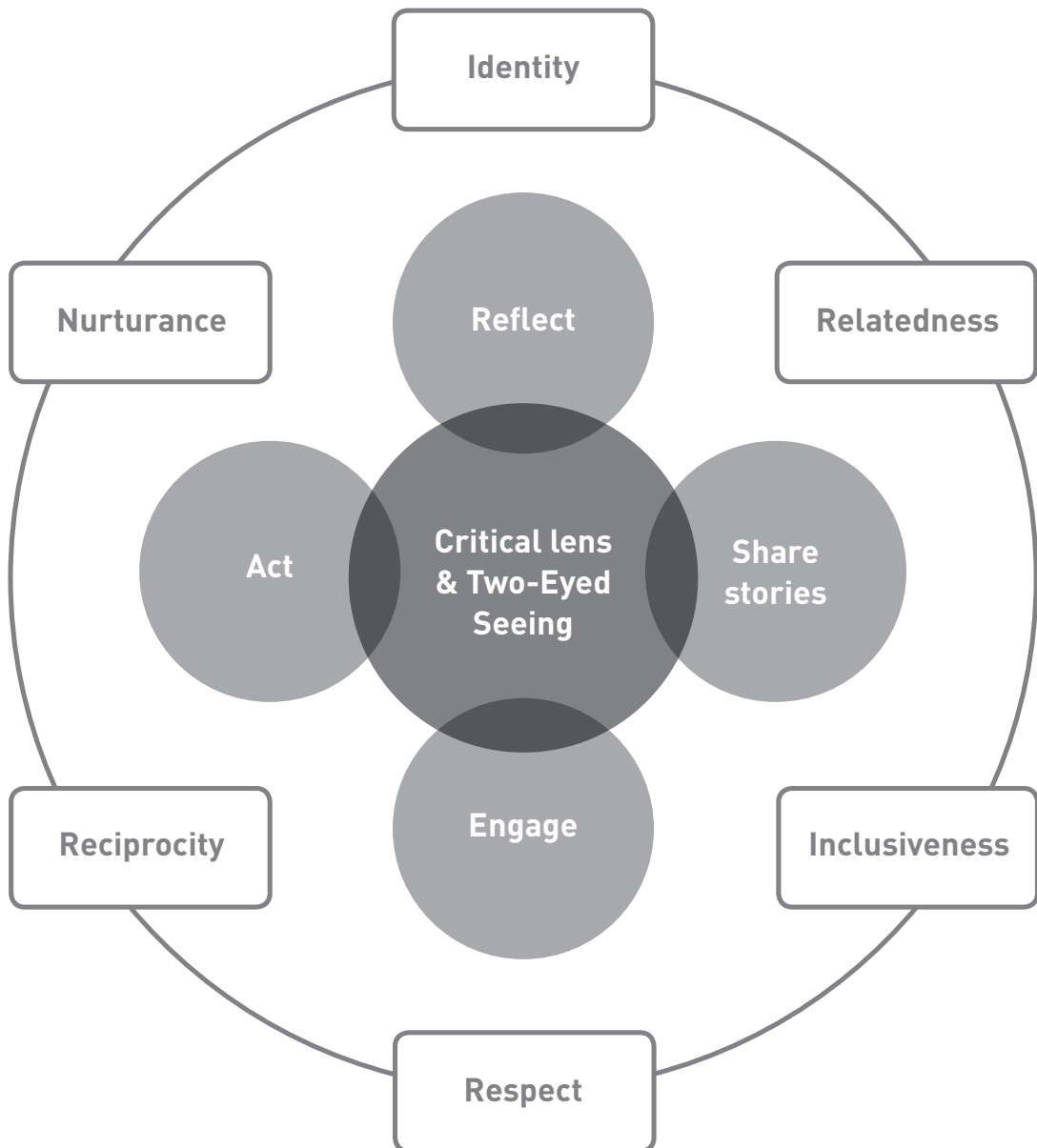
Educator reflections and discussion

This section will explore the educators' collective reflections from an Indigenous educator perspective. Overall, we found that there were three overarching factors that contributed to safe bicultural learning, specifically: pedagogical design features; educator behaviour; and student behaviour.

What factors contributed to a safe learning environment?

The course, "Bicultural Social Work Practice", was delivered in the first semester of 2015, on a weekly basis for three hours. The last hour of teaching was dedicated to a tutorial session, which included time for Porotaka Kōrero. Regarding delivery, the three-hour sessions appeared to provide the space for deeper interactions among students, which is a finding consistent with the literature (Biermann & Townsend-Cross, 2008). As students were consistently encouraged and given opportunities to share their own perspectives, it became apparent to the educators that a culture of inclusiveness was fostered.

Reciprocity was a woven theme throughout the culturally responsive pedagogical design. One example that stood out was asking questions of students frequently throughout lectures, encouraging them to integrate their knowledge and teachings into the class. The educators focused on moving away from a didactic teaching model. For instance, one educator explicitly stated that they were coming into this course as an open learner instead of as an expert.

A topic within the curriculum that seemed to stimulate self-refection was identity, which Heron (2007) notes is crucial to bringing about reflexive knowledge. In a Porotaka Kōrero session, students were asked to reflect and share what is central to their own worldviews. They were then asked to identify an object that represented their collective worldview as a Porotaka Kōrero group. The educators noticed that students respectfully listened to each other share stories. In addition to reflecting on their own identity, they also appeared to find commonalities amongst individual stories and wove together a shared identity.

The reflective practice approach adopted stood out as a promising practice for creating a safe classroom for bicultural education. It was clearly observable that students benefitted from having the time and space to reflect on the previous two hours of teaching. This reflexive approach led to further questions from the students, which included further clarification of what was taught in the lecture or explored a critical question from a student. It was clear that Hatcher et al.'s (2009) aim of creating a class culture where students can openly share was achieved.

The educators found continually analysing the Porotaka Kōrero framework was necessary for its development and delivery. This approach aligns with critical pedagogy, such as through questioning what was done in the lectures and tutorial sessions (Theobald, 2013). Critical pedagogy was included in the curriculum as a means to stimulate critical thinking among students. This was particularly emphasised around concepts like "Indigenous epistemology" and "cultural competency". Upon reflection, the educators postulate that embodying critical pedagogy themselves and engaging in reflective practice were critical for creating a reflective classroom. Hatcher et al., (2009) state the importance of enacting what we say as authentic and trustworthy educators. Example questions include:

- Indigenous epistemology: What is central in your worldview? What do you think is central to a Māori worldview? Are there comparisons or differences with your worldview?

- Cultural competency: What do the words "cultural competency" mean to you? Thinking critically, what are some of the strengths and challenges of the term itself?

Educator behaviour was perceived as a significant factor in creating a safe classroom environment. Aspects of behaviour included the spoken word and instructions to the class, as well as overall demeanour. This mirrors the approach posited by Hatcher et al. (2009), which underscores the significance of the nonverbal in creating a classroom community. In relation to instructions, Porotaka Kōrero was positioned as an environment where students could question course material, engage in deeper thinking and possibly work through divergent perspectives. It was important to communicate that the room was a safe and respectful place, reminding students often that there are no wrong answers in class discussions. This aligns with the research that the acceptance of mistakes and a lack of punishment support the transfer of learning (Cree & Macaulay, 2000).

Reciprocal story sharing was also an element that cultivated a safe learning environment in the class, as identified by Hatcher et al. (2009). It was evident that, when educators, guest speakers and students alike shared personal anecdotes, that there was a deeper level of trust in the room. People were feeling comfortable enough to be vulnerable. From an educator perspective, sharing stories with students around cultural humility – needing to unlearn, be curious and humble, and not knowing the answers – may help students feel safe to begin navigating their bicultural practice. Porotaka Kōrero was also a pivotal method in creating a peer-based learning environment between students, who appeared to appreciate the reciprocal aspect of the methodology.

Relatedness was built in the classroom through communicating the value of relationships, both in the educational setting and in bicultural social work practice. The first introductory circle was explained as the opportunity to identify common relations amongst students and with the educators. The assignment of students learning their *pepeha* (traditional Māori introduction) personified the principle of relatedness. The pepeha is about sharing your own story of your geographical ties and your relationships. The person you are meeting may be able to relate to your tribal group or subtribe, grandparents or parents, siblings or children, partner or spouse. Through learning about who you are in context to land and community, the pepeha has an important role in Māori relationship building.

In previous years of teaching SOCWORK 212, the pepeha had been shown to be anxiety-provoking for students. Based on that experience, the educators aimed to mitigate their potential anxiety and assert the classroom as a safe learning space: they communicated that the emphasis is on the process, and that "we are all in this together". A successful aspect in creating safety was having pepeha tutorials take place at the Marae on campus, under the guidance of Kaumātua (Elders). The Kaumātua emphasised the richness and meaning behind the pepeha, which took the emphasis away from pronunciation and allowed students to contemplate the greater purpose of the assignment. In addition, the educators did their pepeha and showed humility while doing so. They felt it was important

to demonstrate vulnerability, participate in the cultural protocol, and personify the togetherness of our learning journey.

What factors hindered a safe learning environment?
The educators were unable to identify factors that detracted from a safe learning environment, however, they did speculate on potential threats to the pedagogical framework. For example, individual-level attitudes and behaviours have been noted as a key agent in creating a safe classroom for bicultural learning. Therefore both educators and students have equal potential to hinder the dynamics of safety as they do to promote them. The educators propose that personifying the values of Indigenous pedagogy (such as listening with respect, valuing inclusiveness and respect), has a pivotal impact on the educational environment.

There are also possible threats to culturally responsive pedagogy at an institutional or structural level. For instance, Harms et al. (2011) suggest incorporating multiple aspects of culture and history into the curriculum, yet this relies heavily on the educator: their own attitudes and beliefs may cause resistance to incorporating cultural teachings, they may not have access to traditional knowledge keepers, or possibly do not feel comfortable with the material. Biermann and Townsend-Cross (2008) note the deficit-based thinking around Indigenous education models for all children. This, in addition to the colonised education system and privileging of western knowledge and methodologies over Māori epistemologies (Pihama et al., 2004), may present resistance to culturally responsive pedagogical models.

How can the pedagogy be improved?
Through the reflective practice approach, the educators have formulated suggestions to improve the teaching framework of the course. These are outlined in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Suggestions for Improving the Pedagogical Design

PEDAGOGICAL DESIGN	THEME	SUGGESTION FOR IMPROVEMENT
Teaching approach	Grounding own philosophical views	Before beginning the course, it may be beneficial for educators to reflect on their philosophical opinions relevant to the course, such as their own relationship to the concepts of biculturalism and multiculturalism.
Curriculum	Foundation of biculturalism	Ground biculturalism in the historical context of Aotearoa and the implications for Māori. Despite that historical context was given, rooting the term "biculturalism" may be helpful in demonstrating the significance of bicultural practice with Māori people, rather than multicultural views.
	Challenging racism	Although this is not a focus of the course objectives, curriculum on how to challenge racism may have been helpful – students mentioned in class discussion that they were wanting to become more confident in doing so.
	Exploring self-assessments	One of the classes featured a brief self-assessment on the cultural competencies of social work. In order to connect deeper with their perceived competencies, it may have been worthwhile to explore the students' self-assessments: Why did they think that? What are their goals in this area? How will they get there?
Porotaka Kōrero	Restricting prior lecture time	It is important to note though that students' fatigue impacted their engagement in the Porotaka Kōrero. It may be worthwhile to keep lectures to a two-hour timeframe beforehand, or explore the process near the beginning or middle of the lecture.
	Alternative formats	In addition to talking circles and general group discussion, there may be room to utilise more engaging formats used such as role-playing or case study workshops.
	Student-directed planning	It may be more beneficial to plan the Porotaka Kōrero in "real time" – possibly asking students what they would like to discuss more of, or reflect on, from the material presented: How do they want to dig deep? What would be helpful for them to practise?

One suggestion to elaborate on is turning the Porotaka Kōrero process to be student-driven. Magnus (2009) denotes the importance of theoretical concepts and explanations in cultural competency education, but students may want to engage with or question certain ideas in greater depth. They may also not fully grasp material as it is presented in the lecture, nor be able to fully articulate their opinions. Porotaka Kōrero time could thus be learner-driven, through students identifying which course material they want to explore further. In their discussion about the science of teaching, Biermann and Townsend-Cross (2008) posit that the teacher provides stimuli and facilitates reflection for students as they drive their own educational journey. Therefore, this increasingly organic Porotaka Kōrero process may be in alignment with critical and culturally responsive pedagogy.

Another issue worth exploring is a recurring discussion point throughout the course on biculturalism and multiculturalism. Although we explored the historical context of biculturalism in Aotearoa, the class continued to bring up the value and role of multi-culturalism in social work practice. The educators felt that it was important to keep the discussion going, and encouraged students' questioning and sharing to maintain a safe learning space for everyone. At the same time, they felt the need to stress the context of the term "bicultural" practice. This remains a primacy issue in Aotearoa, with many key factors pointing to this. For example, Māori are the Indigenous people of Aotearoa, and have a founding document, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, that is recognised within New Zealand law. The various social work accreditation bodies espouse set cultural competencies that are highly recommended for working with Māori. Therefore, this course is not about valuing biculturalism over multiculturalism: it is about upholding the need for culturally competent social work practice with Aotearoa's Indigenous people. For future years, integrating the term "bicultural" into lessons on Desyllas and Sinclair's (2013) structural social work and anti-oppressive practice could help root their understanding of the term in relation to the Māori renaissance.

CONCLUSION

There are a number of successes anecdotally noted from this delivery of "Bicultural Social Work Practice". Taking a reflective practice approach was critical to cultivate a culturally responsive pedagogical framework. Critical pedagogy, Indigenous pedagogy and culturally responsive concepts created a necessary foundation for Porotaka Kōrero. Further, integrating Māori history, cultural components and opportunities for self-reflection was essential in the course delivery. While Porotaka Kōrero proved to be a useful culturally responsive pedagogical framework, the educators were able to reflect only on the implementation from their standpoint. It is essential for a qualitative study to be done using the Porotaka Kōrero model which would incorporate participants who are students of this course.

From an Indigenous educator perspective, there appear to be great opportunities for culturally responsive pedagogical development. This may include creating practical teaching frameworks, applying and evaluating existing pedagogical models in a bicultural practice education context, or endeavouring (in qualitative research studies) to assess their impact on attitudinal or behavioural change. Considering the overlap in theoretical and epistemological foundations, it may be worthwhile to adapt and implement the Porotaka Kārero framework

in other Indigenous contexts. Documenting the process and lessons learned would be valuable for researching its implementation. For instance, it would be essential to modify contextual and cultural information to the specific place of implementation.

More specifically, this framework draws upon Canadian research and social work theory, and there may be strong potential for Porotaka Kōrero to be applied in Canadian education. Its foundation is on principles that First Nations culture embraces, and has the intention of cultivating aware, culturally humble, life-long learners. Much like Biermann and Townsend-Cross (2008), the educators posit that any education system could benefit from exploring culturally responsive pedagogy. There may also be opportunities for outcome assessments with the Porotaka Kōrero framework, and studying its impact across different contexts could have strong implications for cultural competency education.

Upon deeper reflection, it emerged that the educators themselves experienced the process of Porotaka Kōrero each week. They went through the methods of cyclically reflecting, sharing stories, engaging and acting, and held a critical lens to their own pedagogies and epistemologies throughout the delivery of the course. A two-eyed seeing approach was taken, where the strengths and experiences from two different Indigenous educators were upheld. Lastly, the core principles of Indigenous pedagogy grounded their teaching practice. It is with these insights that reflective practice is suggested as a methodology for educators in bicultural social work education: particularly for cultivating a culture of reflection and safety in the classroom.

Acknowledgements

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Note: [i] The literature review was completed with a utilisation focus, where findings were intended to inform culturally responsive pedagogy. The academic search included the following terms: "Māori pedagogy" and "bi-cultural education;, "pedagogy"; "cultural safety"; "cultural competence"; "culturally responsive"; "culturally relevant"; "cross-cultural training".