

Paradigm Lost: The loss of bicultural and relation-centred paradigms in New Zealand education and ongoing discrepancies in students' experiences and outcomes

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The term paradigm lost (with apologies to Milton) references the lost opportunities arising from a discrepancy in both what the New Zealand education context promises and what is implemented in many schools. Honouring the Treaty of Waitangi inherently promises an education system that draws on the worldviews of both Māori and Pākehā. We argue that the schooling model, adopted in 1877 and substantively unchallenged since, does not reflect the views of the uniqueness of every child as contained in the heritages of both Treaty signatory partners. More concerning is that the accompanying assimilatory practices within schooling have perpetuated their disastrous impact on Māori. This article explores the impacts of the 'lost paradigm' on students' sense of self and therefore on their sense of belonging at school. The potential and hope for paradigm regained is also presented, drawing from the responses of educators who have participated in a professional learning and development course, where participants engage in a process of conscientisation, resistance and transformative praxis, that changes both their personal educational practice and that of their school. Through this course, participants experience what Freire (1996) refers to as 'radical hope' – the belief that we can make life better for others and change the paradigms that lead to oppression and despair.

Keywords: education history, education policy, Māori student experiences, critical theories

Introduction

The New Zealand education policies and schooling documents require that educators honour the Treaty of Waitangi as they deliver education to our young people. Honouring the Treaty requires that educators and schooling practices, including curriculum and assessment, will respect and draw on the worldviews of both Māori and Pākehā. In both these world views children are considered, as explicitly described in the Early Childhood Education Curriculum Te Whāriki, as imbued with mana atuaanga – qualities of “uniqueness and spiritual connectedness” (Ministry of Education, 2017a, p. 35). However, we believe that without a fuller appreciation of some of the historical acts that preceded this Treaty, these qualities of mana atuaanga will never be widely accepted or supported by our current schooling model. This model, now often labelled as the factory model of schooling, was adopted by New Zealand in 1877. The core concepts of this model remain in place to this day. Our tight adherence to the precepts of this model precludes national conversations and understandings of the views of the child inherent in the heritages of both Treaty signatory partners – Māori and British. The requirement to honour the Treaty of Waitangi should encourage a focus on the key historical and ontological beliefs that underpin our bicultural heritage. Understanding these beliefs could allow for our schooling system to be founded on

a different paradigm than that of the factory model. Instead, with apologies to Milton, we have a situation of paradigm lost – the lost opportunities arising from a discrepancy in what the Treaty obligations within the New Zealand education context were built from and promise and what is implemented in many schools.

In this article we outline factors that have contributed to a general acceptance of the current model of schooling as the preferred model, despite the ongoing deleterious impact this model has had on generations of children. We also present a professional learning and development (PLD) model that has proven to support educators to acknowledge and understand their role in perpetuating the paradigms that underpin the current status quo and to engage with the ongoing and spiralling process of conscientisation, resistance and transformative praxis that is needed to promote lasting, transformative change.

Schooling in New Zealand

Most children in New Zealand are educated through the country's state schooling system. Under the Education Act, enrolment in a State school is both a right: "every domestic student is entitled to free enrolment and free education at any State school during the period beginning on the student's fifth birthday and ending on 1 January after the student's 19th birthday" (Education Act 2020, s3, 33 (1)) and a compulsion: "Every domestic student must, during the period beginning on the student's sixth birthday and ending on the student's 16th birthday, be enrolled at a registered school" (Education Act 2020, s 3, 35 (1)). The vast majority of children attend a school – on 1 July 2020 there were 826,347 students in New Zealand schools (Ministry of Education, 2020e). In contrast, 6,573 students (0.8 percent of all eligible children) had been granted a Certificate of Exemption from Enrolment at a Registered School, and their parents or legal guardian were legally responsible for their learning programme (Ministry of Education, 2020a).

The advent of our current schooling system

Despite tangata whenua (people of the land, collectively known today as Māori, New Zealand's Indigenous tribes) having a range of effective methods for knowledge transmission long before colonisation had begun (Berryman, 2008), the mass schooling system for New Zealand arrived with the early settlers from Great Britain. The first European-style school was established for Māori in 1816 by missionary Thomas Kendall, at Rangihoua (Barrington & Beaglehole, 1974; Simon & Smith, 2001). Attendance at these schools was voluntary and popular, by the late 1840s there was a mission school in almost every village (Calman, 2012) as Māori sought to understand the benefits of the new technologies on offer. Both adults and children attended, with instruction conducted in te reo Māori (Māori language). It was estimated that, in the early 1840s, half of the adult Māori population were literate in te reo Māori (Simon & Smith, 2001). The first state support for mission schools came from the Education Ordinance Act 1847, the funding dependent on instruction being in English. By 1851, the numbers attending these schools had dropped to between 700 and 800 students, significantly fewer than in the 1830s. The Native Schools Act of 1858 provided annual funding of £7,000 per school and, in order to speed the process of assimilation, added further regulations, including that all enrolled students needed to be boarders. By the 1860s, most

mission schools had closed and, in 1879, the remaining Native Schools were placed under the authority of the Department of Education.

The Education Act 1877 introduced compulsory schooling for all New Zealand's young people and the British system of schooling was adopted for both Māori and Pākehā (New Zealanders of European descent) learners. This Act set in law that the institution of schooling was the preferred education system, introducing compulsory schooling ahead of Great Britain where it was introduced in the 1880s (Soysal & Strang, 1989).

The factory model of schooling

When the Education Act was passed in New Zealand, compulsory mass schooling was, internationally, a relatively recent phenomenon. Large formal schools were introduced in Prussia in the early nineteenth century, the first country to move the responsibility for education from families to that of the state (Melton, 2001). The Prussian system introduced compulsory attendance for boys and girls, specific training for teachers, national testing and a prescribed national curriculum for each grade level – factors which have remained features of mass schooling across the Western world. The underlying philosophy was that learning is a regimented activity that occurs in ages and stages. New Zealand was an early adopter of mass schooling, and “from its inception took on board a set of ‘values’, ‘ideals’ and ‘standards’, more or less coherent with the cultural history of Britain and Europe, that had evolved over several hundred years” (Penetito, 2004, p. 90).

As industrialisation took hold, the mass schooling model closely followed the structure of factories, also a relatively new phenomenon. Within mass schooling, large numbers of students were placed in grades according to their age and moved through successive grades as they mastered the curriculum. Education ceased being a family-based activity aiming, instead, to be impersonal, efficient, and standardised. The term ‘factory model of schooling’ was adopted to describe this system (Callahan, 1962; Labaree, 2010; Leland & Kasten, 2002; Sleeter, 2015) and, in the early stages of industrialisation, it was a term used with pride. In 1916, an influential educator E. Cubberly (cited by Kliebard, 1971) said: “our schools are, in a sense, factories in which the raw products (children) are to be shaped and fashioned into products to meet the various demands of life” (p.75). Mokyr (2001) refers to the vested interests of the industrial capitalists in the role of schooling in preparing children for working futures within their factories. While pride in the term ‘factories’ is no longer part of our current education rhetoric, there remains a residual theme of pride in schools’ efficiency and effectiveness in shaping students to meet goals of the State-mandated achievement outcomes for students.

The factory model of education spread quickly to the United States, Kliebard (1995) identifying the influence of industrial ‘giants’ in the design of schools that were established to be as efficient as possible, a practice enhanced by ‘age-grading’ (Leland & Kasten, 2002). Sleeter (2015) says that “core practices and structures for this purpose, still used today, include grouping students by age, distributing them into ‘egg crate’ buildings, standardising curriculum, measuring student learning for purposes of comparison, and standardising teacher work” (p.112). She reports many criticisms of the model, highlighting three in particular. Firstly, the model is “highly inequitable, reproducing social stratification based on race and class” (p.112). Some children are more disadvantaged than others in this system,

particularly those who are “stigmatized students of color” (Murphy & Zirkel, 2015, p. 28) and those with special learning needs (Meyer, 2001; Morris, 2002). Secondly, Sleeter (2015, p.113) says, “its curriculum is standardised, based on a White upper-middle class worldview that limits perspectives, funds of knowledge, and intellectual inquiry, and bores the diverse students in schools.” And, thirdly, it is “oriented around compliance with and maintenance of the status quo, rather than social transformation” (p. 114).

In New Zealand, the impact of the factory model of schooling on Māori students has been particularly disadvantageous (Pihama & Lee-Morgan, 2019; Sleeter, 2015). Compulsory mass schooling was imposed with little evidence of consultation with the Māori population over their agreement for this model of schooling, despite the Māori population, at the time of the introduction of the policy, considerably outnumbering the tauwi (immigrant) population. The decision that the education system would model that of Europe was a determined act of colonial oppression through assimilation, an act that has been detrimental for Māori and for Indigenous people around the world (Shields et al., 2005). As Pihama and Lee-Morgan (2019) say:

Education was both a target and tool of colonialism, destroying and diminishing the validity and legitimacy of Indigenous education, while simultaneously replacing and reshaping it with an ‘education’ complicit with the colonial goals. Schooling as a colonial structure served as a vehicle for wider imperialist ideological objectives. (p. 21)

The Treaty of Waitangi in New Zealand education

The Treaty of Waitangi, signed in 1840, was a formalised agreement between the British Crown and some chiefs from different iwi (tribal groups). Today the constitution of New Zealand continues to “reflect the Treaty of Waitangi as a founding document of government in New Zealand” (The Office of the Governor-General, 2019, p. 1). The Treaty by itself has no legal standing in New Zealand and can only be enforced when explicitly referenced in an Act of Parliament (Ministry of Justice, 2019). The Education Act 1989, and subsequent iterations, places a legal obligation on education institutions to uphold the principles of the Treaty.

Guidance for schools on understanding and enacting their obligations in honouring the Treaty is provided by the Ministry of Education (2012). Schools are provided with guidance against three broad principles implicit within the Treaty: partnership, protection, and participation (Royal Commission on Social Policy, 1988). Strengthening the legal obligation to enact the principles of the Treaty are the responsibilities incurred as a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC). UNCROC was passed by the United Nations in 1989, and ratified in New Zealand in 1993, the obligations immediately incorporated into the Education Act. Articles 28 to 31 address a child’s educational rights (United Nations Human Rights, 1996). These articles state that New Zealand is obligated to provide an education system that focuses on the holistic development of the child, respects the child’s culture and provides an education where the cultures of both Indigenous and tauwi are acknowledged, valued and prioritised.

A consideration of the factors surrounding the passing of the 1877 Education Act – including the rich educational framework operating in Aotearoa long before the arrival of British settlers; the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840; and the passing of the Education

Act in 1877 when Māori children far outnumbered British children – raises the question of why a British system of schooling, derived from a factory model of production was adopted as the compulsory form of education? Answering this question requires a wider exploration of the historical and political contexts that were at play when European settlers first arrived in Aotearoa.

The Doctrines of Discovery

The prevailing political and paradigmatic settings that accompanied the arrival of British settlers and the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi are grounded in historical events dating back to the fifteenth century. In the 1400s a series of papal bulls (decrees issued by the Pope) allowed European monarchs to seize lands inhabited by Indigenous peoples if they were the first European nation to ‘discover’ these lands. For example, in a papal bull, the *Dum Diversas* issued in 1452, Pope Nicholas V gave permission for King Alfonso of Portugal to search out and reduce any “Saracens and pagans and any other unbelievers” to perpetual slavery (Harjo, 2014; Mutu, 2019; Watson, 2010). Under the same pope, this permission was extended in 1455, through a bull called *Romanus Pontifex*, to give the Catholic nations of Europe authority over lands discovered during the Age of Discovery. It allowed full seizure of land and the enslavement of native, non-Christian peoples in Africa and the Americas. Other decrees followed, further endorsing the right of ‘discoverers’ to seize land and enslave non-White Indigenous peoples in the name of European, Christian monarchs. In 1496, King Henry VII issued a decree on behalf of England to allow explorers to claim lands occupied by ‘heathens and infidels’ on behalf of England (Davenport & Paullin, 1917; Miller et al., 2010; Mutu, 2018). In 1792, Thomas Jefferson declared that the Doctrine of Discovery would extend from Europe to the United States government (Dunbar-Oritz, 2014).

Under the Doctrines of Discovery, lands not occupied by White European occupants were declared empty (*terra nullius*) and the inhabitants classified as non-human, along with native flora and fauna. In 1769, Captain Cook claimed New Zealand for King George III. In 1840, the year the Treaty was signed, Lieutenant Hobson declared the South Island *terra nullius* under the same Doctrines (Katene & Taonui, 2018; Mutu, 2018; Ngata, 2019). With the ‘discovery’ of New Zealand by Captain Cook, the Doctrines of Discovery became part of New Zealand’s legal framework. The Treaty itself had no legal status as exemplified in an 1853 court case *Parata vs The Bishop of Wellington*. In this case the judge declared the Treaty of Waitangi ‘a simple nullity’ and found, citing the Doctrines, the only valid title to land was Crown title (Katene & Taonui, 2018). More recently, the Doctrines of Discovery were cited in the 2003 *Foreshore and Seabed* case (*Ngati Apa vs Attorney General*) and upheld in the subsequent 2004 *Foreshore and Seabed Act* (Katene & Taonui, 2018; Ngata, 2019).

The underlying tenet of the Doctrines of Discovery, that white nations are able to ‘discover,’ enslave and colonise all Indigenous nations, has permeated the Western world and the countries they have occupied. In a 2012 meeting of the Permanent Forum of the United Nations, the Doctrines of Discovery were denounced as the “shameful root of all the discrimination and marginalization Indigenous peoples face today,” that “encouraged despicable assumptions ... Indigenous peoples were ‘savages’, ‘barbarians’, ‘inferior and uncivilized’ ... [among other] constructs the colonizers used to justify their subjugation,

domination and exploitation of the lands, territories and resources of native peoples” (United Nations, 2012, p. 3).

When the Treaty of Waitangi and the first Education Act were signed, the Doctrines of Discovery underpinned the prevailing global paradigm and legal context, entitling European settlers to seize land and resources and to subjugate the Indigenous inhabitants. Colonisation was seen as means of civilising the natives of the land, a political viewpoint that has remained current, despite the United Nations denouncing the Doctrines in 2012. Although less visible in our nation’s rhetoric than talk of the Treaty, the Doctrines have remained highly influential. In a 2015 interview, Moana Jackson said that “to honour the Treaty, we must first settle colonisation” (cited in Katene & Taonui, 2018, p.48). For an education system to fairly reflect both the heritages of New Zealand’s Treaty partners, the Doctrines of Discovery that underpin the history of colonisation of New Zealand need to be fully acknowledged, addressed and redressed; the underpinning implications understood in the context of today.

Reinforcing the theory of the hierarchy of races

At the same time as New Zealand’s education system was being established, a theory of the hierarchy of races was becoming prevalent, aspects of this becoming known in the 1870s as ‘Social Darwinism’ (Williams, 2000). These theories included the belief that some races of people were superior to others, the White race being the most superior (Claeys, 2000; Spencer, 1852; Williams, 2000). Darwin believed that the “optimal outcome of human natural selection would be the triumph of ‘the intellectual and moral’ races over the ‘lower and more degraded ones’” (Claeys, 2000, p. 237).

These beliefs were prevalent in society and in our schools. Imported textbooks used in New Zealand schools referred to five great races of men of which the white race was the greatest (McGeorge, 2012). Textbooks published in New Zealand, from 1905, also affirmed “the notion of the hierarchy of races” (Consedine & Consedine, 2005, p. 139). British settlers in New Zealand were portrayed as “naturally superior to Asians and Africans because they were white [and] superior to other Europeans because they were racially British” (McGeorge, 2012, p. 67). Māori were portrayed as “a very superior savage” (McGeorge, 2012, p. 69). School Journals, compulsory reading in New Zealand schools from 1914, further reinforced this idea and the “moral superiority of Britain was asserted as a fact” (Malone, 1973, p. 15). The promulgation of Social Darwinism continued into relatively recent times, for example, in 1978 the Department of Education recommended a book “The Māori and The Missionary.” This book said the missionaries “went to the aid of the backward races” (Miller, 1954, p.1). The Social Darwinism concepts of cultural and genetic superiority have underpinned educational policies (Bishop, 2005; Sullivan, 1994) and remain influential across society today.

Some structural changes have occurred over time, such as the requirement in the Education Act 1989 for all schools to honour the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi; and the New Zealand Curriculum vision that “Māori and Pākehā recognise each other as full Treaty partners” (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 8). However, these changes have been implemented without the acknowledgment of the influences of the Doctrine of Discovery or Social Darwinism as part of the schooling policy framework and beliefs upon which they are building. Jackson (2019) says that unless, as a nation, New Zealand acknowledges and addresses the “mythtakes,” the “deliberately concocted falsehoods to justify a process that

is actually unjustifiable” (p. 102), we cannot move forward. These unacknowledged mythtakes are part of the policy sediment (Ball, 1993) in which newer education policies are founded.

Opportunities for an alternative paradigm

However, there is an alternative paradigm presented within New Zealand’s education system, that is, for an education that seeks to foster the uniqueness and spiritual connectedness of every child. The Treaty of Waitangi, despite the contentiousness surrounding the wording and translations, clearly calls for *mana oritē* – a mutual respect for the beliefs, values and heritages of both signatories. A key principle in *Te Whāriki, He Whāriki Mātauranga mō Ngā Mokopuna o Aotearoa*, Early Childhood Curriculum is *mana atua*, whereby “children understand their own *mana atua* – uniqueness and spiritual connectedness” (Ministry of Education, 2017a, p. 35). In *te reo*, this principle is explained as: “*e ai ki tā te Māori he atua tonu kei roto i te mokopuna ka whānau mai ana ia ki tēnei ao*” (Ministry of Education, 2017b, p. 18). This statement speaks of the godliness or spiritual essence each child inherits from their ancestors when they are born (see Early Childhood Development, 1999; Rameka, 2015; Reedy, 2003).

There are challenges, even in the Early Childhood sector, in fully enacting this principle. Rameka (2015) says there “is little [evidence] to indicate that the spiritual dimensions of the child or the world are recognised in early childhood education practice,” attributing this to an education system which is “essentially secular, leaving little room for ideas and beliefs of the sacred or spiritual” (p. 82). She explains:

Western science has effectively disconnected spirituality from other aspects of individual and institutional existence, and has embedded belief systems that position reason, truth and logic over faith and spirituality. As spirituality cannot be proven scientifically, it is often viewed as illogical and unsophisticated and therefore has no place in educational theory and practice. (pp. 82–83)

The belief that every child is unique and spiritually connected is a key concept in the heritages of both the signatories of the Treaty. In *Te Ao Māori*, a common term for children is *tamariki*. Pihama and colleagues (2004) explain the concepts behind the term ‘*tamariki*’ as “*Tama* is derived from *Tama-te-rā* the central sun, the divine spark; *ariki* refers to senior status, and *riki* on its own can mean a smaller version” saying “children are the greatest legacy the world community has” (p. 22). Within British or Western worldviews children are also considered very special. The concept that “God created people in His own image” (Genesis 1: 26-27; James 3:9) is a foundational truth in the Christian and Judaism faiths and embedded in Western worldviews. Babies of both Māori or Western heritage are treasured – they are held to be unique, born of greatness and carriers of the divine spark by the loving communities into which they are born, regardless of the strength of connections to, or belief in, the religious and cultural connections ascribed to those heritages.

New Zealand schooling documentation, though, provides no explicit guidance on the ontological positionings or paradigmatic views of the child inherent in the heritages of both Treaty partners. Instead, the paradigmatic view is that every child must be uniformly shaped

by the processes and structures of the factory model of schooling. Within the factory model paradigm, the State prescribes what should be learnt, to what standard and at what age, resulting in the child being described in terms of how well they meet the artificially prescribed requirements and steps required to meet the next requirement. Descriptions of too many children are firmly rooted in a deficit model, children's progress defined in terms of what they need to do next, children viewed as incomplete and imperfect, always needing to achieve the next curriculum goal or standard. The child is not viewed as having agency over their learning, but as an empty vessel needing to be filled (see Freire, 1996).

The factory model of schooling also influences views of the purpose of education. This has resulted in a pervasive discourse that schools have succeeded when the majority of their students meet the standards of State-set curricula and assessments. Some educators have resisted this influence and decried its prevalence. For example, Luria and Vygotsky (1992) argue that the child should be viewed as "... a very special creature with his [sic] own identity." They decry:

The incorrect belief that children and adults differ only in quantitative terms has become firmly entrenched in the general consciousness. Its proponents argue that if you take an adult, make him [sic] smaller, somewhat weaker and less intelligent, and take away his knowledge and skills, you will be left with a child. (p.62)

The unique policy context in New Zealand, with the requirement to honour the intent of the Treaty of Waitangi, provides opportunity to draw from our dual cultural heritages. From this base, educators are positioned to explore and make explicit their ontological positioning regarding children, for example, do they view all children or students through a lens of mana atua – that each child is unique and spiritually connected? If the answer is 'yes,' how do these personal beliefs align with structures, policies, expectations and practices in the teacher's everyday practice and the child's everyday experience? Even within a policy context that directs a factory model as the preferred method of schooling in New Zealand, the requirement to know and understand one's personal ontological positioning of the child could begin to change the educational experiences for all our children. The factory model could revert to being a process rather than its current position as the historical and pervasive ontology that is embedded across our schooling system.

Impact on students

Belonging at school

Belonging at school has been defined as a state where children feel accepted, respected, included, and valued by others at school (Goodenow, 1993, p. 80). When a sense of belonging is strong, students "view schooling as essential to their long-term well-being," demonstrated through their participation in academic and nonacademic pursuits (Willms, 2003, p. 1) and positive "relations with school staff and other students" (Willms, 2003, p. 8). Sadly, an increasing number of New Zealand students report a disconnect with schooling. For example, the 2015 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) testing shows that New Zealand students' sense of belonging at school has considerably weakened since this was first

measured in 2003. In this report, the Ministry of Education compared New Zealand students' responses with those in nine other countries we "commonly compare with" (Ministry of Education, 2017b, p. 49). New Zealand students were the least positive about their sense of belonging at school and were noticeably below the OECD average. Across New Zealand Schools, between 17 and 22 percent of students reported that, at school, they felt:

- like an outsider or left out of things,
- awkward and out of place, or
- lonely (Ministry of Education, 2017b, p. 18)

The sense of alienation that students are reporting – feeling like an outsider at school, feeling out of place and feeling lonely – provides sobering evidence of a disconnect between a worldview or paradigm that views children as unique and spiritually connected and their schooling experience.

Belonging at school for Māori students

Educational outcomes for Māori students in New Zealand schools are, on average, considerably worse than for Pākehā students. The Ministry of Education reports that, in 2019, 35 percent of students identifying as Māori left school having achieved National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) Level 3 or above, compared to 56 percent of European/Pākehā students (Ministry of Education, 2020b). A higher proportion of Māori students leave school before their 17th birthday than European/Pākehā students – for 2019, this was 31 percent compared to 17 percent respectively (Ministry of Education, 2020c). Attendance rates for Māori students are also lower than for European/Pākehā students – in 2019, 44 percent of Māori students 'attended school regularly' (defined as those attending 90 percent or more of Term 2) compared to 61 percent of European/Pākehā students (Ministry of Education, 2020d). A further comparison can be seen in the rate of stand-downs – in 2019, for Māori students the stand-down rate was 44.3 per 1000 students, compared to 20.9 per 1000 students for European/Pākehā students (Ministry of Education, 2020c).

Māori students have also told educators, over an extended period of time, that schooling is not a good experience for them. For example, Bishop and Berryman (2006) concluded, after Māori students were interviewed in 2001, that the students' experiences were "overwhelmingly awful, year after year" (p. 251). In late 2015, a series of interviews were held across the country with senior Māori students (Berryman & Eley, 2018; Poutama Pounamu, 2017). These students were identified by their school as having achieved educational success as Māori, in line with the vision statement of Ka Hikitia, the Māori Education Strategy (Ministry of Education, 2019). The students reported on their own successes, sometimes despite their schooling experiences, and despite their awareness that their stories did not represent the experiences of all their Māori peers, even within their own schools. They told of ongoing pressure from stereotypes about Māori that played out as racial microaggressions and lateral violence within their schools and communities:

- People saying stuff like: “Māori can’t do this, can’t do that.”
- Just because you’re Māori, it doesn’t mean that you’re dumb. And it doesn’t mean that you can’t achieve.
- If you’re a Māori, you’re probably already put in those classes where they’re not pushing you to succeed as much, so automatically you do not achieve well. That’s the overall stereotype of Māori achievement. People aren’t expecting as much of you. (Berryman et al., 2017; Berryman & Eley, 2018)

The experiences of these students were confirmed in the voices of Māori students reported in *Education matters to Me: Key Insights* (Office of the Commissioner for Children & New Zealand School Trustees Association, 2018). Comments from Māori students in this report included:

- Mainstream is a zoo where I’m surrounded by snakes.
- Racism exists; we feel little and bad.
- Just because we are Māori doesn’t mean we are stupid.

The experiences of Māori students in New Zealand schools reflects the experiences of Indigenous and minority students around the world. Murphy and Zirkel (2015, p. 3) have ‘salient concerns’ about belonging in school because some students’ social identities make them vulnerable to “negative stereotyping and social identity threat – the threat that one’s social group may be devalued in a particular setting” (see also Steele, Spencer & Aronson, 2002). Despite education systems becoming more culturally, ethnically and linguistically diverse “rather than benefitting from and learning from each other, we continue to expect our students to be represented within the same curriculum, pedagogy and testing regime or we form separate enclaves and the divide becomes even wider” (Berryman et al., 2015). Berryman and Eley (2019, p. 990) caution against “the notion of belonging at school [being] posited as having the same meaning and influence on educational experiences for all students then we are in danger of missing or trivializing the experiences for the marginalized, the othered or the alienated” (p.1).

Resisting the dominant paradigm

Becoming aware of the dominant paradigms operating across the education system and their underpinning historical foundations in order to examine one’s own actions, responses and micro-interactions located within those hegemonies, requires a commitment to one’s own learning, unlearning and relearning (Wink, 2011). From this learning, new ways of acting and being can follow: “denunciation is impossible without a commitment to transform, and there is no transformation without action” (Freire, 1972, p. 60). Specific to New Zealand is the need for participants to go beyond a surface level of understanding, to challenge the dominant discourses and to “critically analyze and deconstruct existing hegemonies and practices which entrench Pākehā-dominant social, economic, gender, cultural and political privilege” (Smith, 1997, p. 47).

Freire (1996) said that all change for social justice required a process of conscientisation, resistance and transformative action. Through conscientisation those who wish to review

their own positioning in classroom micro-interactions are open to becoming aware of what they have been thinking, what they have held as true and the part they have played in perpetuating the status quo of the factory model of schooling. A process of conscientisation means that participants put the problem and their part in the problem at the centre, rather than an over-simplification of the issues (Smith, 2003). Resistance requires that, having determined that there is a need for reform, to dissent with or resist the accepted status quo and to stand against prevailing ontological and epistemological positions. Transformative praxis is the ongoing practice that ensues from the conscientisation and resistance – transformative because a new status quo is being enacted, praxis because educative practice is rooted in sound theoretical research and iterative reflection. The outworking of this critical process of self-review is, according to Freire, radical hope – the belief that we can, as individuals, make life better for others, this belief “leading the incessant pursuit of humanity” (Freire, 1996, p. 64).

An opportunity for this critical process of self-review towards radical hope are provided through the Poutama Pounamu Blended Learning course. This self-managed, personalised, year-long PLD experience is specifically designed for slow-burn learn; enabling participants to engage through a spiralling, ongoing process of conscientisation, resistance and transformative praxis.

Poutama Pounamu Blended Learning course

The Poutama Pounamu Blended Learning course contains five online modules and three wānanga. The dual settings, with other learners in marae settings and online, ensure that students have opportunities for both interpersonal and intrapersonal learning, necessary for the learning of new praxis to be deeply internalised (Berryman & Wearmouth, 2018; Eley, 2020; Vygotsky, 1980). The underpinning theory of action, drawn from Kaupapa Māori and critical theories, is based on over 15 years of research into what works best for Māori students and how this can work more effectively for all. The model is a cascading model of PLD, each participant sharing their learning with a minimum of three other people in a learning group they establish. The involvement of a learning group ensures spread across a school or a community. The group engage with the learning over an extended period of time (approximately a year), embedding sustainable change as discussed by Timperley, Wilson, Farrar and Fung (2007). Since the course was introduced, over 400 teachers, school leaders and principals have participated, spreading the learning to more than 1,500 other school personnel through their learning groups. Participants’ feedback comments show the impact of both the personal and institutional changes that have occurred because of their involvement with this course:

- The more I read, the more I find out, the more I want to know. It’s enabled my own change and awakened my agency to influence others. (Secondary school teacher)

They referred to the transformative change they experienced in their own lives:

- It was transformational and I realised the first journey I had to take was a personal one. It was one that each of us had to go on by ourselves. All the staff had to experience it. (Principal)
- It is transformative and moving and becomes much more than professional development – it is personal development on a cognitive, moral and spiritual level. (Primary school syndicate leader)
- The conversations conducted at the wananga had a profound moral effect on me, which resulted in a strong personal resolve to be more agentic. (Secondary school teacher)

And, they told of the discomfort they experienced in this learning journey, resulting in their personal commitment to enact that transformative change in their teaching practice:

- My conscientisation was a deeply uncomfortable, unsettling and challenging experience. Realising that yes, I had a very strong hand in upholding a system based on the colonisation, marginalisation and oppression of the indigenous people of our country was horrifying. (Primary school teacher)
- The significant learning I developed ... was that I don't only have the right to promote culturally responsive practice in my kura, but I have a moral responsibility to do so. (Secondary school teacher)

This learning has sent many educators back into their own master's study, the first of whom are expected to graduate in 2021. Melissa Corlett (2020), for example, has published her experiences in the Poutama Pounamu Blended Learning course, writing of both the challenge she experienced, her discomfort with the status quo and her confidence that the future can be better for all students. She concludes:

We must grasp the moral imperative to work hard, be uncomfortable, be brave, and look deeply. Then we can see our systems for what they are, something that we have constructed and something we can together deconstruct. Through this journey I have found the hope that we can collaboratively build education to do better by Māori students, to benefit all learners and the nation. (p. 47)

Conclusion

New Zealand's current model of state schooling with the attendant beliefs and values has been in place since 1877. The status quo is well-established and changing the paradigm or ideological underpinnings of this system requires a change in the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of both educators and policy makers. A process of conscientisation and resistance, leading to transformative praxis, can occur but this takes time and requires multiple opportunities for individuals to learn about, question and understand the historical, social and political contexts operating in our educational settings. It also requires specific and tailored professional development that addresses perceptions and attitudes (Glynn, 2015) and, in New Zealand, this needs to draw from both Kaupapa Māori and critical theories (Berryman et al., 2013, 2016; Ministry of Education, 2018). As the Best Evidence Synthesis

found, sustainable change, involving both hearts and minds, takes time and commitment: “teachers need to have time and opportunity to engage with key ideas and integrate those ideas into a coherent theory of practice” (Timperley et al., 2007, p. 22).

Despite this New Zealand-focused research that demonstrates the need for opportunities for participants to learn, unlearn and relearn, the current model for teacher PLD is that schools are awarded, through a competitive process, set numbers of contracted PLD hours. This practice encourages schools to seek efficient ‘bang for the buck’ sources of PLD. Cheap and seemingly efficient PLD for staff can be one-off workshops or ‘star’ presenters giving keynote addresses at Teacher Only Days. These one-off events provide little or no follow-up supporting teachers to deeply engage with complex contexts or to sensitively challenge their previously unchallenged worldviews. When matters such as the negative outcomes for Māori students within the school system, confronting racism rife within our system or learning about the Doctrines of Discovery or Social Darwinism are presented in tight timeframes with the intention of shocking participants into acknowledging injustice without an accompanying pathway for transformative praxis we believe this causes undue harm. The events themselves risk becoming a form of ‘disaster tourism,’ providing shock value rather than a pathway to radical hope as envisaged by Freire (1996).

New Zealand schools have a legal obligation to uphold the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. To truly honour this Treaty, educators are required to draw from the worldviews of both the signatory partners and to enact these across all aspects of schooling. There is no doubt that there is much goodwill and many good intentions across New Zealand’s schooling sector to honour the Treaty and to address the richness of the heritages of both Treaty partners (Ministry of Education, 2007, 2015, 2019). However, our current model of schooling, the factory model, is rooted in the context of the Doctrines of Discovery and a theory of Social Darwinism (Eley, 2020). In this model, the views of the child as imbued with mana atua, qualities of “uniqueness and spiritual connectedness” (Ministry of Education, 2017a, p. 35), continue to be suppressed and belittled.

There is, though, considerable room for hope. New Zealand’s Education Act calls for an honouring of the Treaty of Waitangi and, through that, a recognition of the ontological positioning of the child in both te ao Māori and Western heritages. The legal basis for a changed paradigm is in place. Providing a pathway of support, such as provided by the Poutama Pounamu Blended Learning, towards the changed hearts and minds of educators and policy makers is necessary to flip the current paradigm. There is, therefore, opportunity for New Zealand’s education system to be grounded in a paradigm where children are viewed as miracles – carriers of the divine spark and created in the image of Ngā Atua (the Gods) from both worldviews.

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