The Importance of Community Knowledge in Learning to Teach: Foregrounding Māori Cultural Knowledge to Support Preservice Teachers' Development of Culturally Responsive Practice

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ABSTRACT

Culturally responsive teaching is an essential component of reframing educator preparation for equity and has particular resonance when working in partnership with indigenous communities. As teacher educators in Aotearoa New Zealand, we continually seek to enhance our practices to ensure that Māori cultural values, pedagogies, and epistemologies inform all aspects of our teacher education curricula and support Māori educational aspirations. In this article we describe a preservice teacher education program co-constructed with our local Māori community that foregrounds Māori cultural knowledge. We focus particularly on two signature features of the program, a co-constructed framework for teacher growth and development and community-based learning experiences, highlighting the ways that these features engage preservice teachers in learning through Māori epistemological perspectives and pedagogies. We conclude by reflecting on the generative nature of engaging community expertise and knowledge to create contextually meaningful learning experiences for preservice teachers that support their development as culturally responsive teachers.

Culturally responsive teaching has been posited as an essential component of reframing teacher education in pursuit of more equitable outcomes for all young people (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). This has particular resonance when working in partnership with indigenous communities, given the particular socio-historical and political contexts of self-determination (United Nations, 2007). As teacher educators in Aotearoa New Zealand, we continually seek to enhance our practices to prepare new teachers who are able to work successfully in our bicultural context, where the treaty-based[1] partnership between Māori and Pākehā (non-Māori) shapes the policy and practice contexts of teaching and learning. This places Māori knowledge and community engagement with iwi and hapū (tribal groups) front and center for teacher preparation.

Most recently, we have been engaged with our local Māori community in the collaborative development of a new preservice program using the principles of kaupapa Māori to ensure that Māori cultural values, pedagogies, and epistemologies inform all aspects of the curriculum and support Māori educational aspirations. In this article, we draw on our collective experiences as a bicultural team of Pākehā

Mā te whakaaro nui e hanga te whare; mā te mātauranga e whakaū
Big ideas create the house; knowledge maintains it

[1] The Treaty of Waitangi, initially signed on February 6, 1840, was between iwi (tribal) leaders and the Crown. It is understood to be the foundational document for the nation, establishing a partnership between iwi and the Crown, although the history of this partnership through colonial and postcolonial years has not been one of equity for Māori.

teacher educators and the Kaiārahi Māori,[2] who together facilitated the development of the program. The Pākehā educators do not presume a mantle of expertise on kaupapa Māori, nor speak on behalf of iwi and hapū. Our purpose, rather, is to describe how collaboration with our local Māori community has helped us "walk the talk" of culturally responsive practice in the development of a preservice teacher education program. To this end, we first situate our teacher education practice within the literature on equity and culturally responsive teaching, and the national Aotearoa New Zealand policy context. We then describe the collaborative design process we undertook before looking closely at two "signature" features of the program resulting from the collaboration. We conclude with final thoughts on the importance of community knowledge and engagement in learning to teach and equity-oriented teacher education.

Situating our teacher education practice: Inequity, culturally responsive practice, and biculturalism

Internationally, many students from lower socioeconomic and minority cultural backgrounds experience inequity in terms of opportunities to learn and educational attainment (see Holsinger & Jacobs, 2008). The roots of these inequities are many and entangled, including wider socioeconomic and historical considerations. Research also sheds light on the ways that schools and teachers often contribute to the perpetuation of educational inequality through practices grounded in unexamined beliefs about students' backgrounds, capabilities, and motivation to learn (Alton-Lee, 2003; Sleeter, 2011). In particular, the institutional cultures of Western-oriented mainstream schools typically do not Incorporate Indigenous worldviews, knowledge, or pedagogical frameworks (Macfarlane, Glynn, Grace, Penetito, & Bateman, 2008). This often leaves Indigenous youth alienated and dispirited, resulting in significant inequitable outcomes (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Penetito, 2010). Aotearoa New Zealand has one of the largest gaps between high- and low-achieving students in the OECD, and Māori are disproportionately represented in the lowest quartile of educational attainment (Ministry of Education, 2011). Māori are more likely to be referred to special education services (especially for behavioral issues), have vastly higher suspension and expulsion rates, and tend to leave formal schooling earlier and with lower qualifications (Ministry of Education, 2006).

Teachers' knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and practices are a double-edged sword. When they arise from a deficit perspective of students' cultural knowledge, families, and communities, they contribute to the alienation and resulting educational inequity (Bishop & Berryman, 2009). When they are affirming and inclusive, they serve to enhance learning opportunities and outcomes (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Culturally responsive teachers display a particular repertoire of knowledge, skills, and dispositions including: (a) demonstrating a sense of agency and responsibility for the learning and development of every learner (Alton-Lee, 2003); (b) having a strong sense of self-awareness and understanding of themselves as socio-cultural beings (Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh, & Teddy, 2009; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995); (c) acknowledging the reciprocal nature of the teaching and learning relationship (Macfarlane, 2007); and (d) having a deep understanding of the socio-cultural contexts of students' lives (Bishop, 2003; Rogoff, 2003). These perspectives and pedagogical approaches positively engage learners' identities, languages, and cultures in ways that improve outcomes for all students and support more equitable educational outcomes for Māori.

Given this research, culturally responsive teaching has been posited as an essential component of reframing educator preparation in pursuit of equity (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Grant and Gibson (2011) have argued that teacher education must help new teachers understand how culture impacts learning, help them develop cultural knowledge and connect it to their classroom practice and curriculum decisions, and challenge them to reject deficit views of their students and their students' communities. Further, emphasizing the importance of the social, cultural, and political contexts of teaching and learning,

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[2] The Kaiārahi Māori serves as a cultural guide and leader within an organization to ensure that all members are safeguarded and supported to engage in culturally appropriate practices.

many educationists have argued that what constitutes "good practice" must be defined in the specific cultural context (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Macfarlane, 2007; Williamson, Apendoe & Thomas, 2016).

For us as teacher educators in Aotearoa New Zealand, our work is framed within the socio-cultural context of our bicultural nation. Macfarlane (2012) draws on the work of Dr. Ranginui Walker in describing this concept of biculturalism as "understanding the values and norms of the other (Treaty) partner, being comfortable in either Māori or Pākehā culture, and ensuring that there is power sharing in decision-making processes at all political and organizational levels" (p. 32). Treaty relationships mean that those engaged in preservice teacher education are challenged to create meaningful bicultural partnerships with iwi and mana whenua[3] that recognize and reflect through practice the aspirations of Māori. This construct of biculturalism underpins our work in teacher education in two specific ways. First, it informs how "culturally responsive teaching" is defined and enacted by explicitly foregrounding Māori scholarship, knowledge, values, and epistemology alongside Western-oriented scholarship in this area. Second, it means that Māori cultural knowledge and community engagement need to be the starting point for developing teacher education programs. This is not a matter of negating the diverse cultural backgrounds of other members of our community. Rather, it is working in ways that support our responsibility to ensure that Māori rights as Indigenous people to self-determination are upheld. Moreover, we believe that by explicitly foregrounding the rights of Māori as *tangata whenua* (the people of the land), we establish a sensitizing conceptual framework that enables preservice teachers to positively engage with the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of all learners.

Within this bicultural context of Aotearoa New Zealand, preservice teacher competence is defined through particular policy documents and informed by New Zealand-based research (e.g., Aitken, Sinnema, & Meyer, 2013; Bishop & Berryman, 2009; Macfarlane, 2004). Teacher preparation is called on to reflect the aspiration for teachers to better serve the needs of Māori and of other "priority learners." As identified by the New Zealand Ministry of Education, "priority learners" are those who have not historically been experiencing educational success, including Pasifika, speakers of languages other than English, students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, and those who experience particular learning needs (ERO, 2012, p. 4).[4] Moreover, the national professional standards require that graduates of teacher education programs "have knowledge of tikanga and te reo Māori[5] to work effectively within the bicultural contexts of Aotearoa New Zealand" (Education Council, nd).

Concerned about the continuing disparity of educational outcomes for Māori learners and other "priority learners," the Ministry of Education called for reform in the system. This included the establishment of "exemplary" teacher education programs at the postgraduate level that would "enable a substantial shift in the nature and quality of opportunities for ITE (preservice) students to learn to practice" (2013b). The shift to a postgraduate level for preservice teacher education offered a unique opportunity to innovate and build a wholly new program.

Engaging community: Using māori principles to co-construct a new preservice teacher education program

Taking up this opportunity, we were guided by both socio-cultural and kaupapa Māori theoretical perspectives and principles. Socio-cultural theory acknowledges the existence of multiple knowledges grounded in cultural and historical contexts, and frames learning as participation in the social world (Vygotsky, 1978). This perspective enables us to critique and challenge educational practices that traditionally privilege Western knowledge and marginalize Māori knowledge. Turning this critical lens on ourselves allowed us to acknowledge the need to approach our development of the new program differently than we had in the past, where schools were the significant, primary "stakeholder" group that

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[3] Mana whenua relates to power associated with occupation and possession of tribal land and those who have the authority and jurisdiction over this territory. See http://www.maoridictionary.co.nz/word/3452.

[4] We wish to note here that in our work we seek to trouble this notion so as not to essentialize students from such backgrounds in ways that implicitly reinforce deficit theorizing. Nevertheless, given the issues of inequity, we agree that it is important to turn explicit attention to the disparity in order to change practice toward effecting different outcomes.

[5] Māori cultural practices and protocols, and Māori language.

guided and informed such work. To craft a program that enabled new teachers to be fully responsive to Māori learners, we needed to draw on the principles of kaupapa Māori to ensure that Māori knowledge and cultural practices were integrally woven throughout the program design and pedagogical practices.

Kaupapa Māori theory asserts that a unique epistemological tradition gives shape to Māori world-views and the solutions they seek to social and educational challenges (Smith, 1999). In practice it is both "decolonizing" and "empowering," and promotes "the revitalization of Māori cultural aspirations, understandings, preferences and practices as a philosophical and political, as well as educational, stance" (Bishop, 2012, p. 39). In the realm of education, it serves as a challenge to and critique of the dominant discourse and hegemonic practices within Aotearoa New Zealand that marginalize Māori in ways that result in inequitable outcomes, as previously noted. A key principle of kaupapa Māori is *tino rangatiratanga*, the right to self-determination and autonomy (Smith, 1997). Self-determination means rejecting unequal power relationships and repositioning the "system" so that Māori voices and solutions are given space (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). This means that educational programs for Māori should be designed by Māori in order to fully engage Māori identity, epistemology, frameworks for learning, and pedagogies.

With the leadership of the Kaiārahi Māori (the third author), we thus began our concept development phase of the program by establishing the *Ngāi Tahu Rūnanga Advisory Group*. Ngāi Tahu is the iwi (tribe) of the majority of the South Island, and thus is tangata whenua in our local area. The rūnanga are the governing council or administrative group of hapū (tribal subgroup), which is the basic political unit within Māori society. In keeping with the concept of *tino rangatiratanga*, Ngāi Tahu and all the local rūnanga have established strategic and operational plans for education that reflect their aspirations of ensuring Māori youth have educational success as Māori through their schooling. They also identified members of the rūnanga to serve as the education representative, from which the members of our advisory group were drawn.

The *Ngāi Tahu Rūnanga Advisory Group* was grounded in a set of key underlying principles that guided how we worked together over the 18 months of program development and the initial year of implementation. The first of these principles was the understanding, "nothing about us without us," signifying again the focus on self-determination and the critical need for Māori to be part of the leadership and driving force for educational programs or approaches focused on Māori learners. This led to the second principle, which was ensuring that Māori were involved at the conceptual stage—that is from the very beginning of the work—and not seen as "an add-on at the end, or a tick-the-box exercise." For our work this meant having the advisory group as our initial consultation about the program and establishing regular meetings at key program development stages. This resulted in deeper engagement that supported the third principle of ensuring that all things Māori—concepts, epistemologies, values, pedagogies, and scholarship—were well integrated to align with the advisory group's express desire to "see us reflected in everything." Being well integrated meant permeating the program design from vision and values; through the curriculum, assessments, and learning environment; the selection process for candidates; and within the professional development we would offer to support both the teacher educators and mentor teachers working in the program. For *Ngāi Tahu*, this was the sign of a true partnership, as put forth in the Ministry of Education's strategic vision for Māori Education, Ka Hikitia 2013–17: Accelerating Success (MOE, 2013a).

Our ongoing work with the Ngāi Tahu Rūnanga Advisory Group reflects the distinctive characteristics of *whakawhānaungatanga* (collaboration) and *ako* (reciprocity and reciprocal learning relationship). They continue to support and shape the program, serving as important critical friends and co-developers as we engage in the process of continuous reflection and enhancement. Moreover, they have been important partners in the co-construction of new knowledge and practices that have become signature features of the new program.

The masters of teaching and learning: Signature features

The result of our collaboration is the Masters of Teaching and Learning, a one-year intensive professional preparation program that integrates research-informed professional knowledge with embedded practice-based experiences. The goal of the program is: *To prepare teacher graduates who are critical pedagogues, action competent, and culturally responsive, enabling them to be innovative, adaptable, and resilient in*

supporting and enhancing the diverse learning strengths of each of their students. Through the partnership with the Advisory Group, the program foregrounds Māori cultural knowledge throughout a range of structures, processes, and curriculum features. These include the co-construction of a community of practice and mentoring model in support of preservice teacher professional practice experiences, the framing of preservice teacher inquiry through constituent courses, and refining of the selection process to attend to dispositional features. Some features of the masters program are enhancements of positive practices drawn from our other programs. Others are wholly new and unique. We think of these as "signature features" because they were specifically suggested and given shape by the Ngāi Tahu Rūnunga Advisory Group. These include: (a) the synthesizing conceptual framework, *Te Poutama: Ngā Pou Ako* and (b) community-based learning activities, Tamariki Day and Noho Marae.

Synthesizing conceptual framework: Te poutama: Ngā Pou Ako

Te Poutama: Ngā Pou Ako represents the masters program vision of highly effective teachers and is our shared understanding of the development of adaptive expertise and action competence in culturally responsive practice for our preservice teachers. It constitutes a culturally encompassing framework and scaffold for their learning and development. For Māori the poutama is a visual often featured in tukutuku panels.[6] It represents the staircase to heaven that the god Tane climbed to get the three baskets of knowledge, which he brought back for humankind. It is a well-known, traditional metaphor for the process of learning, development, or progress toward accomplishment of greater knowledge and awareness. *Te Poutama: Ngā Pout Ako* is organized around the four core values (see Figure 1 for example), which are:

- *Te Taumata Mātauranga (intellectual rigor and scholarship)*—relates to disciplinary scholarship and engagement with research and the evidence-base for teaching and learning, having the ability to engage in teacher inquiry, to think critically, and take the perspective of others;
- *Te Manukura o Te Ako (leadership of learning)*—relates to having a sense of moral purpose for teaching, agency, and willingness to take responsibility for students' learning, and skill in dealing with complexity;
- *Te Mana Taurite (commitment to inclusiveness and equity)*—relates to viewing diversity as a strength rather than a problem to be managed, having sensitivity and compassion, and being tolerant, respectful, and fair;
- *Te Mahi Ngātai (collaboration and partnership)*—relates to having positive attitudes toward children, families, and colleagues, being willing to seek out and support collaborative relationships with students, families, whānau, hapū, iwi, aiga, and community, as well as preservice teacher peers, university, and school teachers and other education professionals.

Te Poutama: Ngā Pou Ako represents a framework for preservice teacher development and growth toward culturally responsive practice framed around the program's core values. The steps represent advances in knowledge, through incidents of shifting understandings (the vertical riser) and periods of knowledge consolidation (the horizontal tread). Pou (pillars) are significant markers that acknowledge boundaries, guardianship, and protection. In our poutama they reflect the core values, and each of the four pou influence and impact on one another.

For each of the pou, there are two or three cultural dimensions with descriptors that define preservice teachers' development and growth from *kia mārama* (developing understanding) through *kia mōhio* (knowing and applying) to *kia mātau* (leading and engaging). The cultural dimensions within *Te Poutama: Ngā Pou Ako* draw on Māori cultural values (see Table 1). The descriptors reflect pedagogical elements and language from the extant scholarly literature, including the Ministry of Education sanctioned *Tātaiako*: *Cultural competencies for teachers* (Education Council, 2011), the nationally mandated graduating teacher standards (Education Council, n.d.), and kaupapa Māori research relating to effective culturally responsive teaching in Aotearoa New Zealand (e.g., Bishop & Berryman, 2009; Macfarlane, 2004).

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6 Tukutuku panels are latticework panels. In a meeting house, they are panels on the walls between the carvings.

Te Poutama: Ngā Pou Ako
Commitment to Inclusiveness and Equity

Kia mātau: Leading Learning and Engaging Learners		
E.g. Effectively communicates with ākonga to create a supportive and inclusive learning environment	E.g. Demonstrates a range of strategies for promotion and nurturing a safe environment	E.g. Explains how knowledge of local context and local iwi and community is important in supporting Māori, Pasifika and other cultures to achieve in and through education
Kia mōhio: Knowing and Applying Knowledge		
E.g. Shares a clear purpose for learning with ākonga through co-constructed and cooperative learner-focused activities	E.g. Develops culturally responsive and inclusive practices	E.g. Creates opportunities for ākonga to draw on their identity, language and culture as context for learning
Kia mārama: Developing Understanding		
E.g. Values ākonga voice and feedback in the lesson	E.g. Knows and treats ākonga holistically	E.g. Models high expectations for learning
WANANGA Supports learning through shared communication with ākonga, whānau, iwi and communities	**RANGATIRATANGA** Develops and applies understanding of practice that is culturally inclusive	**TANGATAWHENUATANGA** Provides contexts for learning where the identity, language and culture of ākonga and their whānau are affirmed

Figure 1. Example core value from Te Poutama: Ngā Pou Ako Te Poutama: Ngā Pou Ako *Commitment to Inclusiveness and Equity*.

Te Poutama: Ngā Pou Ako has been a unifying framework for university and practice-based mentors to guide and support preservice teachers in their learning and development. It provides an encompassing framework to challenge their thinking and related professional dispositions and skills aligned to program core values and constituent cultural dimensions that support student learning and engagement. The cultural dimensions within each of the core values (pou) of *Te Poutama: Ngā Pou Ako* form the focus of preservice teacher inquiry during their practice-based experiences. These teaching inquiries encourage their learning through engagement with "puzzles of practice" and invite them to examine their own and others' frames of reference and assumptions relating to these puzzles (Blackman, Connelly, & Henderson, 2004). As a metaphor, the idea of a puzzle signals indeterminate situations, where there is not a clear "solution" or response and incremental growth in understanding as different pieces of the puzzle are uncovered and fitted in place (Gozzi, 1996). We use puzzles of practice fairly generally to indicate problems, challenges, dilemmas, and contradictions that teachers encounter in practice. The concept of puzzles is useful to support them in developing an inquiry orientation to teaching by focusing on real-life challenges in the classroom and supporting them to critically reflect on making links between research and their practice experiences to pose possible solutions to their practice-based challenges. Sometimes we get preservice teachers to define their own puzzles. Sometimes we pre-define the puzzles. Often these focus on one of the cultural dimensions of *Te Poutama: Nga Pou Ako*. For example, a student might be challenged about how to authentically engage and value student voice in lessons and curriculum design, a key aspect of the cultural dimension of Wananga.

The documentation of their development during their practice-based experiences, both in terms of feedback and assessment, is based on evaluation of their progress within the different stages of *Te Poutama: Ngā Pou Ako*. Student learning is supported by having the preservice teachers focus on how learners learn and the relational and pedagogical practices that support this learning, while preservice teacher professional learning is directed toward effective teacher attributes through the framework of *Te Poutama: Ngā Pou Ako*. Throughout the program, the preservice teachers develop an e-portfolio to evidence their learning and practice around each of the dimensions within the four core values. In this way, *Te Poutama: Ngā Pou Ako* supports their progress toward our vision of highly effective teachers by developing adaptive expertise and becoming action-competent, culturally responsive teachers.

Community-based experiences: Tamariki day and noho marae

The second signature feature of the program, the community-based experiences, arose from our collective wisdom of experience in supporting teachers to develop the culturally responsive repertoire needed

Table 1. Te Poutama: Ngā Pou te Ako elements.

Four core values	Māori cultural values
Reflect the MTchgLn program vision of highly effective teachers • *Te Taumata Mātauranga* (intellectual rigor and scholarship) • *Te Manukura o Te Ako* (leadership of learning) • *Te Mana Taurite* (commitment to inclusiveness and equity) • *Te Mahi Ngātai* (collaboration and partnership)	• **Manaakitanga** (caring values) • **Whānaungatanga** (relationships) • **Ako** (reciprocal teaching and learning) • **Wānanga** (problem solving and communication) • **Tangata whenuatanga** (place-base) • **Whakapiringatanga** (managing for learning) • **Kotahitanga** (working together) • **Mana motuhake** (high expectations) • **Rangatiratanga** (respecting and valuing culture)

to be effective in our bicultural context. It is challenging for teachers to engage in pedagogical practices that they have rarely experienced themselves as learners. Though committed to modeling these learning-teaching practices in our university courses, we knew this was not sufficient experiential learning to support the preservice teachers in developing the cultural knowledge and understanding needed to engage with the dimensions and practices embodied in the poutama. They needed to have experiences learning in, from, and with members of the Māori community and thereby learn through the traditions of Māori knowledge, epistemology, and pedagogy. Thus, we companioned two community-based learning experiences: (a) Tamariki Day, which was a wholly new feature, and (b) a reconceptualized Noho Marae, which is a well-established learning experience in all our programs. Both community-based experiences take place in the first month of the program during an intensive summer school course.

These learning experiences take place on local marae, which are community compounds that belong to specific iwi or hapū. They generally consist of a fenced-in area that has a wharenui (meeting house) and marae ātea (open space in front), along with a wharekai (dining hall) and amenities. The marae is the heart of the local Māori community where tribal, social, cultural, and political functions take place. For Māori it is their tūrangawaewae, or "place to stand," meaning the place one belongs and one has rights and responsibilities based on family geneology. Each marae is governed by local tikanga (custom and protocol), and in many wharenui, Māori knowledge and history is literally carved into the walls and painted on the ceiling. First-time visitors must be formally welcomed onto the marae by members of the community with a powhiri. On many marae, the primary language for all interactions is te reo Māori and it is certain that it will be the language for the powhiri.

Many non-Māori have never been on a marae, and for some it can be intimidating because of their minimal knowledge of Māori culture and marae protocol. However, being bicultural means becoming comfortable in "both worlds." For preservice teachers, having experiences on the marae supports their development of knowledge and understanding of Māori culture, community life, protocols, and pedagogies that underpin bicultural educational practice.

The first community-based experience is the Tamariki Day organized and led by one of the local marae. Tamariki is plural for children, reflecting the focus of the community on providing a day of culturally grounded, place-based learning and engagement for their young people. The day is organized to engage the young people of the marae community, ranging in age from toddlers to adolescents, in an array of cultural learning activities facilitated by local community leaders and elders. These experiences have included such activities as:

- learning about the history of the marae and surroundings;
- planting seedlings in the local waterways to help rejuvenate the ecosystem;
- cutting raupo (bulrush) and setting it out to dry for later use in woven mats, baskets, and tukutuku panels;
- learning about and building replica waka (canoe) from "found" materials; and
- painting a mural that depicts the local mountain and river that are sacred to the marae.

The tamariki also learn about tikanga by participating in the powhiri for the preservice teachers and university staff who join them for the day. This is also a learning experience for the preservice teachers about the protocols surrounding powhiri. The tamariki are organized into multiage groups of 4–6 and rotate through the activities planned for the day. The preservice teachers are asked to join with a group

to engage and learn alongside the tamariki. We ask them to focus on building relationships with the children, listening to them, watching how they engage with each other and the adults in the community, and learning about their interests, experiences, and strengths. We also ask them to pay attention to their own learning and the new knowledge they are gaining about Māori culture, language, and values. In this way, they are immersed in the community-learning context and get to experience Māori ways of learning through working collaboratively and intergenerationally, both foundational concepts of Māori pedagogy.

The second experience, the Noho Marae, takes place on a different local marae, giving the preservice teachers another experience to engage in a powhiri and learn from and with different members of the Māori community. This is a two-day immersive experience where the preservice teachers and university staff stay overnight on the marae, learning, working, eating, and sleeping communally as is the custom. During the two days, the preservice teachers' learning is co-led by two Māori members of university staff, supported by a teaching team. The learning experiences also include engagement with local elders and members of the marae community. Learning activities for the preservice teachers during the Noho Marae have included:

- learning te reo Māori to support both engagement on the marae and in classrooms/centers;
- learning and practicing waiata (songs) that are used as part of marae tikanga, in classrooms/centers, and more widely in community events;
- developing and practicing with their mihi (formal introduction of oneself);
- dramatizing Māori myths and legends—which reflect important Māori values, epistemological perspectives, and history;
- exploring the myths and legends for possible connections to subject-matter content to first problematize the notion of "knowledge" and then consider how to connect cultural knowledge to school knowledge;
- examining the powhiri as a "ritual of encounter" and considering how this can inform one's thinking and practices around developing learning communities, and inform classroom/center protocols, processes, and behavior "management";
- working with the *Tātaiako* cultural competencies and exploring the five Māori values that guide the framework; and
- learning about the wharenui and marae history and carvings from a community elder(s).

For these activities, with the exception of the oral history with elders, the preservice teachers are organized into whānau (family) groups. These groups of 5–7 members work collaboratively in the learning activities and often present their learning to the whole group. For example, the groups may engage in learning activities by standing together while each presents his/her mihi, dramatizing a myth, or sharing ideas about how they might develop "rituals of encounters" to try out during their practice-based experiences. This group structure and collaborative focus reflects the explicit use of both pedagogical strategies and Māori values that are elements of the poutama, such as *whānaungatanga* (relationships), *ako* (reciprocal teaching and learning), *wānanga* (problem solving and communication), *kotahitanga* (working together), and *rangatiratanga* (respecting and valuing culture).

Taken together, the community-based learning experiences support the preservice teachers in taking that first step on the poutama of developing understanding, kia mārama. They help bring the pedagogies and practices embodied in the poutama to life and give the preservice teachers tangible experiences and models to draw on as they work to develop their culturally responsive repertoire. Moreover, these experiences support their development of the underlying conceptual understandings of culture, the nature of knowledge, and the connection of identity, language, and culture. From these experiences, we are able to help them challenge unexamined assumptions and stereotypes that might underpin latent deficit theorizing of Māori learners and communities. They experience the relationship between language, context, and knowledge, and are supported to consider how these work together to create either affordances and opportunities or barriers. The experiences offer them insight into intergenerational learning-teaching that is at the heart of the concept of *Ako*. And throughout their continuing coursework, they are able to reach back to those experiences in ways that enable them to link theory to practice. For example, they may draw on the concept of whānau groups within their classrooms as a way

to support collaborative learning and shared meaning-making of curriculum content. As one preservice teacher summed up the community-based learning experience: *"Tamariki Day, Noho Marae …the real life infusion of Māori epistemologies."*

Reflections

Inequity in educational outcomes for culturally, ethnically, and linguistically marginalized youth remain troubling policy and practice challenges for teacher education. Through our collaboration with our local Māori community, we have sought to "walk the talk" of culturally responsive practice to address this inequity. The signature features of the masters program, Tamariki Day and Te Poutama: Ngā Pou Ako, represent the generative and creative nature of our bicultural partnership. Foregrounding Māori values, knowledge, and epistemology have made them tangible and concrete within the program. Engaging local community knowledge and expertise has been essential in creating the learning opportunities needed for preservice teachers to develop into culturally responsive teachers for the bicultural context in Aotearoa New Zealand.

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