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University and school: Collaborative research as culturally responsive methodology

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to explore our experiences as university-researchers working with two teacher-researchers in a project examining the use of picture books in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. Specifically, we reflect upon the collaborative and participatory characteristics of our approach that can be seen through the lens of culturally responsive research methodology (Berryman, SooHoo, & Nevin, 2013). We reflect upon our research processes in terms of five culturally responsive research principles by which we, the authors, believe a relational and dialogic space was created in which to learn from and with each other, and for the mutual benefit of all.

Introduction

This article is the result of a very positive, fulfilling research experience, the focus of which was describing and developing the use of picture books in a diverse New Zealand primary setting. However, it is not the content of the research which is the focus of this article, rather the process by which the four researchers worked together. As two university-researchers we (Nicola and Marilyn) worked collaboratively with two teacher-researchers, Grace and Pip, over an eight-week period to learn more about how picture books were being used with children in a culturally and linguistically diverse setting. Because the research was to be collaborative and was to provide a space for reflection on classroom practice, and make findings accessible to other teachers, an action research cycle (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000) was adopted involving three workshops, reflective writing, classroom observation and conversation as methods of data collection. Throughout the research process a focus on trust, appreciation and collaboration was sought, and at many times euphoric feelings of connection and clarity were most satisfying amongst all four co-researchers. The purpose of this article is to explore the possibility that the research process was a form of culturally responsive research methodology (Berryman et al., 2013). Five principles of culturally responsive research methodology developed by Berryman et al. (2013) will be used to scaffold the discussion of the ways in which the research was culturally responsive.



Defining culture within research

The concept of culture is often defined in terms of practices and world views linked to race and ethnicity; however, the term culture is also used more broadly to encompass world views relating to groups defined by gender and sexuality (Maltz & Borker, 2012), socioeconomic status, and by workplace (Holmes & Marra, 2002; Wagner et al., 2006). The research described in this article involves co-researchers from different workplace settings: two New Zealand primary school classrooms, and the Faculty of Education, University of Waikato.

Holligan, Wilson and Humes (2011) believe “concepts of ‘culture’ and ‘research’ are problematic in the sense of being concerned with discovery and/or creation of new knowledge; in turn creating methodological problems and challenges for the conduct of research” (p. 714). Research culture is thus nuanced by the extent to which it is conceptualised in terms of its purpose and connection with others—in this instance between teaching and stakeholder partnerships. However, amidst argument and debate, one widely accepted definition is that provided by Evans, who describes research culture as “shared values, assumptions, beliefs, rituals and other forms of behaviour whose central focus is the acceptance and recognition of research practice and outputs as a valued, worthwhile and pre-eminent activity” (as cited in Holligan et al., 2011, p. 716).

This definition is applied to an action-based research project that describes and discusses ways in which picture books are used with older children. Specifically the research was focused on two teachers who were teaching in linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms. Our approach was to consider how we might employ culturally responsive research, attempting to “equalize the power between researchers and participants as they [we] work[ed] collaboratively through the research process” (Berryman et al., 2013, p. 24).

The design was set within situated practice, consistent with a social/cultural perspective (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) and broadly interpreted to achieve meaningful communicative practice; the crucial dimensions being mutual engagement, negotiated experience, and a shared repertoire of knowledge. The overall aim was to illuminate, describe and understand how two teachers use picture books in their classrooms, expressed in the respondents’ own terms, within the context of their own knowledge and experience.

This research was initiated by Marilyn and Nicola, who have a longstanding interest in children’s picture books in educational settings, and thus in a traditional sense we were the researchers. Had we chosen a traditional methodological approach the teachers who we worked with on this project may have been involved as participants only; however, we approached this research very mindful of the fact that we wished to learn from experienced classroom teachers of children about the ways in which they used picture books, and so we knew that this traditional relationship, in which the researcher dominates, was not appropriate to our context. For this reason we chose to approach two classroom teachers as collaborative (co-)researchers, in effect to “disrupt the traditional relationship between researcher and participants and [to] seek to create instead an interplay of mutual interests” (Berryman, et al., 2013, p. 29). The proposed research questions were initially: How do teachers use picture books for drawing on cultural and linguistic diversity in the classroom? How does this relate to the close

analysis of words and images? This was later adjusted to one question as the research process developed.

Co-researchers

Grace is a New Zealand Pākehā teacher with over 20 years of classroom experience across all levels of primary education, and Pip a New Zealand Pākehā teacher with seven years' experience. Marilyn and Nicola are both New Zealand Pākehā and involved in initial teacher education. Marilyn teaches in literacy education and online New Zealand children's literature teaching. Nicola teaches in educational linguistics and in culturally responsive pedagogy. She has developed two picture book collections to complement her work. As co-researchers all four have close family connections with different ethnicities through children, grandchildren and wider whānau. This influences their teaching in significant ways.

The research overview

Before we discuss and unpack the ways in which the research process facilitated a culturally responsive approach, an overview of the research process will be given (see Table 1). The first column indicates the research event, starting with our initial conversations, and going through to our final half-day workshop. Column 2 identifies the data collected from each research event, and the third column lists the location and length of time for each event.

Table 1. Overview of the research process

Research event	Data	Location & timing
Initial conversation.	Transcriptions (baseline data).	School setting outside of teaching hours.
One classroom observation.	Field notes and artefacts (teacher interactions, children's work).	School classroom setting during teaching hours: One hour per observation.
Full-day workshop (6 hours).	Establishing who we are— activities/sharing of tasks. Negotiated teacher goals. Individual written reflections.	University learning space.
Two classroom observations for each teacher.	Field notes and artefacts (teacher interactions, children's work).	School classroom during teaching hours: One hour per observation.
Half-day workshop (3 hours).	Reflecting back on classroom observations/children's work and teacher pedagogy. Beginning draft writing of what we (as a collective) believe we were achieving. Negotiated teacher goals. Individual written reflections.	University learning space.

Two classroom observations for each teacher.	Field notes, artefacts (teacher interactions, children's work).	School classroom during teaching hours: One hour per observation.
Half-day workshop (3 hours).	Reflecting back on observations and adding to our working definitions of what we had achieved. Individual written reflections Future teacher goals.	University learning space.

The action research approach (Cohen et al., 2000) began as an initial conversation between Grace, Marilyn, Nicola and Pip. This conversation provided a platform for the beginnings of the relationship between us all. Grace and Pip discussed their teaching careers and described ways in which they used picture books in their classrooms (see Appendix A). As they explained their teaching pedagogy so too did Marilyn and Nicola. It was obvious during this conversation, that all researchers shared the same passion for and belief in the value of using picture books in classrooms. We decided to probe further and focus on the discourses that shaped the teachers' understandings; and review a range of pedagogical strategies aimed at motivating and supporting language and cultural diversity; and to ascertain what features characterized classroom practices/processes Grace and Pip were employing. It was agreed this would involve some observations of teaching in their classrooms. These observations and interactions led to the development of a series of three workshops involving the four as co-researchers. Detailed content of each workshop is provided in Table 2. In this table we have presented the three workshops across the top row and down each column we have listed the major themes that formed the underpinnings for each of our collaborative sessions.

Table 2. Content of the three workshops

Workshop 1 (Full day)	Workshop 2 (Half day)	Workshop 3 (Half day)
<p>Connect</p> <p>Collaborative tasks, e.g., analysed a previously unseen picture book cover and double page spread from <i>Collecting Colour</i> (Dunstan, 2008).</p>	<p>Review</p> <p>Reflected on classroom observations and interactions. Emphasis on learning from each other, using children's work samples in non-hierarchical manner</p>	<p>Review</p> <p>Teacher-researchers and university-researchers shared further understandings and reflections of observations and practice over the previous weeks</p>
<p>Explore</p> <p>Who are we? Definition of culture. Read and identified books from the NZPBC¹ which reflected each person's identity [all four of us].</p>	<p>Explore</p> <p>Examined how cultural and linguistic diversity are portrayed in a range of picture books. Began to jointly construct and write a definition of what we were trying to achieve in terms of picture books and their use in linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms.</p>	<p>Define</p> <p>Re-examined definition of picture books from previous workshop and what we had achieved—expanded on teaching pedagogy. Worked on summing up what had been learnt in relation to research question, jointly recorded.</p>

	Research questions collapsed into one.	
Decide Negotiated teaching goals for next two weeks.	Decide Re-evaluated and set further teaching goals for next two weeks.	Decide Discussed where to next.

Near the end of each of the three workshops, we took time (10 minutes) to complete an individual written reflection. These reflections were followed by a brief discussion to encourage shared understandings but without coercion. Thus the sessions ended with positivity and theorising, but also a sense of individuality. Between workshops 1 and 2, and again between workshops 2 and 3 Marilyn and Nicola visited and observed two picture book sessions in Pip and Grace's class at times that were mutually agreed. These classroom observations were collegial in nature. We were introduced to the children and invited to move around the classroom and we were free to observe or interact however we liked. These interactions developed further understandings of the classroom setting. Field notes were kept and samples of children's work were collected with their consent.

In summary, there were four different forms of data: A transcribed initial conversation; written reflections from workshops; notes and definitions from workshops; field notes and children's work samples from five observations. With this data we searched for strategies, processes and themes in relation to the revised research question, 'How does the close analysis of words and image contribute to the way picture books can be used to draw on cultural and linguistic diversity in the classroom?' These findings have been reported elsewhere (Blakeney-Williams & Daly, in press). However, to reiterate the focus of the present article is to reflect upon ways in which the research methodology met the criteria posed by Berryman et al. (2013) with regard to our research being culturally responsive and inclusive.

Was this culturally responsive methodology?

In their introduction to a volume of collected chapters exploring culturally responsive research methodologies, Berryman, et al. (2013) define culturally responsive research methodology in this way: "Culturally responsive methodology disrupts the traditional relationship between researcher and participants and seeks to create instead an interplay of mutual interests" (p. 29). They discuss ways in which researchers can engage in culturally responsive research in terms of five principles: 1) Learning from multiple sources; 2) Bringing your authentic self to the research; 3) Bringing a relational and dialogic consciousness; 4) Enacting ongoing critical reflection; and 5) Assessing shared relationships and agreements. This paper will explore the extent to which the five guiding principles 'played out' in this action research project.

Learning from multiple sources about the group with whom you will engage

Because our central research question was to explore how picture books were being used by teachers in a culturally and linguistically diverse setting, we wanted to identify a school that met these criteria. The researchers began the process of "doing the work

before the work” (Berryman et al., 2013, p. 32) by searching for a school that was classified by the Ministry of Education as having a multi-lingual and culturally diverse population. Thus ethnic composition and size of the school were known before the school was approached in regard to participating in the research. The school also had close ties to the university to which the researchers belonged but the school teaching staff were largely unknown.

A 2012 Education Review Office report on the school notes that it has a sizable transient population with a significant number of students from non-English speaking backgrounds and/or speakers of the Māori language. Effective support programmes are in place to cater for these students, who have a wide range of diverse needs and abilities. This includes increasing consultation with Māori parents and whānau, and links with the Māori community and local kura kaupapa. As well as this, the school supports a number of international students.

Nicola and Marilyn met with the principal to discuss the cultural context of the school and the proposed project; approval from the Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee was gained along with Board of Trustees approval; and finally we met with the two teachers who had volunteered to be involved in the research. The teachers taught in different syndicates with one teaching children aged 7–9 years; and the other children aged 9–11. Thus even before the research had started we had begun to get to know Grace and Pip, and they had begun to connect with us.

Bringing your authentic selves to the research

In our meeting with the two (at that stage) potential co-researchers we discussed our understandings of our picture book research and our goals and aspirations for this project, especially to be collegial; we emphasised that we wanted to learn with and from them, a collaborative and respectful relationship so that their practice could be shared with their professional colleagues. As is described by Berryman et al. (2013), we did not “enter the research relationship with the explicit intention of changing the Other, but rather to respectfully honour and support the Other” (p. 33). We explained how the action research cycle might progress, and that as well as us learning from the teachers we hoped they would also have the opportunity for professional development and reflection along with personal goal setting. In this way, the research began with a conversation about the teachers’ thoughts on using picture books in their classrooms and teaching experience to date. Thus began the process of storytelling which became the strength of the research and connections between us. As Berryman et al. (2013) suggest, the stories told seemed to gradually reduce the distance between us as researchers and to act as “social glue” (SooHoo, 2006).

Our aim was to develop a ‘dialogic space’ for each to bring their own authenticity to the research (Berryman et al., 2013), but we (Nicola and Marilyn) acknowledge that at this stage, ‘power’ was still very much vested in ourselves as the researchers who had begun the research and defined its beginning parameters. In the three workshops which followed we hoped to allow our conversation to develop, and provide more opportunities for us to “feel as well as see” each other (p. 32), and thus for the power relations to change.

To this end, in the first full-day workshop, we devoted the first third of our time to activities that might help us *connect* (see Table 2) with each other. We put a great deal

of thought into creating a task which would go some way towards reframing us from being perceived to be expert university-researchers to being accepted as fellow children's picture book enthusiasts who wanted to learn with and from the teacher-researchers. We decided to choose a picture book which neither of us had previously seen (*Collecting Colour*, Dunstan, 2008), and to work in a partnership in which Pip and Grace were each paired with one of us to analyse the cover and a double-page spread from the book. We deliberately chose a book that neither of us was familiar with so that the task was one of genuine knowledge sharing and co-construction. Reflections after that first full-day workshop indicated that this was to some extent successful. Nicola noted, "Today Pip and I have learnt a lot about deconstructing illustrations in picture books.... We also learnt a great deal by comparing our notes with those of Grace and Marilyn."

A second activity for that day involved introducing and exploring (*Explore*, see Table 2) a collection of picture books known as the New Zealand Picture Book Collection (Daly, 2013) and inviting everyone to choose a book which "spoke to them", and reflected "who we are". Each of us then spoke to the others about why we selected our book and we discussed the similarities and differences in our choices. This activity was pivotal in establishing ourselves as individuals and how we might *connect*. It was another part of the storytelling process we seemed to engage in from the beginning. Marilyn commented that the "activity on identity using a picture book was very powerful to show our cultural understandings and social backgrounds". This exercise appeared to provide us with a surprising level of sharing and personal understanding which added to the depth of our authenticity in our research relationship; a sense of identity in terms of time and place. Thus the initial conversations and workshop appear to have provided an opportunity for each of the researchers to bring their own knowledge, perceptions and ideologies to the research project; to share aspects of our identity with each other through the picture books chosen; in short to share our authentic selves.

Bringing a relational and dialogical consciousness

As well as providing a context for establishing a respectful and collaborative relationship, we believe the first conversation and all-day workshop were pivotal in establishing a relational and dialogic consciousness in our research space that we believe continued throughout the research process. We were able to clearly state and collaboratively reshape our research questions, and to show that while we both had some background in picture book research, we genuinely did want to learn from Pip and Grace about their classroom practice and they wanted to learn from our experiences.

During the second workshop, using children's work samples and field notes from two classroom observations, we took time to reflect back (*Review*, see Table 2) to Pip and Grace what we had experienced and provided time for them to describe and reflect upon what they had been doing. The third and final workshop provided further opportunities again for discussion on what Pip and Grace had been doing with picture books in their classrooms since we last met. In both these workshops, the teacher-researchers focused on whether their personal goals had been achieved or not. Remembering they came from different teaching syndicates, there was a sense of interconnectedness, some revelations, but also re-evaluation and individual pursuits.

It was also during the second workshop that all four of us worked together to craft (*Explore*, see Table 2) a definition of what a picture book is and how this relates to linguistic and culturally awareness. By doing this we established a framework of ideas as our baseline data. For example, in order to write a definition (*Define*, see Table 2) we needed to think about selection, levels of complexity, and different genre associated with picture books. These thoughts assisted Pip and Grace in their goal setting (*Decide*, see Table 2) as well. We called this a “working definition” as we did not reach consensus and went away to think. At this point the two initial research questions were collapsed into one.

In our desire to be culturally responsive and build a partnership in a research culture, we were aware the nature of discourse is an important factor to consider. We (Marilyn and Nicola) attempted not to use academic language or to be overbearing in our responses. We sought to listen and reflect, as much as possible enacting Berryman’s (2008) double koru in which “... one element is active, and the other is quiescent” (Berryman et al., 2013, p. 30). Nicola noted the power of active listening in one of her reflections: “Just going through the slides [PowerPoint] and examples of children’s work [charts, illustrations] with Grace and Pip today I learnt how valuable this is in hearing Grace and Pip reflect on what they did and why. They added personal insights about their experiences and extra details about what was going on in the classroom”. This listening happened between colleagues too (Pip and Grace) when there was space for them to share what they did in their classrooms with picture books: Marilyn noted that “amazing knowledge came to the fore between colleagues, unaware of what the other does”.

When we worked together to define a picture book (Workshop 2) we used the whiteboard to write up our initial ideas (see Figure 1) to create a truly collegial response. The process was quite spontaneous. We all grabbed pens and began to write furiously on the whiteboard (see Figure 1). We crouched and leaned in, stood on tiptoes, and reached over each other in order to write our ideas on the board. Then we stood back and discussed, adding arrows, changing words, and adding more details to clarify our ideas. Realizing how valuable our brainstorming and jottings were, Marilyn rushed downstairs for a camera while the others laughed and kept going. It was as if we couldn’t stop the flow of ideas and we didn’t want to ‘lose them’.

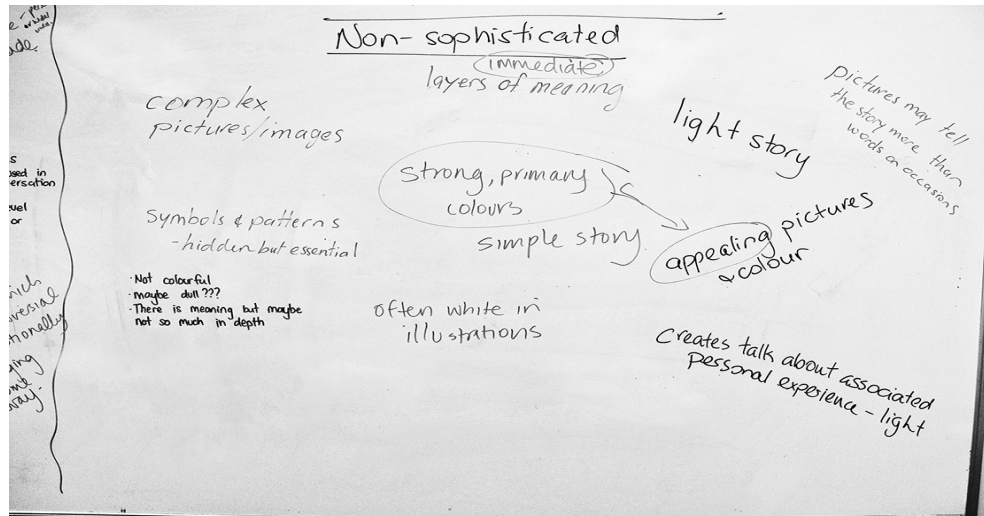


Figure 2. Whiteboard work when creating a definition

In workshop 3 in order to answer our research question we used cartridge paper (Figure 2) to record ideas. Nicola took the role of writer, listening to and documenting the three voices around her. Despite the one writer, once again the response was truly collegial as can be seen by the arrows, deletions, and insertions that occurred during the process. There was a mutually shared energy in the room that to us was a reflection of the relational and dialogic consciousness that had been created.

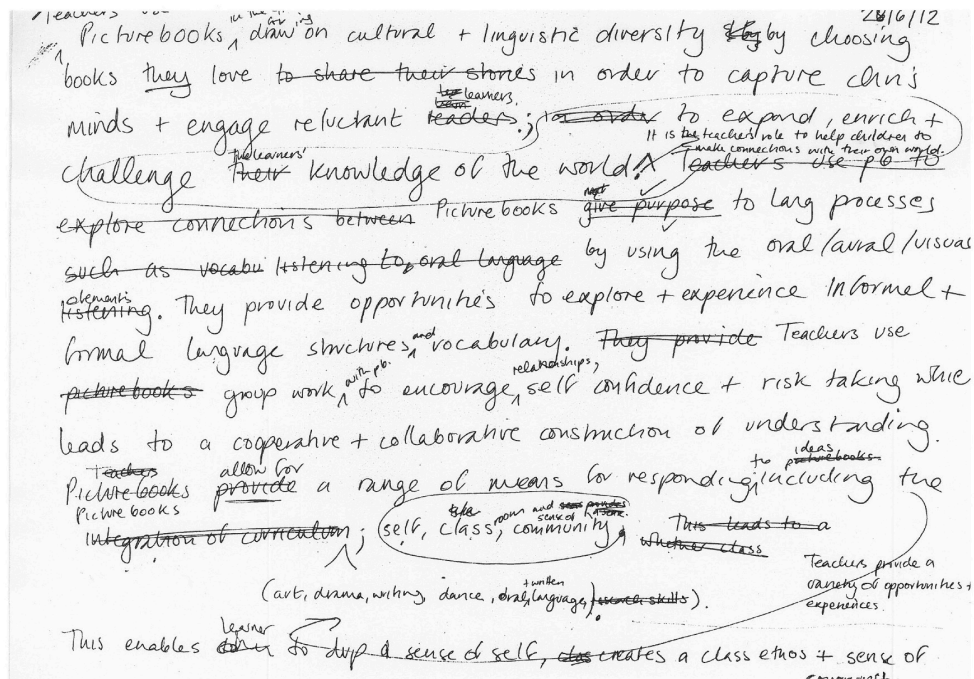


Figure 3. Large cartridge paper chart drawing ideas together

Reflections after each session showed how powerful the group work on creating a picture book definition was: “A definition of a picture book is really interesting. The basics were understood but the added depth through discussion was fulfilling and showed our shared knowledge” (Marilyn). Grace noted that “trying to define [picture books] was not easy, and we have to be careful that we really do encapsulate what we mean”.

In our final workshop we added to this definition and jointly summed up what we had learnt together in response to the central research question we had collaboratively constructed at the previous session.

Enacting ongoing critical reflection

Throughout the research process Nicola and Marilyn were conscious that qualitative research embodies critical theory as part of the process. By this we mean co-creation of new knowledge without necessarily reaching consensus. One example of this was the working definition that embodied collective and significant meaning-making messages. All participants could be viewed as experts of their own local knowledge. While this involved a brokering by all parties, argument and debate (Figure 2), our own tacit experiences and theorising could be presented because we had developed trust and respect for each other.

The activities in our workshops encouraged reflective action, co-constructed understandings and allowed us to collectively own that learning. One of Nicola’s reflections documents something of this critical discussion as it occurred: “We [all four researchers] discussed the qualities that are involved in selecting picture books to meet the needs of the class”. Grace and Pip deliberately chose books that they could ‘sell’ to their students, rather than just reading to them. They looked for high visual content/images that added to the quality of the narrative and would assist with discussion. We (Nicola and Marilyn) asked about the impact of such choice on meeting the needs of all learners, not just the high proportion of English Language Learners [ELL] or non-European students. The teachers were adamant their choices benefited all because ‘good’ models of English structure, vocabulary and expression facilitate learning regardless of linguistic or cultural diversity; however, success relies on a range of approaches and strategies to make a difference. This was where the research project began.

In the final written reflection of the action research cycle, both Pip and Grace commented on the effect of the project in assisting them to articulate and affirm their current practice; while introducing new ways of using picture books in the classroom; and in addition the value of having the opportunity to hear and see what the other was doing. Pip said that she was “thrilled and privileged” and that the project “helped me cover many aspects of the curriculum that sometimes get left behind (dance/drama)”, and that there was “evidence of children’s learning, [their] improvement in reading and writing”. Grace noted, “I have had great positive feedback about my current practice” and she felt the project had confirmed that “I am doing some really exciting and valuable work with picture books. It [also] opened up new pathways for me to use. It expanded my repertoire of ... ways to explore picture books”. The two university-researchers both commented upon how positive the experiences of researching with and learning from the teachers had been for them: Marilyn noted that the experience had been “wonderful and uplifting in terms of working with student teachers in tutorials”.

Nicola also noted how much she felt she had learnt with the teachers about picture book use in diverse classrooms: “I have learnt in vivid reality how picture books can be used in classrooms to support ELL students and thinking skills.”

When the research project was finished we were aware that we wanted to be part of an ongoing relationship with the teacher-researchers. In this sense, we were thrilled to find out during an informal follow-up meeting that Grace and Pip had gone on to consolidate their learning by planning and implementing two professional development sessions for their colleagues at school, sharing the knowledge about classroom use of picture books which we had constructed together. They chose a similar format to their experiences with us. In their workshops they shared favourite picture books and began to work on a jointly created definition of a (sophisticated) picture book, just as we had. They set goals and put these into practice over a period of time and visited each other's classrooms, including Grace's and Pip's, to see what each teacher had accomplished. The staff then returned to and modified their draft definition, and finally Grace and Pip shared the definition that we as a research team had written in our final workshop. We believe these sessions are evidence of the shared power and knowledge created in the project, a sense of agency and empowerment. For Nicola and Marilyn we can see how important it is in initial teaching education to work with student teachers in collaborative ways as opposed to a transmitted role where the lecturer is seen to have all the expertise and control. Modes of delivery should therefore be a negotiated space where others feel valued and able to share in mutually supportive ways.

Assessed shared relationships and agreements

There were tensions that need to be considered, of course. One of these relates to professional reading. We (Nicola and Marilyn) had carefully selected a range of articles on the use of picture books in middle syndicate classrooms across a range of curriculum areas and placed these in personalised folders; but the teachers were not interested, stating they preferred “hands-on” activities. The success of the first workshop therefore relied on collaborative, exploratory tasks. There was only one example where the need for professional reading seemed relevant to their needs and this was during personal goal setting when thinking about close analysis of words and images. Pip and later Grace felt they didn't have enough knowledge of visual grammar and therefore found relevance in professional reading. At first we were disappointed in not knowing how to bridge theory with practical application, but in fact we now agree that dialogue and conversation were the essential elements in affirming current practice, building self-identity, epistemology and pedagogy. A further realisation was seeing the children in class using visual language in their activities and referring to a wall chart of ideas that Nicola and Marilyn noted were an interpretation of the one article we had read and discussed. If we had longer time together, professional reading might be an area to pursue.

Another tension initially involved the choice of picture books that were to be explored during the workshops. Nicola and Marilyn had searched for what they thought were linguistically and culturally appropriate picture books. We had considered the cultural context of the school when making our decisions based on the principle of ‘multiple sources’ previously consulted. How wrong we were. Careful preparation could not account for teacher preference. It was the New Zealand Picture Book Collection that they gravitated toward, wanting to know the authors, the illustrators, the

themes and ways of being within New Zealand children's books. This notion of self-identity and storytelling became central components for our discussions. We embraced these feelings and the realism this brought. Authors such as Patricia Grace and illustrators like Peter Gossage can 'walk between two worlds to paint pictures' through words and images regardless of cultural backgrounds and diversity of needs.

A potential tension was finding a physical space in the university setting that was conducive to a positive working environment. We found such a place, a small and comfortable learning space that was not considered a classroom. As a consequence, a relaxed, convivial atmosphere prevailed in which we worked collaboratively on open-ended tasks, choosing books to represent ourselves as people who read to each other at opportune times, and relaxed with much humour and positivity. We believe this immersion in the process allowed personal goal setting to emerge naturally. We saw transformative learning occurring in the classrooms based on workshop content and participation, none of which was pre-determined.

Conclusion

This article has explored the ways in which a research project involving two teacher-researchers and two university-researchers can be viewed as a form of culturally responsive methodology within situated practice (Berryman et al., 2013). We do not claim this study can be replicated or generalised across settings but we have tried to show the complex interplay between the individual in terms of agency and professional identity, and a supportive research culture. While the focus of the research was describing the ways in which two primary school teachers use picture books to draw on cultural and linguistic diversity in the classrooms, we felt a sense of empowerment and elation from the engagement with the teachers and their interactions with children. We see this as a collaboratively constructed methodology that could be viewed as being culturally responsive. We have shown that many aspects of the research methodology specifically chosen because of a desire to learn with and share research power with our classroom teacher co-researchers effected the creation of a relational and dialogical space in which the identities, beliefs and knowledge that all parties brought to the research table were respected, acknowledged and valued.

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Appendix A

Semi-structured interview questions

1. Can you tell us about your teaching career to date, for example, years of teaching, age levels you have taught?
2. How important are picture books in your teaching practice?
3. If you consider them important, can you give some reasons why?
4. In what ways do you use picture books in your classroom?
For example,
 - a. Major language/literacy approaches?
 - b. Other curriculum areas?
 - c. Part of an integrated programme?
5. Is this influenced in any way by the NZ curriculum (2006) objectives/goals/aspirations. For example—key competencies...?
6. Have you used picture books in different ways with different age levels?
7. Think about any changes you have noticed in picture books over the years. For example, the overall quality? Words and images?
8. Have you had any specific professional development related to picture books in recent years?
9. Other comments ...

¹NZPBC = New Zealand Picture Book Collection