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Pre-service teachers applying culturally responsive critical pedagogy

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Abstract

How do pre-service teachers apply culturally responsive critical pedagogy in the classroom? This small study of two Aotearoa New Zealand pre-service teachers investigated a professional practice placement that followed theory courses. The research found these two pre-service teachers applied culturally responsive critical pedagogy in five ways: reflecting on self and identity, centring ākonga *(learners), uplifting culture, developing critical consciousness, and improving academic outcomes for non-dominant culture ākonga. However, these two pre-service teachers placed differing emphases on the ways of applying the pedagogy, including not engaging with improving ākonga achievement. The research offers practice examples of culturally responsive critical pedagogy by pre-service teachers.*

Keywords

Culturally responsive critical pedagogy; initial teacher education; professional practice placement; theory-to-practice

Introduction

In Aotearoa New Zealand, non-dominant culture *ākonga* (learners), especially Māori or Pacific learners, are over represented in poor educational outcomes (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016). Culturally responsive and critical pedagogies theorise causation and remedies. In the Aotearoa New Zealand context, culture intersects with critical pedagogy's central concept of class, thus a culturally responsive critical pedagogy (Milne, 2017) may help improve education for non-dominant culture learners.

This study investigated how two pre-service teachers from a small Aotearoa New Zealand initial teacher education (ITE) provider applied theory-to-practice. The study used a critical social sciences approach and qualitative research methods, including interviews, observations, and document analysis. It researched how two pre-service teachers applied culturally responsive critical pedagogy theory from academic courses during their professional practice placement. My role was both critical pedagogy lecturer and researcher.

Literature provided five ways of applying culturally responsive critical pedagogy: reflecting on self and identity (Bartolomé, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Milne, 2017; Price-Dennis, 2009; Vavrus, 2002), centring ākonga (Bishop et al., 2007; Darder et al., 2017; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Milne,

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2017; Price-Dennis, 2009), uplifting culture (Bishop et al., 2007; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Milne, 2017; Price-Dennis, 2009), developing critical consciousness (Darder et al., 2017; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Milne, 2017; Price-Dennis, 2009), and improving academic achievement for ākonga of non-dominant cultures (Bishop et al., 2007; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Milne, 2017). However, the two pre-service teacher participants engaged in only four of the ways. Despite the premise that non-dominant culture ākonga experience poor educational outcomes, the pre-service teachers did not enact the fifth way of applying culturally responsive critical pedagogy related to improving achievement.

Literature review

This research connects critical pedagogy and culturally-responsive pedagogy, investigating how pre-service teachers apply culturally responsive critical pedagogy during in-school professional practice placements. The different focuses of critical pedagogy and culturally responsive pedagogy will be outlined in this section. These pedagogies are often critiqued as being overly theoretical, so this section will review three studies of how teachers and pre-service teachers apply culturally responsive critical pedagogies at the chalkface.

Critical pedagogy aims to empower marginalised ākonga, particularly those from lower social classes, through change in the educational system. Critical pedagogy centres marginalised ākonga, democratises the classroom, and gives ākonga a voice. It aims to develop critical awareness of societal structures and conditions among teachers and learners, and empower them to analyse and change societal inequalities. The terms praxis and conscientisation, which refer to reflecting on and applying critical theory to real world problems to bring about change, are important for understanding the process teachers and ākonga go through. However, critical pedagogy is critiqued as having a white bias and focusing on social class over culture (Darder et al., 2017).

Asset pedagogies, such as culturally-responsive pedagogy, counter the white bias of critical pedagogy. Culturally-responsive pedagogy also aims to bring change to the education system; however, its focus is on teachers recognising ākonga cultures and supporting their achievement. Culturally responsive pedagogy has become mainstreamed in Aotearoa New Zealand, often defined using a quote from *Te Kotahitanga: Phase 3* (Bishop et al., 2007):

> Educators create learning contexts within their classroom; where power is shared between self-determining individuals within non-dominating relations of interdependence; where culture counts; where learning is interactive, dialogic and spirals; where participants are connected to one another through the establishment of a common vision for what constitutes excellence in educational outcomes. We termed this pedagogy a Culturally Responsive Pedagogy of Relations. (p. 1)

This approach values ākonga identities and experiences as starting points for learning. Teachers form relationships with ākonga and develop pedagogies specific to the ākonga they work with.

American teacher-researchers Duncan-Andrade and Morrell (2008) provide examples of critical pedagogy that is culturally responsive. Working mainly with non-dominant culture students in a disadvantaged urban school, Duncan-Andrade and Morrell applied their pedagogy to teaching English, coaching, and a summer school university-access programme. Their critical pedagogy aimed to raise academic achievement; develop dominant-culture literacy skills; connect learning to learners' experiences through popular culture; advance their students' capacity to be critical citizens through "critical literacy theories and multicultural readings of canonical texts" (p. 51); and engage students in praxis, using a Freirean dialogical approach. Duncan-Andrade and Morrell call for practical application of critical pedagogy to be embedded in ITE.

In the Aotearoa New Zealand context, Milne (2017) uses the term culturally responsive critical pedagogy to describe the whole school approach of Kia Aroha College. Milne's school applied the pedagogy by intersecting critical understandings with the cultures of its mainly Māori and Pacific learners. The focus of the pedagogy was ākonga cultural identity formation, described as a self-learning lens; improved academic outcomes, described as a school-learning lens; and development of critical consciousness among ākonga, described as a global-learning lens. Development in each of these lenses is used to measure the results of the culturally-responsive critical pedagogy. In addition, the school promoted teacher self-development through the creation of a "Critically Conscious, Culturally Responsive, Teacher Profile" (p. 97). The profile's development goals are that a teacher "understands the relationship between power and knowledge" (p. 97); is developing in "social justice, solidarity and critical thinking" (p. 97); is learning their cultural identity; "understands the cultural backgrounds of students" (p. 97); understands whānau as a concept for school; and is involved in cultural aspects of the school.

Action researchers Milne (2017), and Duncan-Andrade and Morrell (2008) are experienced and well-connected school leaders and teachers. They have *mana* (status and command of respect) and cultural capital that allows them to challenge the status quo, and access to resources, including each other, to support their pedagogies. However, pre-service teachers, on whom this research focuses, are learning the art of teaching, are at placement schools temporarily, and lack mana and cultural capital that support applying culturally responsive critical pedagogy. This makes applying new or different pedagogies more challenging. American researcher Price-Dennis' (2009) PhD thesis was a multi-case study investigation into how three pre-service teachers applied a culturally responsive form of critical pedagogy called critical literacy. One of the pre-service teachers was placed at a school with a high level of economic disadvantage, while the other two were at schools with more economically advantaged students. Price-Dennis identified a number of ways the pre-service teachers applied critical literacy, suited to the learners and context: curriculum, power and place, advocacy and action, conceptualising race, dialogue, inquiry, relationships, familiar content, and a range of assignments and assessments. Similarly to Duncan-Andrade and Morrell (2008), Price-Dennis calls for ITE to prioritise theory-to-practice in critical pedagogy. Concurrently with applying the pedagogy in the classroom, Price-Dennis' pre-service teachers reflected critically and developed in their understandings of the key issues of "race, equity, and social change" (p. 207). This highlights a key feature of critical literature regarding pre-service teachers that was also seen for teachers in Milne's (2017) study: a focus on self-reflection and personal development.

ITE literature places importance on pre-service teacher reflective personal development. Literature recognises that reflective personal development includes critical understandings of the self (Bartolomé, 2004); identity development, autobiography to self-critique privilege; and cultural competency, including learning another language (Ladson-Billings, 2009). These are applicable for Aotearoa New Zealand where more than 70 per cent of pre-service teachers are Pākehā (dominant European culture of New Zealand) (Ministry of Education, 2020a), while more than half of ākonga identify with non-dominant cultures (Ministry of Education, 2020b). In addition, while Vavrus (2002) considers reflection to be worthwhile, he places importance on critical depth within reflection.

To support this current research into how two pre-service teachers apply culturally-responsive critical pedagogy during in-school professional practice placement, the literature reviewed above offered five main ways of applying the culturally responsive critical pedagogy. These are teaching approaches that centre learners and share power (Bishop et al., 2007; Darder et al., 2017; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Milne, 2017; Price-Dennis, 2009), relevance of culture in the classroom (Bishop et al., 2007; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Milne, 2017; Price-Dennis, 2009), learning that critiques society (Darder et al., 2017; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Milne, 2017; Price-Dennis, 2009), improved learner achievement (Bishop et al., 2007; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Milne, 2017), and reflective personal development (Bartolomé, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Milne, 2017;

Price-Dennis, 2009; Vavrus, 2002). The themes found in the qualitative research in this study will be discussed in relation to these five ways of applying the pedagogy.

Method

This qualitative research used a critical social sciences approach to investigate how two pre-service teachers applied culturally-responsive critical pedagogy during professional practice placement. This research benefitted from the flexibility of critical research to employ various research methods (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005), such as the qualitative data collection methods used in this study.

Two volunteer participants were recruited from a small Aotearoa New Zealand ITE provider. Students of a critical pedagogy course were approached about participation. As I was the lecturer of the critical pedagogy course, towards the end of the semester the school administrator emailed students with information about the research and invited them to an information session with the Head of School. At the information session the Head of School outlined the voluntary nature of participation, the research ethics and the research itself, and provided participant information sheets and consent forms to take away. Volunteers returned the forms to the Head of School, who held the forms until after the critical pedagogy course was completed. After the critical pedagogy course grades were released, the consent forms were provided to me, the researcher.

The desired sample size for the study was three participants. Selection criteria required participants to be in their final year of a three-year primary teaching bachelor's degree; to have studied courses in critical pedagogy, te reo Māori (Māori language), and teaching for Māori and Pacific learners; and to be enrolled in the four-week professional practice placement. The cohort of possible participants was fewer than 10 pre-service teachers. Four of the class members volunteered. For one volunteer, the placement school did not give consent due to the Education Review Office visiting during the data collection period. One participant withdrew during the study. This left just two participants for the study.

The two participants were assigned the pseudonyms Manaia and Jamie. Manaia self-identified her culture and gender in this way:

> I actually went home thinking I'm back at school again—I was that young Māori girl.
>
> When I was going to school … I didn't fit into any culture, because my mum was Pākehā and my dad was Māori, so I was always known as half-caste. So I didn't fit in with the Pākehā. I didn't fit in with the Māori. So those situations built up the walls that I had … so I got to [*sic*] let that go and realise that I have a culture … I recognise that I'm Māori but I was brought up more with my mum, so I'm more European, more Pākehā. But she was very much the Māoritanga [Māori way of life], the looking after people, feeding people, opening our house to them and I think she got that probably from dad, and that's where I've been brought up. So I've had to recognise that yes I am Māori, but I'm more along mum's influence than dad's.

Jamie self-identified his culture and gender as follows:

> I am a young European male who doesn't have a lot of experience with other cultures.
>
> I'm in a Western-based school and being a Westerner, you know, myself, just my cultural identity is just naturally there, isn't it? I don't suppress anything.
>
> Being a male in a heavily dominant female industry, I'm still undecided either positively or negatively, or maybe not at all … what impact that has.

ITE was a career change for both participants, as each had previously worked in different education roles: Manaia in early childhood education and Jamie as a primary school teacher aide. While these

characteristics provide interesting background, this study did not investigate the influences of identity, prior experience, or intersectionality on professional practice.

For the professional practice placement under study, the pre-service teachers returned to the same class they had spent one week in at the beginning of the school year. One participant was placed in a New Entrant class (age 5–6 years), while the other was placed with a Year 5–6 class (age 9–11 years). Both schools were proximate to the ITE provider's city: one school was suburban, while the other was in a satellite town. Of the ākonga at one school, 23 per cent were Māori, 13 per cent Pacific learners, and 34 per cent Pākehā (Education Review Office, 2016). At the other school, Māori ākonga made up 23 per cent, while 68 per cent of the learners were Pākehā (Education Review Office, 2016)

The research question was: How do pre-service teachers apply culturally responsive critical pedagogy during in-school professional practice placement? To gain multiple angles of understanding, three kinds of qualitative data were collected during the four-week professional practice placement. Two semi-structured interviews and two teaching observations were undertaken per participant. In addition, participants provided annotated teaching planning documents, goals, and reflections. Participants were emailed the observation notes and interview transcripts so they could edit for accuracy, and to uphold the study's ethical framework (Mero-Jaffe, 2011). However, neither participant responded, which may highlight the power relations between participants and researcher.

The one-hour semi-structured individual interviews were held away from the placement school, at a location chosen by the participant. An interview schedule provided a guide for questions and prompts. Interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed by the researcher. Due to delays in gaining research approval and consent, the first interview was held one week after the start of the professional practice placement. The second interview was held after the placement ended and allowed the participant and researcher to discuss the observations.

The first teaching observation took place after the first interview, in the second week of placement. The second observation was during the last week of placement. Each observation took place on-site in the placement school and class. Observations began at the start of the school day and concluded at midday. Teaching and learning that was observed included morning greetings and routines; reading; and one to two other lessons, such as maths, writing or inquiry. Observed data was recorded in written field note form using a loosely framed observation schedule. No information was gathered about individual ākonga in the classes.

Annotated planning documents with goals and reflections were requested from the participants. One participant provided the full suite of documents associated with the professional practice placement, while the other participant provided documents for four lessons across four days, with some reflections.

Data analysis was performed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach to thematic analysis, which includes six stages: familiarisation, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. Familiarisation included personally transcribing the interviews and multiple readings (Perakyla & Ruusuvuori, 2011). An inductive approach to analysing the data allowed for initial codes to be developed without reference to literature (Braun & Clarke, 2006). However, it can be seen from the literature review, findings, and discussion that the themes strongly align with literature, as in a theoretical analysis.

As I had been the participants' lecturer prior to the study, the asymmetrical power relationship between lecturer-researcher and students-participants made for several ethical considerations related to ethical relationships and minimisation of harm. I enacted plans to mitigate any potential disadvantage of the students due to their participation, or students possibly feeling beholden to me. I completed marking for the critical pedagogy course prior to the professional practice placement and prior to receiving the participant consent forms. I made myself unavailable for assessing the placement and did not make evaluative statements about participants' teaching competence.

Ethical issues, such as full disclosure, confidentiality, informed and voluntary consent, and confidentiality, were also addressed. Ethical approval was gained from University of Auckland Human

Participants Ethics Committee, Reference Number 022967, and the ethics committee of the ITE provider the participants were studying through. Full disclosure was made to the ITE provider, participants, schools, and mentor teachers. All parties were informed of their rights, and informed and voluntary consent was gained. Placement class whānau were informed of the research process. Pseudonyms were used for participants, and names of schools and the ITE provider were removed to ensure confidentiality. However, due to the small size of the ITE provider and use of identifying features, including ethnicity and gender, the participants may be recognisable.

The trustworthiness of this research was ensured through reliability (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015) and rigour (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Merriam and Tisdell's (2015) eight stages for reliability were applied to support trustworthiness. To establish rigour, each stage was documented and reviewed. This was supported by use of multiple repeated methods of data collection.

Findings

This research focused on the question: How do pre-service teachers apply culturally responsive critical pedagogy during professional practice placement? The two pre-service teacher participants engaged in theory-to-practice, translating what they had learned in academic courses into practical acts of teaching. Data collected from the two pre-service teachers was analysed according to five themes found in literature: reflecting on self and identity by the pre-service teacher (Bartolomé, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Milne, 2017; Price-Dennis, 2009; Vavrus, 2002), centring ākonga (Bishop et al., 2007; Darder et al., 2017; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Milne, 2017; Price-Dennis, 2009), uplifting culture (Bishop et al., 2007; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Milne, 2017; Price-Dennis, 2009), developing critical consciousness (Darder et al., 2017; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Milne, 2017; Price-Dennis, 2009), and improving academic outcomes for ākonga of non-dominant cultures (Bishop et al., 2007; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Milne, 2017).

Reflecting on self and identity by the pre-service teacher

The theme reflecting on self and identity is underpinned by the premise that for people to develop a culturally responsive critical pedagogy they need to invest time in understanding and critiquing themselves. Manaia and Jamie both saw knowing their own identities, identifying biases, and understanding cultures as ways they applied culturally responsive critical pedagogy. This included ongoing self-critique and self-development.

Prior to the placement, Manaia and Jamie had investigated identity through theory courses. Reflections built into the placement offered spaces where the pre-service teachers could have, but did not, continue identity development work. Manaia and Jamie's reflections were mainly about their acts of teaching. Observations showed that Manaia, through wearing a sports team shirt, and Jamie, during learning conversations, shared aspects of their identities with ākonga. For Manaia, acknowledging her own identity was separate to considering ākonga identities, whereas Jamie shared his identity during discussions with ākonga about their identities. In addition, Jamie reported having a conversation about identity with the school principal, further evidence of the importance he placed on this aspect of culturally responsive critical pedagogy.

Addressing their own biases was considered by Manaia and Jamie. For example, Manaia explained: "We've got to get rid of those biases that you carry around with you, that you don't know until you do critically look at your culture and the way you are as a person." Both participants wanted to avoid stereotyping, including gender stereotyping.

Manaia and Jamie both mentioned developing critical cultural understandings. Jamie, particularly, was aware of his limited understanding of other cultures. Three of the four cultural competencies in

Tātaiako (Ministry of Education & New Zealand Teachers Council, 2011) were brought up by Manaia and Jamie in the interviews and reflections: *whanaunatanga* (respectful relationships), *manaakitanga* (showing respect toward Māori language, culture, and beliefs), and *ako* (responsibility for teaching and learning). More about culture will be discussed through the later themes.

The ways Manaia and Jamie reflected on self and identity reflected the aims found in literature (Bartolomé, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Milne, 2017; Price-Dennis, 2009), but lacked the critical depth Vavrus (2002) desired.

Centring ākonga

The research found there were three aspects to the two pre-service teachers centring ākonga within their teaching: knowing ākonga, making learning relevant for ākonga, and sharing power with ākonga.

Knowing ākonga

Manaia and Jamie viewed getting to know ākonga as an important part of culturally responsive critical pedagogy. They used ākonga names, showing they considered names to carry value and that learning names was worth investing time in. In some cases, they asked ākonga to help them improve pronunciation, reflecting the *Tātaiako* (Ministry of Education & New Zealand Teachers Council, 2011) competency of ako. However, during observations, Manaia was still learning names.

As well as names, other aspects of ākonga that Manaia and Jamie got to know included cultures, backgrounds, out-of-school activities, year groups, curriculum levels, and preferred ways of learning. The ways used by Manaia and Jamie were similar to the ways in which Price-Dennis' (2009) participants got to know the backgrounds of their learners and reflected the aims of Milne (2017) and Bishop et al. (2007) for building relationships. Milne (2017) also promotes engaging with whānau, which Manaia and Jamie did not do. The short time that the participants were in schools during their professional practice placement made it difficult for them to get to know ākonga and whānau. However, due to not mentioning more individual characteristics or quickly learning names of ākonga, it could appear that Manaia and Jamie viewed ākonga through group identities, such as year level or culture, rather than as individuals.

Making learning relevant for ākonga

Knowing ākonga helped Manaia and Jamie to make learning relevant through connections to ākonga cultures and backgrounds. For example, Jamie wrote in a reflection:

> How are tamariki [children] including aspects of their personal being into their learning? I am wondering if it would involve components of bringing items from home that are of high interest or relatability for oral language news. Those could then be incorporated into writing and maths … My hope is that by using the high interest of the ākonga, that can [be] redirected into developing writing, reading and team work skills.

Manaia and Jamie planned ways to connect ākonga to the learning through task selection. For example, Manaia mentioned: "I'm not just catering for the ones who are physical, I'm catering for the ones who like to write, the ones who draw." Jamie used what he knew about the age and development of the ākonga to choose *waiata* (songs) and everyday experiences to teach te reo Māori. In mathematics, Manaia created problems using familiar items like cheeseburgers. Manaia and Jamie considered choice of literacy texts to be important, and this will be discussed later.

Connecting texts and inquiry topics to ākonga experiences valued their experiences and helped them to access the learning and go deeper. For example, Jamie began a discussion about Matariki (the celebration of Māori New Year which is marked by the star constellation Pleiades) through ākonga sharing their experiences of New Year and followed this by asking ākonga who had attended Matariki events to share their experiences. Drawing on prior learning from across time and learning areas also supported ākonga to deepen their learning. For example, Jamie linked a literacy shared big book to a previous science lesson: "We've got a very special book. You might remember we did something really similar when [the science visitor] came. Have a look and see if you can make any connections" (Jamie).

Despite contextual and scale differences between Duncan-Andrade and Morrell's (2008) high school study and the primary school classes of Prince-Dennis (2009) and Manaia and Jamie, the intention of making learning relevant by engaging the learners' everyday worlds in the education space is similar.

Sharing power with ākonga

During observations, Manaia and Jamie shared power with ākonga by giving them options, asking who would go first, and asking whether counting would be in English or te reo Māori. The pre-service teachers allowed and led these power sharing opportunities. During the interviews, both Manaia and Jamie explained that flexibility in planning was a way they wished to share power with ākonga, as Jamie explained: "It's allowing just space I guess for that in planning and not sticking so rigidly to what I've set. But those unplanned opportunities happen—just let them happen." However, during the observations, the routines of mentor teachers provided structures for the day, and the pre-service teachers directed learning progress and transitions between activities.

Joining in and being alongside ākonga was used by both Manaia and Jamie to reduce power asymmetries. This included taking a turn during shared reading (Manaia), joining a fitness activity (Jamie), and sitting at the same height as ākonga (Manaia and Jamie). For example, during shared reading, Manaia interjected: "Hold on, I'm going to sit on the floor, I can't hear you talking." During activities, Manaia and Jamie both used "we" language instead of "you" language. Although they were both observed intentionally addressing power differentials, neither participant discussed this during the interviews. Power sharing may lead to ako; however, few opportunities for ākonga to teach the pre-service teachers were noted. Furthermore, Manaia and Jamie retained the power of the teacher through their language and classroom management strategies.

Power sharing is important in critical pedagogy (Darder et al., 2017) and culturally responsive pedagogy literature (Bishop et al., 2007). However, Manaia and Jamie's ways of power sharing are different to power sharing found by Price-Dennis (2009), which was in the form of dialogue.

Uplifting culture

The third theme in Manaia and Jamie's ways of applying culturally responsive critical pedagogy was uplifting culture. This was seen with the sub-themes of teaching te reo Māori, developing understanding of Māori culture, and engaging with ākonga cultural identities. Manaia and Jamie did not apply even emphasis across the three, with teaching te reo Māori emphasised more than Māori culture or the cultures of ākonga.

Teaching te reo Māori

Manaia and Jamie both integrated te reo in their teaching, but for different reasons. Manaia's motivation was to develop te reo proficiency of ākonga, while Jamie aimed to normalise use of te reo, as he explained in his weekly goal:

> My ambition for ākonga to use Te Reo Māori with limited kaiako [teacher] promoting was chosen as it was the desired outcome that ākonga would make connections between the language used in the morning hui [whole class meeting] and waiata [songs] and apply that in a wider context—i.e. other areas of the school day, at home, in the playground etc. (Jamie)

Both Manaia and Jamie used te reo to greet ākonga. They both used te reo Māori *kīwaha* (colloquialisms) for praise, which connected te reo with positive feelings from being praised. However, at times correction was also given in te reo, which could create a negative association with the language. Beyond these, Manaia used only stand-alone basic commands such as "*e tu*" (stand up), while Jamie used commands and sentences such as "*haere mai ki te whāriki*" (come to the mat). These kinds of short statements support Jamie's aim of normalisation in the classroom, but don't necessarily apply to non-classroom contexts as Jamie had hoped.

The approaches taken were also different. Manaia taught whole-class teacher-led lessons, introducing a few words of new vocabulary each time. She felt this was supportive for the learners, writing in her reflections: "Found that working with the whole group and them saying the te reo together helped with the students' confidence and mine as well. Will continue and add on more words for how they feel" (Manaia). However, comparing te reo lessons between the two observations of Manaia, held two weeks apart, there was only a minor development of content, which was unlikely to have progressed or challenged the ākonga. Manaia reflected that an ākonga had greeted a *kaiako Māori* (Māori teacher) in te reo while on a school trip. "I was able to observe one of my students replied to a Māori teacher using the Reo I had taught her. I was so proud and it made me want to continue with Te Reo teaching and learning" (Manaia). Manaia attributed this to recent teaching; however, equally it could have been the ākonga using prior knowledge.

Jamie's approach involved integrating relevant te reo throughout the day, taking into consideration ākonga year level and developmental stage. In contrast to Manaia's lack of assessment of prior knowledge or progress, Jamie collected observed evidence and used teacher judgement to assess ākonga progress and plan next steps. Jamie attributed ākonga use of te reo outside the classroom to his teaching:

> Something that I've bought into the classroom is … the use of the word pakipaki [clapping] and the [New Zealand Sign Language] sign for pakipaki, so clapping. … The students have taken that on board and are using that in assembly. So they prefer to use the sign and the Māori term over the traditional clapping. And I have seen it in the playground and the kids will independently use that term. (Jamie)

Developing understanding of Māori culture and tikanga

Very little engagement with *Te Ao Māori* (Māori worldview) and *tikanga* (cultural practices) was observed of either participant. Jamie's mentor included a *karakia* (prayer) at the beginning of the day and before eating, but while Jamie incorporated these practices he saw this more as preparing the learners than application of tikanga. Similarly, although Jamie was aware that removing shoes to go indoors was a cultural practice, he saw it more as pragmatic for keeping the classroom clean.

The professional practice placement occurred around the time of Matariki, with both Manaia and Jamie referring to this event: Manaia more casually, while Jamie worked with his school and mentor

teacher to celebrate Matariki. Jamie knew that some ākonga had attended a Matariki event and he used their understandings to support class learning, and oral language and writing for these ākonga. Matariki is the only Māori calendar event to be commonly taught in schools. Its inclusion is important for ākonga Māori. However, aspects of Māori culture that were brought up by Manaia and Jamie—*kapa haka* (performance of Māori song, dance, and chanting) and *hāngī* (food cooked in an earth oven)—occur year round, not just at Matariki. The way in which Matariki was acknowledged by Manaia and Jamie seems to be more of a liberal multicultural addition of holidays and heroes (Banks, 2009) than a way of enacting culturally-responsive critical pedagogy.

Considering ākonga cultural identities

Ākonga of various cultures attended Manaia and Jamie's placement schools, which led both pre-service teachers to discuss valuing diverse ākonga cultural identities, a key aspect of culturally responsive critical pedagogy. However, in practice Manaia and Jamie did not strongly enact this, and when they did it was teacher-directed rather than ākonga-led. Manaia, together with her mentor teacher, was observed learning a greeting in an ākonga home language. While taking the roll, Manaia and Jamie used greetings from various languages, but these were not necessarily ākonga languages. The classroom routines of Jamie's mentor, mentioned above, reflected some Māori cultural practices, which may have helped ākonga Māori to feel welcome in the classroom space. However, Jamie's application of the practices was more likely reflective of a general commitment to biculturalism than picking up on the cultures of ākonga.

Both Manaia and Jamie were aware of the overwhelmingly Pākehā nature of classroom resources and discussed their desires for literacy books representing the ākonga in the classes, a form of critical literacy (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Price-Dennis, 2009). Manaia was observed intentionally using readers with characters who were from non-dominant cultures, but these didn't necessarily represent ākonga cultures. She explained:

> I found one … [with characters who were] Māori. I thought "Yeah I'm going to do that". … Trying to find books that would have some connection for them in society, in their home. But even going through their [*School*] *Journals* … I think there was a few, two I think, [class sets] of Polynesian [*School*] *Journals* associated with them. There was one of the Indian, Asian type … and then that was it. Everything was very much the, you know, the white families.

Although the two pre-service teachers desired for the classrooms to reflect the cultures of ākonga, in reality it was mainly ākonga Māori who were considered. This is important for the *Tātaiako* (Ministry of Education & New Zealand Teachers Council, 2011) cultural competencies, and for Aotearoa New Zealand as a bicultural nation but is applying culturally responsive critical pedagogy in a limited way.

Developing critical consciousness

Manaia and Jamie gave less emphasis to developing critical consciousness. Manaia and Jamie verbalised their awareness of critical consciousness through use of critical language and when directly asked during interviews. They exhibited critical consciousness through critical literacy in text selection by considering gender stereotyping and cultural diversity. However, when using intentionally chosen texts with ākonga, neither Manaia nor Jamie led ākonga in critical conversations. Manaia attempted to engage ākonga in predicting who a text was about:

> That's why I asked: "Who … do you think this is about?" "Oh the dad" and all of that was the dad. Then they found out that, oh, no it was the mum that has gone [into military

> service]. And I thought that was something really great for them to click on to: that it's not always dad that goes off and does things. That it's also mum. (Manaia)

Manaia expected ākonga to figure out for themselves how this text challenged stereotypes and did not lead discussion about internalised stereotypes. Thus, Manaia did not extend to the kind of critical discussions Price-Dennis' (2009) participants engaged in.

When Jamie found he was unable to access texts representing non-dominant cultures, he engaged in a form of praxis by discussing this with his mentor teacher, who then bought te reo Māori classroom resources.

> I guess I could talk about the hidden curriculum in terms of that all of the readers in the class have been very white focused. I was able to bring in, well through talking to my [mentor teacher], saying how I wanted to bring in more culturally responsive texts, [they've] then been able to get some. And now we've got books that are written in complete te reo. We've been translating for students, and it's all song-based again so that's been cool. But … there's that hidden curriculum, te reo, Māori students being represented in text or [other ākonga culture] or [other ākonga culture]. (Jamie)

Jamie's praxis was significant for the enactment of culturally responsive critical pedagogy but was the only example of praxis in the data. Although learners and teachers can all undertake praxis (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008), Manaia and Jamie did not support ākonga to undertake societal critique, which prevented ākonga moving through critical consciousness into praxis.

Discussion and conclusion

This research investigated how two pre-service teachers on professional practice placement applied the culturally responsive critical pedagogy they learned through theory courses. The research found that the pre-service teacher participants, Manaia and Jamie, enacted culturally responsive critical pedagogy in four main ways, which generally align with the literature. The ways they applied the pedagogy were: reflecting on self and identity (Bartolomé, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Milne, 2017; Price-Dennis, 2009; Vavrus, 2002), centring ākonga (Bishop et al., 2007; Darder et al., 2017; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Milne, 2017; Price-Dennis, 2009), uplifting culture (Bishop et al., 2007; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Milne, 2017; Price-Dennis, 2009), and developing critical consciousness (Darder et al., 2017; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Milne, 2017; Price-Dennis, 2009).

However, literature (Bishop et al., 2007; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Milne, 2017) also promotes improved academic outcomes for non-dominant culture learners as a way of applying culturally responsive critical pedagogy. Despite literature regarding culturally responsive and critical pedagogies advocating steps to improve academic outcomes for non-dominant culture ākonga, this was not a theme that featured in the data, thus was not covered in the findings. There was no evidence in the observations, interviews, or written materials that this was a focus for Manaia or Jamie. That this was not found in the data highlights a gap given the importance literature places on this.

The four themes reflected by the practice of Manaia and Jamie received varied emphasis and did not necessarily align with the literature in terms of emphasis or practice. Teaching that centres ākonga was discussed with some importance in the interviews and was applied somewhat successfully through getting to know ākonga and making learning relevant. However, another aspect of centring ākonga, changed power relationships was not well engaged. Teaching that uplifts culture was assigned a varied emphasis: commitment to biculturalism led to teaching of te reo Māori, but there was less inclusion of tikanga or link to ākonga cultures. In terms of self and identity, Manaia and Jamie were aware of their identities but the link to the placement was not strong and self-development was more focused on teaching practice than self-critique. Critical consciousness, although important in literature (Darder et

al., 2017; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Milne, 2017; Price-Dennis, 2009), was the weakest of these four themes. Jamie engaged in praxis, but Manaia and Jamie only considered critical consciousness in planning, and no attempt was made to support ākonga to develop in this way.

Manaia and Jamie's commitment to biculturalism and use of te reo Māori connected culturally responsive critical pedagogy to the Aotearoa New Zealand context. Recent Teaching Council (2019) changes to the ways in which ITE providers develop their programmes have placed increased emphasis on supporting pre-service teachers gain to competency in te reo Māori. This research offers some practice examples in ways Manaia and Jamie used te reo, as an Aotearoa New Zealand application of uplifting culture within culturally-responsive critical pedagogy. The findings suggest that Manaia and Jamie could have gained from further support in tikanga, te reo for beyond the classroom, progressing learners, and assessing progress, including prior learning.

This research hopes to make a contribution to literature by linking literature about ways of applying culturally responsive critical pedagogy to ITE in Aotearoa New Zealand. In investigating how two pre-service teachers apply culturally responsive critical pedagogy, this research acknowledges the calls of Duncan-Andrade and Morrell (2008) and Prince-Dennis (2009) for ITE to give pre-service teachers opportunities to practically apply critical pedagogy. By offering practice examples of two pre-service teachers, it hopes to move forward ITE discussion about culturally-responsive critical pedagogy, taking it from the lecture hall into the spaces where pre-service teachers practise their craft. This small study calls for further research into the emphasis ITE theory courses and professional practice placements give to improving achievement and educational outcomes for non-dominant culture ākonga. As a small study it leaves questions unanswered and offers space for broader research into application of culturally responsive critical pedagogy; for example, through larger participant numbers or of teachers at significant stages of their careers.

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