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**Utilizing Culturally Responsive Pedagogical Practices in Māori Primary Schools**

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### **Abstract**

To respond to the rising trend of globalization internationally in most educational contexts, education systems must adapt the ways that schooling is offered for diverse students from all backgrounds, instead of keeping the prevalent Global North and Eurocentric epistemologies and educational paradigms. Teachers must realize the imminent need for adequate schooling that matches students from diverse backgrounds and their home surrounding cultures. This is why culturally responsive models for schools are being implemented, to address the inequities within education and the socioeconomic and political factors that seep into schools from the students' homes. One key group of students that require culturally inclusive and responsive learning are Indigenous students who have been oppressed historically in schools, as they were not allowed to access their home languages, cultures, customs, and knowledge within the classrooms.

This thesis adopts a literature review framework; it aims to address the theoretical backgrounds of culturally relevant and responsive learning and teaching, which is consolidated into culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP). Frameworks of critical, emancipatory, and transformative education from Freire (2014) are also integrated as one of the core conceptual foundations. Then, the literature review specifically examines CRP in the context of Indigenous schooling and its further applications to Māori education, especially the methodology and praxis teachers utilize to implement CRP in Indigenous classrooms. Different Kaupapa (policy), Tikanga (customary practice), and Mātauranga (knowledge) Māori are woven together to shed light on the effects of different culturally inclusive approaches within Māori education. The objective is that this investigation into culturally responsive Māori pedagogy would serve as a starting point for further research into a more comprehensive model of CRP for Māori education.

Keywords: culturally relevant pedagogy, culturally responsive pedagogy, Indigenous education, Māori education, Te Ao (worldview) Māori, Tikanga (customary practice) Māori, Mātauranga (knowledge)

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## 1. Introduction

“Whakataka te hau ki te uru,  
 Whakataka te hau ki te tonga.  
 Kia mākinakina ki uta,  
 Kia mātaratara ki tai.  
 E hī ake ana te atakura.  
 He tio, he huka, he hauhū.  
 Tihei Mauri Ora!”

“Cease oh winds of the west  
 and of the south  
 Let the bracing breezes flow,  
 over the land and the sea.  
 Let the red-tipped dawn come  
 with a sharpened edge, a touch of frost,  
 a promise of a glorious day.”

– Karakia (Wellington City Council, 2012)

This karakia was offered every day in the morning to start the day off at my practice school in Porirua, Wellington, New Zealand to calm the winds and prepare us for the start and rest of the school day. The story it narrates is that of Takitimu, who survived a storm when exploring the coast of South Westland, because his waka (ship) was well-built and managed. It reminds us that even if great natural forces can harm us, we can respond in harmony with nature and our ancestors’ response by working hard to prepare for the hardships it offers, which will in the end, reward us with physical and spiritual warmth and calm. To begin the thesis, I offer this karakia.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) ensures strengthening Indigenous institutions through sharing responsibility with the community for “the upbringing, ...education, and wellbeing of their children, consistent with the rights of the child”, and emphasizes the importance for Indigenous people to exercise their right to self-determination, cultural traditions and customs, and holistic development (UN General Assembly, 2007, p. 5). UNDRIP provides an adequate theoretical framework for quality Indigenous education and children’s well-being through Indigenous epistemologies and praxes and serves as a solid underlying reasoning for investigating this issue of (culturally responsive) Indigenous schooling. Affirming the previous studies of many educational researchers, Lynch & Rata (2017) highlight the necessity for Indigenous education to employ a “curriculum [that] incorporates sociocultural horizontal knowledge...through identity affirming culturally responsive pedagogical initiatives” (p. 392). Based in Aotearoa New Zealand, Lynch & Rata (2017) found that the collective response from teachers for the most quality Māori educational

approach is combining sociocultural horizontal knowledge with vertical academic competence, to address the need for educational accomplishment as well as support for their backgrounds and (cultural) identity.

To improve the educational mismatch of affirming methodology for Indigenous students internationally, the assumed normative culture of the dominant white middle-class Eurocentric or focusing on Global Northern values and expectations has to be overturned and reconstructed (Lynch & Rata, 2017). In many contexts with Indigenous populations, such as Canada, USA, and South Africa, suggestions have been made that Indigenous students should be exposed to and interact with knowledge that is both relevant to their lives and connected with the world that they've oriented themselves in, instead of an authoritarian colonial approach that reinforces societal inequalities through undemocratic practices (Munroe et al., 2013). This way, students of all backgrounds can utilize diverse cultural knowledge and experiences to participate in more culturally relevant and applied learning that relates to their everyday lives and local contexts (Lynch & Rata, 2017). The intended end objective is that through such an approach “when academic knowledge and skills are situated within the lived experiences and frames of reference of [these] students, they [become] more personally meaningful” (Gay, 2002, p. 106).

Although Chen's (2023) study was conducted on preschool teachers, the theoretical importance of non-Indigenous teachers working with Indigenous students still applies to those working in the primary stage. In Eastern Taiwan, where Chen's (2023) research context was based and where my first experience working with Indigenous children was, the cruciality for non-Indigenous teachers to learn alongside their Indigenous students is even greater, as that is the most practical and closest to accurate proximity they can exercise their contextual multicultural literacy. Especially as a non-Indigenous teacher, where Indigenous knowledge, worldviews, and praxis come in second-hand processes, it is essential to gain a deep understanding of their (Indigenous) students' cultures, so that we may keep practicing holistic cultural consciousness and applying this awareness to our teaching (Chen, 2023).

In this continuous journey of searching for non-mainstream knowledge, as a non-Indigenous researcher and future educator, I should be more than open to deconstructing and reconstructing the current onto-epistemological underpinnings that guide my research and practice, as Chen (2023) and Pidgeon & Riley (2021) have suggested. Freire's (2021) concept of critical consciousness in education – critical pedagogy, can be employed to structurally support

Chen's (2023) findings of critical reflexivity as a praxis for non-Indigenous educators working with Indigenous backgrounds. In *Education for Critical Consciousness* (2023), Freire coins the term conscientization or critical consciousness as representing the transcendence of discrimination and prejudice, interpreting the world through a critical lens, taking action against oppression to break the systemic injustice inflicted upon the disadvantaged, minority, and reach a renewed understanding and practice of justice.

To connect it back to the direct role of critical conscientization within education, Montaña et al. (2010) emphasize the importance of teachers as adopting the practices and roles of an activist in order to "not only possess [teaching] competence" but to also embody the social justice agenda as "student advocates". There are many approaches to being a critical educator teaching through activism, but the central conceptualization is the disrupting action-reflection praxis, where action, reflection, and dialogue are integratively engaged altogether (Freire, 2014). As Montaña et al. (2010) have synthesized, where teacher activists are participating in the progress of socio-political movements and bringing about real concrete change interdisciplinarily, they're demonstrating transformative pedagogy. This is representative of taking on the challenge of fighting educational injustice, through forms of social and political inequity in our institutions, policies, and processes (Montaña et al., 2010).

These realistic Indigenous pedagogical applications are really meaningful to learn about as an Asian non-Indigenous researcher and future educator. In Moriarty & Bennet's (2016) study based in predominantly-Indigenous schools with nomadic backgrounds, it was crucial for practicing teachers to be scaffolded by consciously informed Indigenous theories of knowledge, adequate expert guidance, as well as early exposure to developing social justice practices. Having stayed in Porirua, a suburb region in Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand for a two-month teaching practice, I understand and relate to the experiences, struggles, and continuing directions of the starting teachers' reflections in Australia. It was with great honor that I could build a trusting relationship with the students in my class there, and although sometimes not explicitly addressed, culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy was always a fundamental value and a big responsibility, as well as extensive training within professional staff development meetings. Although it was difficult to learn a whole new language of Te Reo Māori, it came with rewarding feelings of accomplishment and a sense of purpose.

Considering the apparent sociopolitical, economic, and educational disparities many Māori students face in their families, backgrounds, and iwi (community), this requires deep investigation into more appropriate responsive educational paradigms that better fit their needs and the upbringing that Māori students are socialized into (Clark et al., 2018; Grant et al., 2010). Orange (2011) states that the Treaty of Waitangi, the founding document of Aotearoa New Zealand in 1840, ensures the partner-relationship between European Pākehā and Māori people groups informed by respect and protection towards Māori self-determination, agency, and equity. In which Baskerville (2008) suggests, that the treaty should provide a certain implication for quality education, where Māori students engage in schooling that matches their backgrounds and is relatable, given the same educational resources, and excel at the same levels, compared to their Pākehā counterparts. This research is an attempt at gaining a deeper understanding and expertise of culturally relevant/responsive Indigenous education frameworks, and further reflecting and critiquing the gathered knowledge. The hope is that the information used can be built upon by further research to propose a new comprehensive model of culturally responsive pedagogy for Indigenous Māori education. As an effort to improve Indigenous-majority collaboration and exchange of effective communication, successful knowledge of educational theory, and working practices, so that human communities can be challenged to foster compassionate interconnections, this thesis is an endeavor to tackle the current world issues by starting with improving Indigenous (Māori) education and continuing the crucial work of deconstructing and reforming education praxes that lift up students who are oppressed (Huaman, 2023). I hope this inspires you to look at the closest relevant social justice issue near you, and start from there.

## **2. Research methodology**

*Research questions, research design, philosophical underpinnings, specific methods*

1. How does literature discuss culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) in theory and practice in Māori education?

*Sub-questions*

The following sub-questions will be used to supplement and guide the research process:

1. What does culturally relevant pedagogy mean in the Māori context?
2. How are Māori values being integrated into pedagogical approaches in schools?



As critical Indigenous research methodologies (CIRM) resemble the lens, topic, and mode of my research procedure the most comprehensively, it will be the research methodological framework informing my research, so that Indigenous ways of knowing (epistemologies), being (ontology), and doing (axiology) will be the center of this research process (Brown & Strega, 2015). Given the oppressive history of Indigenous peoples and their education, this thesis will be using CIRM along with a critical pedagogical perspective and elements of decoloniality and emancipatory education to inform the research process. Resources that resemble or specifically follow the characteristics of any of the previously stated theoretical frameworks will be investigated and examined. To progress upon CIRM, Linda Tuhiwai Smith cultivated the structural foundations of Kaupapa Māori research, which attempts to build upon previously conducted research, claim back the space of validity for Māori involvement – “knowledge, language, and culture”, and strengthen the credibility of Māori research by applying these approaches. Kaupapa Māori is also culturally relevant and emancipatory by practicing the goals of critical theory, which fits the core elements of my research (Smith, 2021). An opportunity is offered to the Māori collective community to take back their humanity, agency, and self-determination in a decolonial manner, as Smith (2021) proposes.

### *2.1. Research design*

This investigation into culturally relevant/responsive pedagogy is conducted through the process of a literature review, specifically a semi-systematic narrative review, where the aim is to assess, critique, and analyze literature by different aspects, so that it could potentially suggest foundations for a new conceptual model (Snyder, 2019). Culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy (CRP) was initially developed by scholars Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995) and Geneva Gay (2000), both from the US African American context, but its actualization in Māori education is still limited, being researched, and implemented, meaning that there are diverse perspectives and applications in different areas of Māori education. Therefore, this justifies the methodological approach of analyzing different theoretical perspectives, common issues, and different themes, from the various realizations of CRP in different school subjects, to the forms of inclusion, social justice education, values-based education, and finally, teacher-student relationship (Snyder, 2019; Stucki, 2012). With the emergent nature of this research topic, the data collection process will integrate the aforementioned different pedagogical paradigms,

subjects, and stakeholders, utilizing the foundational frameworks and adjacent theories proposed by Ladson-Billings and Gay, as well as gathering more recent data published in the last 25 years to draw from current applications (Snyder, 2019). Aside from two resources published in 1985 and 1995 that informed and structured the main framework of CRP in this thesis, most research used will be implemented from a time frame of 2000-2024. This is to ensure the relevance of its conceptual frameworks, applications, strategies, praxes, and further implications, as the topic at hand discusses the culturally relevant and responsive inclusive education for Indigenous Māori education. The following databases have been used in the information searching phase: Scopus, Taylor & Francis, ProQuest, Oula-Finna, EBSCOhost, Sage Journals, ResearchGate, ERIC, JSTOR, Elsevier: ScienceDirect, and other miscellaneous academic resource databases. The data analysis phase will include critically examining and organizing the previously garnered research to form a detailed understanding of the complex categories of CRP in Māori education. This is to solidify the groundwork for further research to be conducted to synthesize a comprehensive model in the future that involves all aspects of CRP, including evaluation and assessment processes, as well as collaboration between stakeholders, families and communities, and multi-professional experts (Snyder, 2019).

### **3. Theoretical and conceptual foundations of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy (CRP)**

#### **3.1. Critical pedagogy (for the oppressed)**

“This then is the great humanistic and historical task of the oppressed: to liberate themselves and their oppressors as well. The oppressors, who oppress, exploit and rape by virtue of their power, cannot find in this power the strength to liberate either the oppressed or themselves. Only power that springs from the weakness of the oppressed will be sufficiently strong to free both.”

Paolo Freire: *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2014, p. 44)

Freire (2014) discusses the concept of the oppressed rehumanizing the oppressors and the oppressed, where the oppressed yearn for freedom and justice in the face of injustice, exploitation, violence, and oppression from the oppressors. He unpacks that the dehumanization process forced upon the oppressed distorts their identity as a human being, so that they're

struggling for emancipation, overcoming alienation, and affirmation as people (Freire, 2014). Freire (2014) further explains that this rehumanization is characterized by true intention which precisely fights to destroy the causes of false allyship, and turns these efforts into genuine strife, so that the world is transformed when less and less imploring hands have to beg for being perceived and treated as human. In giving the duty of liberation as a lifetime work for the oppressed, Freire (2014) elaborates that only the oppressed will understand the necessity and meaning of transformation, and its praxis, quest, and journey, due to their experiences of the effects and significance of oppression. Freire (2014) concludes by remarking the key instrument of this fight for liberation as an act of love that counters the heartlessness that centers the very act of the oppressors' violence itself, in careful reflection to not take on the only reality known to the oppressed as tougher oppressors to others – prolonging the cyclic systematic injustice. In order to reclaim the humanity that they've lost without also becoming one of the oppressors, Freire (2014) coins the process a critical intervention and analyzes the need to also emerge and turn back from oppression by reflecting, acting, and critically thinking in deep conscientization about the reality that is constructed to oppress. According to Freire (2014), the pedagogy of the oppressed can then also be known as the pedagogy of humankind, animated by authentic, humanist generosity, which needs to be conducted in collaboration with the oppressors systematically, supplemented by political action on behalf of the oppressors to restructure the educational framework, and in various projects.

In practice, Freire (2014) promotes the reconstruction of education where the teachers and the students simultaneously take on each other's roles interchangeably throughout the process, where inquiry, independent agentic thought, dialogue and discussion, creativity, accumulation, and transformation are also incorporated. Freire (2014) details the specifics of transforming the structure of normative education into a paradigm that allows the oppressed, marginalized, and othered to become "beings for themselves", so that they can participate in student conscientization (p. 74). Furthermore, Freire (2014) expands the concept of being a humanist, revolutionary educator by practicing mutual humanization in critical thinking, conducted with profound trust in humanity and their creative power, where they adopt the role of being partners with the students and forming deep relationships with them. "Solidarity requires true communication" and each context is unique to its environment, so the educators must take on an accommodated approach to communicate to truly hold meaning in human life; that is when

their thinking is validated by the students' thinking and becomes authentically about reality (Freire, 2014, p. 77). In the end, Freire (2014) stresses the importance of being committed to liberation by rejecting traditional education systems and adopting a concept of people with the capability of being critically conscious in intentionality. On the concept of situating oneself in a specific context, Freire (2014) discusses rooting oneself in an environment or circumstance where one can be reflexive of their own situationality within those bounds, by being critical about the conditions of existence for a particular situation. By this, Freire (2014) refers to the commitment to emerging from one's positionality to practice effective intervention as a result of conscientization, deepening the attitude of awareness.

### **3.2. Emancipatory pedagogy**

To extend Freire's (2014) notion of education, the theory of critical pedagogy (of the oppressed) is also further developed into emancipatory pedagogy, where education is the key instrument in creating a just and democratic society, as Nouri and Sajjadi (2014) have examined in their research for the aims, principles, and curriculum orientation of what this pedagogical approach looks like in practice. In a global citizenship educational framework, Rieckmann (2020) has also elaborated that as transformative education revolutionizes attitudes, values, paradigms, and worldviews, it also contributes to critical discourses. Rieckmann (2020) further explains that transformative pedagogy also includes learner-centered approaches, action-oriented learning, reflection, participation, and empowerment as citizens of the society, which are attributed to characteristics within critical and emancipatory pedagogy frameworks as well. Therefore, it can be deduced that critical pedagogy and transformative education are similar schooling applications and can be used somewhat interchangeably. On top of the core theories of critical pedagogy, Nouri and Sajjadi (2014) clarify that emancipatory education invites both teachers and students to "critically analyze the political and social issues as well as the consequences of social inequity" (p. 76). To achieve this, the curriculum must be constructed based on true dialogue that centers on social interaction, collaboration, authentic democracy, and self-reflexivity. Nouri and Sajjadi (2014) specify that in addition to scaffolding students to acquire knowledge, critical educators should also focus on an agenda that recognizes the power and politics in today's society that conducts acts of oppression and injustice. Rather, Nouri and Sajjadi (2014) outline that teachers and students together should realize the world's existing

inequities, especially in how they are present in the students' individual lives – explicit and hidden curriculum, and seek to break down and transform those injustices.

In the framework that applies emancipatory pedagogy in practice, Nouri and Sajjadi (2014) have identified three educational aims – humanization, critical conscientization, and establishing a problem-posing education system, which considers, negotiates, and transforms relationships in classroom teaching, knowledge interaction, institutional structures, and social relations in the immediate and wider community/society. Freire (2014) insists that education is always political, thus educators and students should take on the role of transformative intellectuals and cultural workers to address the oppressive inequities of the world (Nouri & Sajjadi, 2014). In terms of humanizing oneself and the world, Freire (2014) has characterized a pedagogy involving teachers and students to develop a critically conscious understanding of themselves, the world, and their relation to it (Nouri & Sajjadi, 2014). Conducting true dialogue is the main method of humanizing the world, through profound love, humility, mutual trust, hope, and critical thinking (Nouri & Sajjadi, 2014). Whereas for critical conscientization, Nouri and Sajjadi (2014) define Freire's process as learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, taking action against the oppressive elements of reality. In gaining intentional and contextual knowledge, students can then act on the learning with agency for change, which happens through true dialogue in a problem-posing education system (Nouri & Sajjadi, 2014). To establish such an education system, Nouri and Sajjadi (2014) analyze Freire's model as a pedagogy of questioning to discover reality through creativity, where teachers are also participants just as much as guiding support.

Nouri and Sajjadi (2014) identify that the educational principles of emancipatory pedagogy are: broadening students' views of reality, transformative, political, and based on true dialogue. Although students will face conflict that challenges them to reflect on the social nature of knowledge, they will ultimately be able to think with agency and participate in social transformation (Nouri & Sajjadi, 2014). Realizing a curriculum orientation of emancipatory pedagogy requires a collective dialogue that overcomes the hidden curriculum as it perpetuates the dominant hegemony and dehumanizes the minority (Nouri & Sajjadi, 2014). First, both teachers and students should be able to describe, critically reflect, and re-negotiate the complexity of power within education, so that teachers and students share the responsibility together, with the balance sometimes tipping over to the students (Nouri & Sajjadi, 2014). An

emancipatory-pedagogy-rooted curriculum should focus on the contextual culture and relatable everyday phenomena present in the students' lives, so they can analyze the historical patterns of power that inform the environment they're situated in and develop their own identity, whilst accessing critical inquiry and creative productivity (Nouri & Sajjadi, 2014). Dialogue being used as a self and peer assessment method was also offered as a means to evaluate the students' learning, so that students can critically analyze their own learning, knowledge, and experiences accordingly (Nouri & Sajjadi, 2014). The ultimate goal of applying transformative, emancipatory pedagogy is that students would have the tools to practice utilizing these competencies interdisciplinarily beyond the classroom (Nouri & Sajjadi, 2014). In conclusion, Nouri and Sajjadi (2014) suggested that aside from incorporating activities such as critiquing educational techniques and content with the students together, teachers should act as a supporting guide and respect the students' independence, in order to build an atmosphere that encourages critical investigation of the assumptions that construct our daily lives. Nouri and Sajjadi's (2014) research review also proposed for more efforts to be directed towards solidifying these educational applications in practice, redefining its aims, rethinking the role of school curriculum in an emancipatory framework, examining its effectiveness, and realizing instructional teacher training professional development programs.

### *3.2.1. Justifying a need for CRP*

As the rise of globalization and neoliberal capitalism sees the increase in immigration, population diversity, and standardized policy approaches, the schooling context and educational needs present in classrooms are changing to respond to support the current student population (Bishop, 2010). Globally, although the increase in student diversity is apparent, the improvement of diverse teachers is not progressing enough to address the disparities between the majority and minority children in the academic and socio-political conflicts they're facing in schools (Bishop, 2010). The consequential issues of insufficient diverse representation amongst teachers with adequate culturally responsive competence are the lack of variety in their cultural experiences, as well as their lack of understanding of the cultural cues of diverse backgrounds (Bishop, 2010). All in all, Bishop (2010) has also concluded the lowering of expectations in minority or disadvantaged student groups, whilst multicultural students also have a shortage of role models and advocates that they can look up to.

### **3.3. Culturally relevant pedagogy**

#### *3.3.1. To address diversity for multicultural students*

Researchers in both the Native Hawaiian and American contexts have found that “teaching can better match the home and community cultures of students of color”, especially those who have previously struggled in a context not fit for their learning or suited to their backgrounds. It was found that employing specific pedagogical ways, such as incorporating “talk-story” dialogue techniques or language interaction patterns that corresponded with the students’ home cultures, improved student achievement (Ladson-Billings, 1995). To more successfully interact with students to improve their achievement, Ladson-Billings (1995) analyzed from the African-American context that teachers should change the way they engage with their students to fit their cultures and behavioral characteristics, as mentioned also in Freire’s (2014) theory of critical pedagogy, to break cycles of oppression that reproduce and deepen the inequity existing in minority communities. Ladson-Billings (1995) progresses even further to expand culturally relevant pedagogical objectives to transform mainstream society in a way that also includes students from minority and disadvantaged groups as human, so that the goal of socializing into a hierarchical structure defined by meritocracy would be reconstructed and transformed into a framework that supports diverse student success (Freire, 2014).

Ladson-Billings (1995) compiles that as academic research about incorporating teaching and (student home) cultures progress, a lot of terminologies have been utilized to describe these different approaches that integrate either the student’s home language, a combination of home-school language interaction patterns, and home cultural backgrounds, such as “culturally compatible”, “relevant”, or “responsive” teaching. The focal purpose of these paradigms is to use one’s home culture as a guide to composing elements of their education (Jordan, 1985). In connection to Ladson-Billings’ (1995) conceptual framework of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP), Montaña et al.’s (2010) implications for teachers to adopt roles as activists and scaffold students’ ability as advocates and civic participants also align with the social justice and equity focused foundation in CRP. Ladson-Billings (1995) also utilizes the instrument of dialogue discussions to assess knowledge claims about the teacher participants in terms of their background, worldview, political perspectives, and professional identity, to attribute meaning to the observed classroom practices, which follows Freire’s (2014) theory of critical pedagogy using dialogue as a way of true transformation. Moreover, Ladson-Billings (1995) contemplates

the ethics of personal accountability, just as Freire (2014) did, where knowledge is situated in a specific context and the positionality of those engaging in these knowledges changes the way it's formed, perceived, delivered, and engaged in discourses.

In the African-American context, Ladson-Billings (1995) has synthesized that disturbingly but also not surprisingly, Black students in the mainstream education system had to conform to the dominant hegemony that the society functions under to achieve academically, otherwise those who were isolated from their peers would also be able to excel only because their teachers could not form pre-misconceptions about them. Therefore, a CRP must simultaneously negotiate mainstream education's academic demands and incorporate cultural affirmation and development for the students' identity (Ladson-Billings, 1995). For example, Ladson-Billings (1995) mentions some teachers utilizing pop culture references, such as rap, that are close to the students' backgrounds to segway into other literary art lessons, while others saw the leadership tendencies and social strengths in problematic behavior traits that were labeled onto some students, and guided them to become a positive group and schoolwide leadership influence. They affirmed and encouraged other students who were perceived as a troubled disturbance in other school contexts to utilize their cultural values and styles and to show up authentically as themselves, which then in turn, showed other students that they can be appreciated as they are in school (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Education centered on cultural competence became slowly adopted by more and more African American dominant schools; Ladson-Billings (1995) reports that many researchers have indicated this pedagogy to be both culturally and academically successful.

Like Freire (2014), Ladson-Billings (1995) stresses the importance of employing critical pedagogy, where teachers are aware of the systemic injustice and social inequities that influence students of minority backgrounds, so that the students may also be prompted to recognize the political underpinnings of education and their society within and beyond their classrooms. Students from Ladson-Billings' (1995) study participated in social civic action by identifying the inequities existing in their local community's urban planning and submitted proposal changes to the city council to change poorly used community spaces – vacant malls frequented for drug usage and other dangerous activities, as well as discriminatory delegations of areas to White- v.s. Black-dominant schools. While practicing interdisciplinary learning and cross-sector



collaboration, the students engaged in community-based issues and turned them into epistemological knowledge (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Although Ladson-Billings (1995) recognized differences in how culturally relevant teachers implemented pedagogical means into their classrooms – some were more strict and fixed, while others were more flexible and progressive, she organized three traits that most of these teachers exhibited to form the theoretical underpinnings that serve as a broad framework of CRP for educational research. The first of the CRP characteristics is the teachers' conception of self and others, where they would be avidly involved in the local community events or living in the neighborhood themselves. Whereas pedagogically, they believed that all their students had high academic capability, were culturally adaptive in their classes to address the needs of the present lesson and respond to culturally inaccurate misconceptions, perceived teaching as a way to give back to the community, and believed as Freire (2014) did in teaching as mining – to draw existing knowledge out of the students to scaffold new learning (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Secondly, the culturally relevant teachers ensured critically conscious, culturally competent social relations to maintain academic success by keeping a fluid reciprocating teacher-student relationship with little hierarchical power – giving opportunities to students to teach about their culture, developing a community of learners where students consult each other in discussions to play to each of their area strengths, and encouraging students to hold each other accountable in forms of formal and informal peer collaboration (Ladson-Billings, 1995). One teacher was also a master's student and she engaged the students in her learning objectives in weekly discussions, which in turn, exhibited in the language that the students adopted and higher ordered thinking they were able to conduct (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Lastly, these teachers who practiced CRP held concepts of fluid knowledge in collaboration and reconstruction, viewed critically, scaffolded, and involved multifaceted and diverse forms of assessments (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Building upon the communal social relations of collective wellbeing, examples were given of teachers who would ask the students to share presentations of their expertise, regardless of their relevance in academic schooling (Ladson-Billings, 1995). They were also critical of the stance, curriculum content, materials, and testing procedures, that the district policy entailed, and involved their students in digging deeper, critiquing, as well as resisting in allyship against problematic content (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Teachers would also encourage their students to always ask "Why?" and probe to academically

challenge knowledge that they took for granted before; they emphasized that just because it was stated through authority does not mean that it's justified, while questioning this also does not mean they demean the expertise of adult figures around them (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Students were encouraged, as observed by Ladson-Billings (1995), to regain their critically conscious mindset in viewing educational content, so that they can always re-evaluate and analyze knowledge that they encounter.

### **3.4. Culturally responsive pedagogy**

Building upon Ladson-Billings' (1995) paradigm of culturally relevant pedagogy from the African-American minority schooling context, Gay (2018) developed a similar model defining it as culturally responsive pedagogy instead. Perhaps progressing beyond the culturally relevant pedagogical framework that Ladson-Billings constructed, Gay (2018) focused on multicultural frames of references, emphasizing that culturally responsive education can be for students of all backgrounds simultaneously in the same learning space. For the sake of interchangeability considering the likemindedness of the two conceptual models, the term culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) will be applied throughout most of this thesis, as it gives a more updated and multifaceted perspective into today's educational context. Compared to Ladson-Billings' (1995) framework, Gay's (2018) also addresses the needs within education that arose from the current globalized world; her research keeps multiple international and cross-cultural perspectives (within the US) into account. In alignment with Ladson-Billings' (1995) CRP theoretical framework, Gay (2018) also stresses the potentiality and need for every student from all backgrounds to have the opportunity to learn with pedagogical methods that accommodate their ways of perceiving, thinking, and doing, which in this case, corresponds to the cultures that surround them. Like Ladson-Billings (1995), Gay (2018) identified the alarming disadvantaged environments most multicultural minority students grow up in and provided this CRP paradigm as an intervention and solution to the disparities these students face outside the school, which transfers over within their classrooms. Corresponding to Ladson-Billings's (1995) pedagogical technique of using the talk-story method with Hawaiian and Native American students, Gay (2018) also highlighted the importance of story-making and -telling, which makes one's teaching more personable, engaging, and understandable.

On improving student achievement, Gay (2018) offers six major premises that underpin CRP to address explicit and hidden stereotyping and racial discrimination, and deficit theorizing which turn into negative self-fulfilling prophesying about students' academic potential, which are as follows:

1. critically conscious cultural diversity acts as the ontological, epistemological, and axiological center of education,
2. multicultural students need inclusive proposals as implementation solutions to address the educational issues they experience,
3. intentionality requires action-based educational programs and procedures to ensure improvement and equity,
4. diverse cultural inclusion vitalizes and strengthens the pedagogical praxis, engagement, and response for multicultural students,
5. competence is complex, contextual, and evolving, which means that teachers should hold high expectations of students regardless of their achievements in one particular area,
6. and assessment results simply indicate areas of further growth, while also reflecting a lot of seemingly hidden factors, such as stress provoked by racial prejudice and inequity.

Gay (2018) concluded that if educational programs aim to achieve highly, they must account for the rights of quality education for all, including multicultural and racially diverse students; by practicing culturally inclusive policies and curriculum applications, multicultural students can show up to school as themselves, without having to sacrifice their identity to survive the academic and social contexts of schooling. To accomplish this, Gay (2018) suggests that students develop socio-civic relational competencies so that they can connect multi- and cross-culturally in knowledge, values, ways of doing, care, and the sharing of power, resources, and responsibilities. Furthermore, Gay (2018) points out the inherent nature of humanity being diverse, as well as the imperative need and positive impact of intra-cultural collaboration, considering this sparks creativity and innovation, not to mention the resulting relationships and human connection.

## **4. Context for implementing culturally responsive Indigenous Māori education**

### **4.1. Challenges for culturally responsive Māori education**

#### *4.1.1. A need for CRP in the Māori educational context*

As Orange (2011) writes, the Treaty of Waitangi (1840), the founding document establishing Aotearoa New Zealand as a nation-state, upholds that the British Crown, which governs the country, should continue to honor the power-sharing relationship between the Pākehā European and Māori people, based on principles of protection, partnership, and participation. Baskerville (2008) gathers that the treaty has certain implications for education, prompting the government to respect and preserve the autonomy that Māori people possess, where Māori students should be able to succeed in their learning to the same extent as Pākehā students in education.

In Savage et al.'s (2011) mixed-method research, the connection between teacher professional development and student experiences collected through interviews was drawn. Savage et al. (2011) first compiled the education context for Aotearoa New Zealand and the imminent reason why culturally responsive education should be implemented to address the educational disparities for the Māori students. Because of the Pākehā cultural domination in the Aotearoa New Zealand education system, aside from Māori immersion schools, the more common English-medium schools provide education where the mono-cultural Global North Pākehā practices suppress and silence the Māori heritage, culture, and language, in ways that disjoint the students' home backgrounds and alienate the disadvantaged minority students further (Savage et al., 2011). Not to mention the low expectations and deficit theorizing that the education system as attributed to Māori students, as well as remedial programs that redirect the problem as the students' and their parents' sole responsibility, this issue is demonstrated in the high suspension rates, over-representation in special education, low educational attainment, and leaving school early with fewer qualifications than their Pākehā counterparts (Ministry of Education, 2006). Because schools are a cultural environment that reflects what the students bring in with them from their backgrounds outside of school, teachers and parents can collaborate to utilize these funds of knowledge in the curricula and in practice to support all diverse students and validate the cultural knowledge that all students are presenting, especially those who are at a more vulnerable position and require to be seen and valued more (Timperley et al., 2007).

#### *4.1.2. Denying students' holistic epistemological identity-building*

Lynch & Rata (2017) propose that the Ministry of Education's (MOE) implementation of Kaupapa (Māori values-, principles-, and ideas-based philosophy) Māori initiatives acting as a solution to educational improvement, also incorporates sociocultural horizontal knowledge that critically presents diverse epistemologies and disrupts unequal power relations within the current political context. Regardless of the presence (or absence) of research-based justifications for these culturally responsive practices within Māori education, policy documents, such as the MOE's Kia Eke Panuku initiative – although no longer in use past 2015, assume and suggest a connecting link between cultural identity development and educational accomplishment (Lynch & Rata, 2017). The underlying paradoxical reason for drawing these connections was an educational productive need for an agenda and objective to scaffold cultural identity, with the hidden intention of rejecting diverse Māori purposes purely for cultural revitalization and preservation and no other external purposes (Lynch & Rata, 2017). The case study concluded with the finding that the participating teachers were contradictingly denying the students the right to an “epistemological” identity, fully fledged with Māori knowledges and ways of doing, but encouraging cultural identities for the sake of educational achievement (Lynch & Rata, 2018). Sometimes, this progresses to the point that if the student does not already have a developed Māori cultural identity, it would be decided for them by external factors, either from the school or their surroundings (Lynch & Rata, 2018).

Meanwhile, the ruling government at the time was also enacting neoliberal economic policies that ignored the economically and socially challenging situations many urban Māori lived in (Lynch & Rata, 2017). In response, many Māori-incorporated immersion or bilingual schools began to offer decolonialized education for Māori children to expand the present socially accepted Māori identity as well as break down the assumed political and social structures of the Global Northern hegemony (Weir, 2012). However, the issue then became the reintegration transition process back into English-medium schools once students advanced to a certain grade level without the options of Māori-medium schooling anymore (Weir, 2012). The teachers who were interviewed in Lynch and Rata's (2018) study expressed concerns for their students regarding school advancement and future (working) success. Teachers further disclosed that they had an apparent dilemma to choose either culturally responsive pedagogy and forego an

academically sound future or vice versa so that the students could access smooth transitions into future education (Lynch & Rata, 2018).

#### **4.2. Justifying CRP for Indigenous education**

From the Native American context, Castagno and Brayboy (2008) advocate that although culturally responsive schooling (CRS) has been offered and implemented in Indigenous contexts, the effects and improvements of this have been reduced to essentialization, meaningless generalization, and trivial anecdotes, which means that CRS should be revitalized to better suit the practicalities of Indigenous education. To achieve this, Castagno and Brayboy (2008) propose that a central objective on self-determination, anti-racism, and Indigenous epistemologies should be integrated and focused on, in order to successfully practice CRS. In terms of practicality, Castagno and Brayboy (2008) analyze that CRS takes on a firm grounding in the heritage language and Indigenous culture, and is an essential element of culturally responsive educators, curriculum, and schools, because it is a fundamental requirement for the development of culturally well-rounded students. Not only does this call for a shift in teaching methodology, curricular materials, teacher dispositions, and school-community relations, but especially a need to address the educational disparities that exist amongst Indigenous students compared to their White counterparts, hence demanding a systematic change (Castagno and Brayboy, 2008). Due to the cultural mismatch of schooling for Indigenous students and the low expectations and achievement gaps this leads to, Castagno and Brayboy (2008) suggest that a reformation of schooling in culturally responsive manners must be realized.

Castagno and Brayboy (2008) explain that although constructed from the Global North research context, culture is both fluid and dynamic, as well as fixed and stable, such as many Indigenous peoples identify theirs to be relational to an anchor in the sea, moving and swaying with the ebbs and flows and changing tides, while being rooted in the ocean floor. To elaborate, Castagno and Brayboy (2008) add that Indigenous peoples have had to adapt and change for their communal progress, but have held on to some ontological and epistemological traditions and ceremonies. This implies that Indigenous education also works similarly, and that as education is shifting, so must the educators; Castagno and Brayboy (2008) indicate that teachers engaging in CRS must also have a certain level of cultural competence themselves to teach to and through the needs and strengths of Indigenous students (Gay, 2018). Castagno and Brayboy

(2008) specify that obtaining cultural competence entails complex awareness and sensitivity, diverse bodies of knowledge, and skill sets to compose CRS. Like Freire's (2014) theory of critical pedagogy, Castagno and Brayboy (2008) describe a culturally responsive curriculum as validating the cultures and languages of students and allowing them to adopt roles to co-construct knowledge in schools, which involves interdisciplinary infusions of rich connections to the students' backgrounds within family and community contexts to the curriculum. Similar to Freire's (2014) educational model, Castagno and Brayboy (2008) express a holistic pedagogy that incorporates critical thinking, cooperative learning, and self-reflexivity through personal reflection and staff development.

Next, Castagno and Brayboy (2008) discuss the importance of addressing the effects of racism and oppression on CRS for Indigenous students, especially in identifying the role it plays in their academic achievement, as well as combating and improving the need for and effectiveness of CRS. In response to this imminent issue, Castagno and Brayboy (2008) inform the criticality for teachers to understand the complexity of racism that influences Indigenous students, in ways such as but not limited to patronizing, stereotyping, discrimination, harmful assumptions, low expectations, biased curricula, belittlement of their experiences, and finally, systemic inequities. Furthermore, Castagno and Brayboy (2008) establish the significance of honoring Indigenous epistemologies, meaning the generational knowledge that is developed, practiced, and sustained by Indigenous civilizations, on top of their sovereignty. Like McLennan et al. 2021 have depicted, Castagno and Brayboy (2008) illustrate components of these knowledge systems being woven together in craft, centering on community, relationality, responsibility to self and community, rooting in place, and responsible use of power. As a reminder, Castagno and Brayboy (2008) mention the diversity that exists within Indigenous groups as well, implicating educators to remember the different ways Indigenous community members may perceive their identity and practice their culture, and being vigilant of the multiple existing valid epistemologies which connect tightly to education. Moreover, Castagno and Brayboy (2008) extend that Indigenous knowledge is constructed of a unified and complex reality that should not be situated on opposing ends of Global North perspectives, but rather a centered and balanced way to reinterpret Eurocentric education.

Additionally, Castagno and Brayboy (2008) emphasize that educators should accommodate Indigenous students in their learning styles and ways of understanding, especially

one that utilizes holistic perspectives and Indigenous strengths, such as spatial, musical, interpersonal, and bodily kinesthetics, although it is important to note the misassigned assumption these expectations might entail. Thus, Castagno and Brayboy (2008) suggest that by leaning into the Indigenous students' strengths, which show commonalities amongst those from the same community, despite individual differences, their education can involve higher levels of achievement. On the similarity of learning preferences, Castagno and Brayboy (2008) analyze that culture is the impacting factor at play, which includes visual, hands-on, connecting to real life, direct experiences, realistic, holistic, creative, reflective, and collaborative. However, Castagno and Brayboy (2008) still caution against essentializing and generalizing Indigenous students' learning styles, so that educators may employ multiple teaching techniques in different contexts. In conclusion, Castagno and Brayboy (2008) pose that these effective pedagogical strategies that benefit Indigenous students are also effective for all students to succeed academically, when teachers can tailor the curriculum and instructions to suit their students' needs better.

Furthermore, Castagno and Brayboy (2008) describe that teachers should be aware of and utilize the specific cultural tendencies and practices that Indigenous students are socialized to exhibit, especially in ways of staying engaged, showing respect, retaining the willingness to impact others, and linguistic and social interactions, which differ from their White counterparts. Castagno and Brayboy (2008) have reviewed that many researchers identify the act of starting their learning encounters by simply observing and listening, instead of being visibly active in engaging with the class, despite the potential complications of this trait being a stereotype perpetuated by White scholars. However, similar to what Ladson-Billings (1995) and Gay (2018) have concluded about CRP for multicultural students, Castagno and Brayboy (2008) gather that Indigenous students' class participation and learning improve when teachers employ effective teaching methods informed by their cultural background. To achieve this, Castagno and Brayboy (2008) offer culturally responsive Indigenous education methods such as being conscious of matching the students' pace of doing, community art and imagery, integrating oral and written community histories into the curriculum, teaching by observing, working from the students' strengths, and inviting community elders and other members to hold lessons. Then, Castagno and Brayboy (2008) follow up with a set of values that may be useful in Indigenous CRS – generosity and collaboration, independence and freedom, respect for elders and wisdom,



connectedness and love, courage and responsibility, indirect communication and noninterference, and silence, reflection, and spirit. Ultimately, Castagno and Brayboy (2008) suggest the final outcome of CRS should be a transformative remaking of Indigenous education in the form of drastic systematic change. In stating this, Castagno and Brayboy (2008) further emphasize the need for self-determination, anti-racism, and Indigenous epistemologies to be at the center of Indigenous CRS.

Finally, Castagno and Brayboy (2008) collect the anticipated results of CRS by stating that the hope of implementing this framework for Indigenous students is that they would realize the value and potential of their community's collective histories and knowledge by restoring and revitalizing Indigenous information and integrating it interdisciplinarily. Castagno and Brayboy (2008) warn educators of the implications of transmitting a certain culture regardless of their intentions, which prompts a collective call from Indigenous parents, youth, and leaders for critically conscious employment of CRS instead, so that Indigenous values, beliefs, knowledge, and norms are prioritized. Aside from the broader objective of cultural awakening, Castagno and Brayboy (2008) also mention the educational successes CRS should bring, such as effective student confidence, identity, and character development, strengthened well-being, positive behavior, achievement, keeping students in school for longer, respect for elders, and communal and civic engagement.

### **4.3. Why CRP Māori education? A look into the current sociopolitical and economic context**

#### *4.3.1. Maori students' health and well-being in schools*

Having gone through significant social change post-colonization, the collective Māori well-being is still experiencing the combined effects of intergenerational trauma and interpersonal and structural racism (Clark et al., 2018). This is evident for Māori youth in terms of “health, education, and social disparities”, in categories of poorer physical, mental, and sexual health, as well as more substance use, compared to Pākehā (New Zealand/Aotearoa European) students (Clark et al., 2018, p. 553). In their quantitative study examining the trends of Māori secondary school students' health and wellbeing between 2001, 2007, and 2012, analyzing the Youth2000 survey data to compare Māori students' results to their European/Pākehā counterparts, Clark et al. (2018) found that overall health amongst Māori secondary school

students is improving, which shows the multidisciplinary strategies that have been employed in the past 12 years from 2001 to 2012 has gathered successful results. However, the ongoing systemic racism and discrimination, which connects strongly to a perpetuated bias in Aotearoa New Zealand health and social services, has led to 25.5% of Māori students experiencing prejudice at school, in healthcare, or with the police (Clark et al., 2018). Although whānau support within the community has mediated some of the health inequities between Māori and Pākehā, the persistent disparities experienced by Māori youth compared to Pākehā students are still attributed to disproportionate systemized marginalization and socioeconomic disadvantages, as is stated also from the Native American context by Castagno and Brayboy (2008) (Clark et al., 2018; Grant et al., 2010).

Reporting on the secondary school context, which gives some sort of representation of the extended primary school context once students progress and transition into further schooling, Clark et al. (2018) did however acknowledge that the secondary school focus in the Youth2000 survey findings was more likely to portray circumstances of more “stable socio-cultural environments, compared to those who were absent” (p. 560). This perhaps indicates that the socioeconomic disparities within the primary school context can be even greater. Aside from the possibility of a lower response rate and reliability/validity issues coming from Māori students’ responses compared to their Pākehā/European counterparts, Clark et al.’s (2018) data analysis suggests that while prioritizing resources to reduce inequities does make a difference in substance abuse and dangerous vehicle usage, solutions should be proposed to improve the physical, mental, and sexual health issues driven by the factors of poverty, including access to healthcare. Furthermore, Clark et al. (2018) call for a signal to “transform discriminatory policies, practices, and procedures [to support] systematically disadvantaged Māori youth and their whānau...through [various] poverty alleviation strategies” (p. 560).

Building off of this current context, Grant et al. (2010) elaborates that although schools usually have little influence over the external factors that affect the lives of their students beyond the school environment, they do present opportunities and time to provide relationships and space for sustainable effects on youth development and wellbeing. Accounting for the Māori secondary student population misrepresentation in the overall school context addressed by Clark et al. (2018), Grant et al. (2010) specified that even if most Māori students had rates of around 74-97% high educational aspirations, motivation, school belonging, safety, and perceived

importance of education from their caregivers, only 49% of students felt that they got along with their teachers and were treated fairly most of the time. Although both Clark et al. (2018) and Grant et al.'s (2010) data analysis of the Youth2000 survey results provided a positive trend in most categories of health and wellbeing for Māori secondary school students, the apparent disparities remain, where 45.8% of Māori students live in neighborhoods of high deprivation compared to 12.6% of their Pākehā counterparts, yielding for opportunities to address these issues directly. Grant et al. (2010) prompted policymakers, educators, and health professionals to exercise their responsibility to listen and take the necessary actions to ensure that all youth are provided the opportunity and environment to grow and develop into fully-fledged and healthy versions of themselves.

### **5. Following implications for educators**

The Youth2000 survey results and analysis from Clark et al. (2018) and Grant et al. (2010) offer some starting points for educators working with Māori students in these contexts. Despite Grant et al.'s (2010) general indication for all students of all backgrounds, not just Māori students, their conclusions stress the importance for teachers to provide students an environment to feel connected and supported, as well as have a sense of belonging, regardless of their culture, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or background, especially for those who are normally marginalized for these parts of themselves. Grant et al. (2010) unpack the characteristics of holistic school support and connection as an adequately high expectation for school success and structure for student learning, caring adult-student relationships, and feelings of safety, which does present the contradictory dilemma of students feeling cared for by the staff, but less perceive that they're treated fairly. In turn, as Bishop & Berryman (2010) have established in their Te Kotahitanga project, these students will be able to achieve better in the classroom and progress to their actual ability and potential. Bishop et al. (2003) have also stated in their study that several working strategies to implement educational improvement are teacher training and support, peer support groups, grouping students with shared experiences together, and school-wide policies and support.

Grant et al. (2010) then expand on the methods to improve school connection in terms of students facing adversity and behavior or mental health issues by stating the need for a dual strategy to risk prevent, manage, and intervene, as well as build resilience with tools to handle

challenging situations. This requires multi-professional collaboration from experts who can provide comprehensive assessments in healthcare working together with the relevant school staff to identify specific risks such as abuse, mental health issues, violence, substance abuse, etc (Grant et al., 2010). At the same time, the dual strategy approach calls for the responsible school staff and cross-sector experts to work with the students and utilize their strengths to “build the skills and competencies that foster a sense of belonging and engagement with the school” (Grant et al., 2010, p. 191). Several multidisciplinary stakeholders, such as teachers, nurses, doctors, social workers, and youth workers, can form a response team within the school to service students who need academic achievement and health and wellbeing support (Grant et al., 2010).

## **5.1. Cross-cultural CRP for Māori education**

### *5.1.1. Learning into culturally inclusive Māori pedagogy*

Following the work of Freire (2014), Ladson-Billings (1995), Gay (2018), as well as Castagno and Brayboy (2008), Baskerville (2008) examines Pākehā (European) teacher’s perspectives and professional development in utilizing CRP specifically in the Māori context, supplemented by the personal stories of marginalized Māori youth, which was produced with the aid of a Māori kaumatua (male leader) with a background in theatre and psychiatrist nursing. In her study, Baskerville (2008) discusses the recommendations and implications for teachers working with different cultures within the classroom, working with Māori students, accessing the marae (Māori congregational place), and practicing Māori protocols. As addressed by the previously mentioned researchers who formulated the core framework of this thesis, Hale et al. (2008) confirm the need for teachers to “embrace new ways of challenging themselves to think differently about the world they live in and how [it] affects the educational experiences of their students” (p. 1424). Baskerville (2008) identifies and further discusses this as a struggle of cultural and linguistic diversity, where the current context of Aotearoa New Zealand is becoming increasingly globalized and multicultural, and education offered to all students is gaining awareness in becoming inclusive and culturally responsive, so that teachers may continue to show the respect that students deserve and individualize their pedagogy for different learners’ needs, just as Bishop (2010) has confirmed. In detail, Baskerville (2008) clarifies that most teachers in Aotearoa have different linguistic, cultural, and educational backgrounds from their students, which means that they should recognize, understand, and critically reflect on how they

handle these differences effectively within the classroom. Building upon the work of previous researchers, Baskerville (2008) elaborates that teachers hold a key responsibility in addressing power imbalances of society prevalent in schooling, creating culturally inclusive environments, and engaging in in-service professional development for CRP.

As the Ministry of Education has reported, priorities should be put on tackling the issues drawn by educational disparities as well as disadvantaged living conditions, and Bishop (2010) suggested that inequity may be improved by implementing Māori cultural aspirations and practices inclusively for all students, even in mainstream classrooms. Drawing from another governmentally funded research study – Ka Hikitia, similar to the Te Kotahitanga project, Baskerville (2008) explores how the key messages of Ka Hikitia where Māori learners are culturally advantaged and have inherent potential and capability, holding the right to succeed as Māori, enters into her professional development. Baskerville's (2008) research examines her own critical reflections on employing CRP so that she upholds the Ka Hikitia goals, in the sense that Aotearoa whānau (families) and communities can thrive, from the basis of strong school leadership and administration will lead to continued effective professional development. Throughout Baskerville's (2008) thinking process following the project, it's interesting to note the apparent uncertainty and conflicting feelings within her observations, deductions, and conclusions reached; it leaves a question that challenges whether this journey is one non-Indigenous researchers and educators are required to partake when they immerse themselves in the Māori community to work with Māori youth.

Baskerville (2008) starts by stating that to transform teaching practices, educators must be open to deconstructing and reforming their epistemologies and ontologies, so that they can become critically informed of their renewed and progressing praxis. By reflecting on the marae theater experience, Baskerville (2008) engaged in a mode of careful interpretation and inquiry, as she derived that all exist in the ever-changing society and are a part of the lived social experiences, an ongoing inner conversation must be conducted to reach reflexivity. Although Baskerville (2008) acknowledges the existing tensions of reflexivity with the multiplicity of meanings, uses, and validity, it still serves as an appropriate instrument for concrete professional development, especially as a Pākehā (European) educator with an outsider's perspective and approach. Baskerville (2008) continues to gather the tools to respond to her own deficit thinking about her Māori students as a drama teacher, which eventually led to the students' increased

absence, dropping out, and missing qualifications, because of the reasons where she failed to implement CRP.

Thus, Baskerville (2008) began her project with the Te Rakau Hua O Te Wao Tapu state-funded theater company led by Moriarty, who was a trained psychiatric nurse and theater director in the arts, after seeing one of their performances in Christchurch Women's Prison. Te Rakau Hua O Te Wao Tapu comprises marginalized Māori youth, some of whom are in correctional facilities, and often implement cultural traditions, contexts, and Māori storytelling to uplift the oppressed in performances and enact social change. In the 3-month immersive collaboration, Baskerville (2008) lived in the marae and adopted the role of a cook, working with marginalized Māori youth to organize meals for the theater company whānau of 90 people. During this, Baskerville (2008) learned the traditional ways of getting to know Tikanga (customary practice) Māori women's roles, taught and instructed the working youth, managed and delegated tasks with them together; all of which Baskerville (2008) did in an unfamiliar context, encouraging daily Māori protocols and practices consistently, which in the end, changed her worldview and practice.

Progressing into the project collaboration, Baskerville (2008) constructed Mātauranga (epistemologies or knowledge) within her own worldview and teacher development of Tikanga (customary practice) Māori based on Te Ao (worldview) Māori, including the traditions of powhiri (welcome ceremony), karakia (prayer), hui (meetings and gatherings), marae justice, and poroporoaki (farewell). During the powhiri process, Baskerville (2008) developed an understanding of the tapu (sacred and rooted in a spiritually ground realm) or power that the ancestors and elders held, especially the respect and status given to honor their links to the whānau, as well as the weight Te Reo (language) Māori oratory and their shared roles and responsibilities. Being welcomed into the whānau in such a solemn and ceremonious way made Baskerville (2008) feel seen, valued, safe, and committed to the significance and ownership of Māori rituals and Tikanga (practice).

Baskerville (2008) recognized the importance of daily karakia (prayer) that integrated pre-meals and pre-practice or -performance and gathered that this ensured everyone's well-being, safety, and success throughout their daily activities; Baskerville (2008) remarked on the open expression of holistic spirituality in Ritenga (practice) Māori and "the power of their collective consciousness" (p. 464). Furthermore, Baskerville (2008) also witnessed how the concept of time

in Māori communities and taking the necessary time to secure clear explanations of the process, a safe space for korero (shared conversation), familiarity with each other, being there for everyone to be ready to contribute, and if needed, questioning and challenging the hui (meeting) agenda. There, Baskerville (2008) gained a new perspective on the meaning of true inclusion and again, the dedication Māori have to each other's worth, safety, and well-being.

Moreover, Baskerville (2008) saw the well-rounded process of marae restorative justice carried out when one youth member stole a facilitator's car, and how this affected the way Māori saw the meaning of relationships, repairing them, and developing a deep shared understanding of the impact for personal responsibility as a community citizen to honor and uphold collective expectations and rules. After the wharenuī (meeting house) meeting with the entire whānau involving the facilitator and youth member who had committed the offense, Baskerville (2008) concluded the presence of healthy, holistic accountability after the parties involved gave consent to participate in the meeting, through the entire community sharing their opinion and input in the impact of the crime, where in the end, the responsible stakeholders were able to share forgiveness and accept the consequences required to compensate for the crime, including cooking and preparing meals at the marae. In the end, Baskerville (2008) realized the importance of true reconciliation, contentment, support, mutual responsibility (manaakitanga), and a restoration of honor (mana – personal standing), so that an intervention of repeated offense can be reduced and the whole community shares the obligations required, instead of focusing only on the main parties involved. Lastly, during the poroporoaki (farewell), Baskerville (2008) learned to feedback and revitalize each other's experiences and future work in kanohi-ki-te-kanohi (face-to-face communication), value true relationship building, receive mana, and obtain a culturally responsive proper closer.

### *5.1.2. Utilizing specifically directed taonga (value) for cross-cultural CRP*

After the collaboration experience, Baskerville (2008) continues by analyzing and reconstructing her teaching philosophy and professional identity. First, Baskerville (2008) concluded that the environment provided the participants with meaningful context, abundant learning tasks – marae theater (powhiri, waiata/songs, and haka/group dance), materials, interaction, measured expectations, multi-professional collaboration with the Māori iwi (community), nutrition, and quality sleep. Informed by the collective stories shared amongst the

marginalized Māori youth, Baskerville (2008) recognized the diverse upbringing Māori students had and had full consciousness of the potential that Māori students brought to school with them from their iwi, culture, and traditions. Baskerville (2008) saw as the youth progressed in the theater training through well-established structure and routine, they were able to heal their past bodily and emotional hurt and trauma, doing the necessary mahi (work) that is required to have safe learning interactions, where their prior knowledge was accepted as valid. Despite the possible tensions that may arise from all cross-cultural communication, Baskerville (2008) resolved that the results coming out of the conflict in belief systems, misunderstanding, and negative feelings associated also bring feelings of accomplishment and joy.

With the following factors – culturally inclusive learning environments, relationship building, and korero, Baskerville (2008) rethought her teaching practice and implemented new culturally responsive applications and strategies into her drama classroom. In terms of building a culturally inclusive learning environment, Baskerville (2008) envisioned Māori concepts of kanohi-ki-te-konohi (face-to-face conversation), manaakitanga (caring for youth as culturally located beings), whānau, whakawhanaugatanga (building family-like relationships) into the classroom, with renewed passion and direction in her work and newfound connection and deep rootedness in Aotearoa as her homeland. Upholding the Treaty of Waitangi published in 1840, Baskerville (2008) focused on integrating its three principles: protection, partnership, and participation (Orange, 2011). Baskerville (2008) co-constructed a mutual teacher-student responsibility and agreement of the guiding principles and classroom expectations, as well as centered the objective of quality relationship building with a specific teaching strategy to achieve that. Risk-taking and karakia acting as a ritual-like powhiri to start the lesson with a song, quote, story, or movement became strategies Baskerville (2008) integrated into the classroom, where instructions and expectations were clearly given. On top of that, Baskerville (2008) also utilized talking circles as a safe space to approach with openness, empathy, and authenticity, so that all students are visible to each other, partner in the learning conversations, and share a power relationship together. At the end of every year, Baskerville (2008) also utilizes reflection circles, reflecting the customs and objectives of poroporoaki (farewell) paradigms, so that students can look back on and wrap up the year in a well-rounded, informed, and conscious manner.

For relationship building, Baskerville (2008) utilized a framework bridging the restorative justice approach and Māori protocol and practice informed understanding, such as



being attentive to diverse body languages and non-verbal signals, to promote student learning and well-being. In practice, Baskerville (2008) implemented specific one-on-one and whole-class discussions to clarify misunderstandings depending on which was needed at the time to achieve honest dialogue, as well as exchanging feedback to each other as a class to address issues of equity, such as individual absences' effects on group performance. Baskerville (2008) also collaborated with other teachers and devoted effort to student-parent conferences by developing Individual Education Plans (IEPs) with target students and their parents, identifying learning barriers weekly, and designing strategies to support positive interactions with others in class. This helped Baskerville (2008) understand her students' learning needs at a deeper level as she modeled equity and patience to maintain and repair her relationships with each student.

After the project with Moriarty's theater company Te Rakau Hua O Te Wao Tapu, Baskerville (2008) found the reciprocity of being both a teacher and a student, and for the students, vice versa. At the marae, Baskerville (2008) was a learner alongside the Māori youth and "encountered their generous, willing, gentle ways of respecting me when sharing their cultural knowledge and wisdom" (p. 465). The presence of ako (reciprocal teaching and learning) was very much incorporated into their shared theater training experience; Baskerville (2008) carried this philosophy and consciousness back to her classroom, where her students became vessels of knowledge and expertise for her to take after and integrate into the teaching, with their previously accumulated competence, just as previous educator researchers have implicated. In Baskerville's (2008) classes, each student was paired with a learning buddy to pre-share ideas amongst themselves before bringing them to the entire group, students were allowed to show up as themselves in their comfortable ways of engagement, and learning was a team effort where everyone would advance only when those who had troubles caught up. Baskerville (2008) trusted her students' pace in small groups and deadline extensions were negotiated, so that the classroom environment became accommodated for "a relaxed community of learners who enjoyed working together" (p. 466).

By including korero and poroporoaki protocols in her classrooms, Baskerville (2008) took the example of responsibility that Moriarty set in his group and started ensuring that conflict was resolved right away to avoid negatively accumulated affiliating emotions, clarified that inappropriate behavior towards others does generate consequences, and coordinated with leadership. Given that it was inevitable expectations varied from class to class still, Baskerville

(2008) promoted values of learning together, valuing each other's opinions, and giving time for everyone to voice their thoughts. Baskerville (2008) took inspiration from Macfarlane et al.'s (2008) approach for a careful balance between task orientation and completion with showing care and support for each other, as well as striving for both individual and group well-being and achievement, where the learning and teaching roles can be freely exchanged. Not only did Baskerville (2008) begin to critically revise her own teaching practices and deficit thinking towards her Māori students, but she also developed an approach that established a caring, supportive learning environment, where students' narratives and voices are valued and their connections and relationships are strengthened. Drawing from Bishop and Berryman's (2006) research, Baskerville (2008) gained sensitivity and responsiveness to cultural diversity, so that she could examine and challenge assumptions, practices, and discursive positioning about Māori students' achievement and inform her own teaching and learning (Tierney, 2006). In hindsight, Baskerville (2008) reflected on a phenomenon that made her more sure of her own voice in public speaking, after briefly losing her voice at the marae during the collaboration project, due to being in a completely new environment where she had to check her own privilege and others' oppression, which fortunately, turned into liberation and communal collective well-being. This makes her practice of privileging the silent voices in class more certain as well, making a conscious emphasis on prioritizing their feelings of safety and value to know they can be as they are in her classroom and facilitating change for them to regain their self-confidence.

Baskerville (2008) clarifies that although as a non-Māori educator, she will never understand what it is to be Māori, but having undergone the project that enlightened her about Māori culture and customs, now she can at least be comfortable in Māori contexts, gain insight into what questions to ask, have the confidence to ask these questions, and expertise and knowledge to implement these new found CRP competencies into her classrooms.

## **5.2. Preparing teacher identities & professional development for CRT**

Bishop and Berryman's (2010) Te Kotahitanga (Kaupapa Māori) research and professional development project, funded by the Aotearoa New Zealand's Ministry of Education, sought to support teachers in implementing an Effective Teaching Profile (ETP), which was developed by a collective of Māori students, families, principles, and several teachers. In response to the current educational disparity problems and its impact on Māori children, the Te

Kotahitanga project also served as an agent of change in strengthening educational achievement by improving classroom interactions and relationships (Bishop & Berryman, 2010). Realized over seven years, Bishop and Berryman's (2010) study hoped to offer "professional learning opportunities developed for classroom teachers", which then in turn, resulted in Māori students attending school at a more regular rate, engaging more as learners, and achieving as well as improving their progress levels to reach their true potential (p. 175).

From the range of student narratives gathered in the first phase of the research, Bishop and Berryman (2010) identified that aside from improving the quality of teacher-student relationships and interactions, Māori students were able to excel when their teachers critically assessed their own ability to assist them, whilst basing their perceptions of the students constructively as well. Based on this collective student input, an Effective Teaching Profile (ETP) was created with a strong emphasis on teachers actively rejecting their internal bias when working with students from disadvantaged backgrounds (Bishop & Berryman, 2010). This means that teachers must be committed to the "professional responsibility for the learning of all students", so that they can be agents of change in the Māori educational sphere (Bishop & Berryman, 2010, p. 175).

The resulting ETP includes the following core elements: Manaakitanga and Mana motuhake – building a supportive environment for students primarily seen as "culturally located human beings" with agency and their individual-collective accomplishments, with whakapiringatanga – routine pedagogical knowledge and potential applications (Bishop & Berryman, 2010, p. 176). Along with the theoretical foundations, the ETP also provides specific praxes: Wānanga and Ako – "effective teaching interactions with Māori students as Māori" employing a range of strategies that promote a "rich and dynamic sharing of knowledge", where "ideas are given life and spirit" through critical dialogue to reshape into new knowledge, cultivating a deep teacher-student relationship; Kotahitanga – collaboratively developing and reflecting on outcomes to improve educational achievements, under a shared collective vision (Bishop & Berryman, 2010, p. 176). Implementing the ETP in the first phase, Bishop and Berryman (2010) concluded that having most of the staff involved in the professional development interventions would be more effective in creating a "cultural change in the school", as well as maintaining a more cohesive application to all school subjects and all classes/grades (p. 177).

In several classrooms, Savage et al. (2011) stated concerns about low-implementing teachers, where they were missing one or more of the six ETP dimensions, and exhibited more challenges that perhaps exceeded the support that the project could provide them with (teachers needing more extensive professional development than the project objectives). In terms of the variability of implementation across different subject areas and two to four-year schools, Savage et al. (2011) found that the highest percentages were in Māori language (50-60%), English (50%), maths (42%), PE/sport science (29-30%), social studies (32-36%), and science (35%), whereas the classes with the lowest integration rate was arts (13-25%). It was hypothesized that the reason for this was in the “function of the...facilitators’ [expertise] and the quality of feedback and coaching provided to [the] teachers” (Savage et al., 2011, p. 190). In high implementation classes, the students spent a significant amount of time in group work and the least listening to the teacher present as well as seat work; these classrooms were managed positively with strong teacher-student relationships, high student participation, and visible learning (Savage et al., 2011). Teachers leading these classes used strategies that included: role assignments, clearly identified task outcomes, elaborating higher order questions and answers, discussion, and further information (Savage et al., 2011). Moreover, these lessons utilized Te Reo Māori (language), cultural knowledge, and epistemological scaffolding more (Savage et al., 2011).

Keeping in mind Lynch and Rata’s (2017) emphasis on CRT mainly for the sake of holistic epistemological identity development in Māori students, Bishop and Berryman’s (2010) completed Te Kotahitanga implementation model employed teacher observations in shadow-coaching for individuals and groups, as well as feedback and individual goal-oriented co-construction sessions. In their first induction hui (gathering) activity, Bishop and Berryman (2010) conducted the Hui Whakarewa, which focused on the importance of connecting the teachers to the local marae (meeting house) with the community elders present, where the teachers would critically reflect on their repositioning their deficit theorizing of Māori students regarding their schooling experiences, using interactions to form relationships with specific strategies and planning. After the study had been conducted, Bishop and Berryman (2010) offered the conclusion that such models promote professional development with continual reflection on their goals and pedagogy from individual teachers, moving into individual observations and coaching, followed by further discussion, allows teachers to practically address

the systemic educational disparities for Māori students in New Zealand. With the space to critically discuss and collaboratively plan based on concrete feedback, teachers can utilize evidence of student achievement to improve their own professional identity and student learning.

Savage et al. (2011) conclude with a suggestion to offer further investigation on comprehensive scaffolding of assessment practices, school organization, and administration and management in light of the improvements made from the Te Kotahitanga culturally responsive teacher professional development or as a model for those sectors of education. Further efforts are required as well to solidify and extend the impact made by these practicing culturally responsive teachers to foster an inclusive school environment, as well as influence other teachers to adopt similar agendas (Savage et al., 2011).

## **6. Māori student reflections on culturally responsive pedagogy**

Investigating the Bishop and Berryman's (2010) Te Kotahitanga project further from a different perspective, Savage et al. (2011) conducted an independent evaluation that examined the secondary school student classroom experiences based on how the project's teacher professional development affected them, especially in the ways that students were able to learn as Māori individuals in different subjects affected by the ETP implementation, as well as how the teachers affirmed the students as culturally located individuals. Savage et al. (2011) found that the students viewed the project from the lens of deficit theorizing as well, specifically to improve Māori achievement instead of its goal of culturally responsive professional development for the teachers. Regarding the ETP dimension of achieving as Māori, Savage et al. (2011) reported that most students valued the complex and diverse identities as Māori learners, were proud of their culture and multi-faceted identities, and had culturally responsive learning where they didn't have to omit their Māori selves, even going to the point of being able to "carry [their] Māori culture [onto] the next generation" (p. 192). Some instruments that the students identified as culturally responsive practices in their classrooms were speaking in Te Reo (language) Māori, integrating Kaupapa (policy) Māori, Tikanga (customary practice) Māori, specific places significant to Māori (the marae – meeting house), and their teachers, all supported them "to feel Māori at school in positive ways" (Savage et al., 2011, p. 192).

Students have also experienced the impact of teachers trying to learn Te Reo Māori and pick up school-related vocabulary from the students; they considered this to be encouraging of

the teacher-student relationship and their own Māori identities (Savage et al., 2011). From the observational data, the reports seemed to complement the students' feedback, where the teachers that implemented the ETP strongly would use Te Reo Māori greetings and also incorporate the language into classroom instructions, as well as whakatauki (proverbs) and karakia (giving thanks/prayers) in lessons (Savage et al., 2011). Students also described noticing the teachers' efforts in incorporating Tikanga Māori, specifically Mātauranga (knowledge) Māori, with lessons related to traditional myths, legends, and Māori history in terms of Aotearoa New Zealand history, such as the Māori migration story (Savage et al., 2011). Furthermore, students also valued their teachers' commitment to community events, weekend sports activities, and wananga (seminar) and whaikorero (formal speech) at the marae, and saw this as encouraging and changed their perception of their teachers with newfound trust and respect (Savage et al., 2011). They alluded to the concept of mutual respect, where both see each other as they are in their humanity, and in turn, Savage et al. (2011) highlighted that this led to changes in relationships that significantly improved the school environment even, in the sense that the students thought of their school culture to be unique to themselves. As Valenzuela (2010) describes, mutual respect requires the teachers to practice authentic care – repositioning themselves as educators and reversing their roles to become critically conscious students of the community and oppressed history.

In an extensive look into the Te Kotahitanga study, Bishop et al. (2003) elaborated that when the teaching pedagogy is focused on the cultural relations of the students, especially in terms of the student-teacher relationship aspect, there was an improvement in student outcomes. Furthermore, whilst “caring for all students as culturally located individuals within a framework of positive student-teacher relationships is considered beneficial for all students”, this praxis is particularly beneficial for Māori students (Savage et al., 2011, p. 184). In addition, Valenzuela (2010) writes about the US-Mexican educational context that authentic caring for students goes beyond surface-level aesthetic caring, where deep reciprocity of care is the teachers' responsibility to administer and in turn provide an educational environment for its students to develop and thrive. Valenzuela (2010) elaborates that aside from getting to know the students, authentic caring involves attending to their input about teaching and learning, respecting their abilities, and valuing the identities that they bring from home. Savage et al. (2011) suggest that

the purpose of caring for students as culturally located individuals reaches beyond simple acts of affection, but implicates comprehensive teacher pedagogy and support for learning.

Despite these findings, Savage et al. (2011) also addressed the teachers' challenge in adjusting their pedagogical praxis to changing classroom patterns, utilizing less interactive teaching methods; some developed their practices into more supportive ones, yet others weren't able to. Similar to troubles adapting to progressive requirements from the school environments, some students at lower implementation schools experienced racism and the effects of deficit theorizing still, even though the Te Kotahitanga project was directed to change those practices (Savage et al., 2011). Some students reported that they were treated as less than their Pākehā counterparts, regardless of trying to engage in class, or misinterpreted the ETP application as a remedial tool to address underachievement instead of reform teacher practices (Savage et al., 2011).

Concluding suggestions were made by Savage et al. (2011) for more well-accommodated teachers to take on leadership roles and mentor other teachers, especially ones in the same subject areas, to assist them in employing the ETP, to productively "maximize resources within the school and nurture teacher leadership for developing capacity in culturally responsive teaching" (p. 195). Savage et al. (2011) further indicated that schools focus on an anti-racist agenda, especially since culturally responsive schooling rarely includes direct discussions about combating racism as a need and measurement for the results of culturally responsive practices (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008). Cammarota and Romero (2006) also argue from the US-Latinx context that program implementation is the most successful when it also prepares students to confront and challenge racism. As seen in this study, Savage et al. (2011) proposed follow-up work to address post-colonial effects on schooling, especially with the continued marginalization of Māori students. Savage et al. (2011) discuss that finally, the issue remains that Māori feedback needs to be more valued and encouraged, so that students may know that they possess the voice, power, and agency to feed back into the school reform with their culturally responsive practices. This way, Castagno and Brayboy (2008) echo that education then becomes "more meaningful and socially responsible" (p. 963).

## 7. Limitations, discussion, and future implications

As Stucki (2012) addresses, there is an imminent need for comprehensive research weaving together the different aspects of culturally responsive pedagogy within Māori education, in terms of inclusion, home-school connection, teacher-student relationship, value-based education, and the learning environment. Due to the limitations of the scope of this thesis, I was unfortunately unable to synthesize more research from perspectives of home-school collaboration, although I do touch a little bit upon the whānau incorporation and respecting the influence of the iwi with the students together. Furthermore, I also was bound by the extensive amount of existing research available about particularly emphasized and more prevalently researched aspects of CRP, such as teacher professional development, as well as the potentialities and challenges of CRP. Regardless, I hope this structuring and organizing of CRP literature in the Māori educational context still provided detailed input into specific categories of its implementation. Moreover, due to the limited resources that I was able to access throughout the writing process, I was unable to maintain procedures of consulting a Māori education specialist so that the thesis could reflect the guidelines of Māori research ethics, with aroha (care and awareness) as well as kia āta-korero (robust discussion) with holistic consideration (The Pūtaiora Writing Group, 2012). The hope was that these values were already transfused within various aspects of the research synthesis and that Kaupapa (policy) Māori frameworks were still reflected to some extent (The Pūtaiora Writing Group, 2012).

Concluded by Freire (2014), Ladson-Billings (1995), Gay (2018), Castagno and Brayboy (2008), Bishop and Berryman (2010), and Baskerville (2008), when teachers practicing CRP can integrate and teach through the students' home backgrounds and cultures, they will also improve their relationships with the students, engagement, attendance to school, course and school completion, and graduation rates, not to mention the important objective of guiding the students to become fully fledged culturally located people with well-rounded identities and the necessary tools for further development. Throughout this narrative, semi-systematic literature review, I have investigated and delved deeper into the aforementioned results of CRP being actualized in the Māori school context. As a non-Indigenous researcher, I implemented critical Indigenous research methodology (CIRM) and tried to honor Kaupapa (policy), Tikanga (customary practice), and Mātauranga (knowledge) Māori in the data collection and organization phase. The objective was to preserve and pass on authentic, accurately situated, and critically conscious



research to the academic community. Moreover, Padilla (2021) suggests for university-level Indigenous education that this cultural plurality, where diverse cultural perspectives grounded in multiple contexts, can provide opportunities to foster multiplicity and solidarity to continue the crucial work of deconstructing Eurocentric values, and in turn, sustaining the community. However, as previously addressed also, further research is required to fully examine other less researched areas of CRP in Māori education.

Finally, Bishop and Berryman (2010) establish strongly that Māori students need to be given the rightful opportunity to succeed as Māori, where their epistemological identities are in alignment with their school achievement, so that neither has to be sacrificed in order for the other to exist and develop. Following decolonial, transformative critical pedagogy, Māori students deserve the schooling that matches their backgrounds and accommodates them with adequate resources, just as their Pākehā European counterparts have access to as well (Freire, 2014; Bishop & Berryman, 2010). As Freire (2014) concludes, only power that springs from the weakness of the oppressed will be sufficiently strong to free both [the oppressed themselves and the oppressors]”, “this then is [their] great humanistic and historical task”.

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