

Maori Education - Implementation of Policy

Research findings from the views of 56 primary school teachers interviewed 1980-81.

30 (54%) teachers revealed 'deficit' views of their Maori pupils. 21 teachers (including 5 Maori) were attempting to cater for the particular educational needs of their Maori pupils without perceiving those needs in terms of problems or limitations. The remaining 5 teachers were seen to be reacting against the negativity of the 'deficit' view by claiming not to distinguish between Maori and Pakeha pupils in their practice, thus revealing adherence to an egalitarian ideology.

For more detailed discussion of the research findings ref. to:-
Simon, Judith A., 1984. 'Good Intentions But...' in National Education, Vol 66 No 4 Sept. 1984, pp 133-139. Wellington, NZEI.

1985. Ideology in the Schooling of Maori Children (Delta Research Monograph No 7) Palmerston North, Massey University.

Some quotes from teachers in reference to their Maori pupils:-

A. Views that reflect deficit ideology -(all characterized by low expectations)
'I'm sure that the children that have what we call poor language patterns - limited language patterns - are limited in many ways...' (Principal, formerly STJC)

'... because the Maori is not a self-motivated person academically, he does not perform as well as the average Pakeha, at which ever level he is...The potential is there but what most of these children are lacking is a sensitive enough and experienced enough background as far as educational things go...You've got to think what is lacking. They're lacking books in the home. They're lacking people to read to them in the way the average Pakeha might. They haven't got the time because they've twice as many children...The average Maori is on a lower socio-economic level. They haven't got so much. They don't know how to use it when they get it. I don't think there's any doubt at all that the average Maori family spends a lot more on beer, cigarettes and the TAB.'

After this catalogue of perceived differences between Maori and Pakeha, this principal then said, '... but as for influencing the curriculum, we have to realize that we are all New Zealanders,' - thus resorting to egalitarian ideology to justify doing nothing to remedy the problems of under-achievement perceived amongst the Maori pupils.

A Junior class teacher claimed her Maori new entrant pupils were 'missing out on their numbers, colours and things' because 'it was not in their culture to go to pre-school...' This remark appears to reflect tolerance of cultural differences but conceals a deficit view - attributing the 'problems' or 'limitations' of Maori children to their culture. It thus serves to denigrate Maori culture whilst affirming the notion of the superiority of Pakeha culture.

B. Views that reflect egalitarian ideology

'(Maori pupils) do not warrant anything different... You just have to go along with the majority really...I think that giving(the Maori pupils) special education, special hand-outs...is spoon-feeding and I think it creates racism.'

Two well intentioned attempts to counter the deficit ideology:-

'I treat children as equals. I don't look upon them as being different because of their ethnic origin... Children are children.'

'I don't think in terms of Maori and Pakeha in this school. I think in terms of those children who are going to have difficulty in certain areas.'

C. Views likely to serve the interests of Maori pupils

From a teacher who, recognizing her Maori pupils had low self-images, sought every opportunity to put positive value on things Maori.

'...You search for the little things you can highlight and you put value on them..'

'in no way would I try to make Pakehas out of (the Maori children), but it is a Pakeha system. I would not try to teach them Maori culture but I would say to them:- "I don't want to make you into Pakehas but I will show you how to survive in a Pakeha system."

Findings related to the implementation of the NACME 1970 policy which advocated the inclusion of Maoritanga in the curriculum to (a) enhance the self-images of Maori children and (b) develop in Pakeha children an awareness of Maori cultural values.

13 primary schools were visited - all with rolls that were at least 25% Maori. 7 principals indicated that 'Maoritanga' or Maori studies were included in their school programmes in one form or another.

On the surface it would appear that the NACME objectives were being fulfilled in these schools. However, it is likely that because of the conditions under which Maoritanga programmes were being implemented in all but one of these schools, the NACME objectives were, in fact being subverted. Thus the programmes could well have been serving to further diminish the self-images of the Maori pupils whilst reinforcing ethnocentrism in Pakeha pupils. This has serious implications for the implementation of the policy on Taha Maori.

Before teachers consider how to implement the Taha Maori policy in schools they need to confront a number of important issues:-

1. How do they conceptualize 'Taha Maori' in the school curriculum?
Why should Taha Maori be incorporated into the school curriculum?
How is it intended to benefit students - and society as a whole?
Whose interests is it intended to serve? How?
2. Who is entitled and qualified to decide on matters of content and implementation of 'Taha Maori' in schools?
Where, appropriately, should teachers/schools seek guidance in these matters?
3. How can teachers evaluate the effectiveness of their own Taha Maori programmes?
What criteria should they employ?
Who establishes the criteria?
Where should the power to oversee and evaluate implementation of Taha Maori policy reside?

Some broader but related issues to consider:-

In the relationship between schooling and society:-

Does the education system function to reproduce the existing society?
ie are the existing relations of dominance/subordination in regard to class, sex and ethnicity, reinforced and perpetuated by the education system?

OR
Is the education system a site for social change?
If, so, what sort of change? How is it taking place?

What do you consider to be the ideal in Maori-Pakeha relations in our society?
What role does schooling at present play in relation to that ideal?

Maori Education - An Historical Perspective - 1961 Onwards1. THE HUNN REPORT 1961

- (a) Change of official racial policy from 'assimilation' to 'integration'.
 (b) Statistics revealing the disadvantaged status of the Maori in NZ society.

The problem for education: Maoris not succeeding in the education system.

Theoretical explanation: 'Cultural deprivation' or the 'Deficit' theory.

The perceived solution: Compensatory education. Inclusion of Maoritanga in the curriculum. *Early intervention*

Ausubel, 1960.
 Bernstein, 1961.
 Currie Report, 1962.
 Pickens, 1976. *Biblog.*
 NZCER Conference 1961 (Maxwell, 1962)
 Barham, 1965.
 Benton, 1965.
 McDonald, 1973.

2. NZEI REPORT 1967

Shift in theoretical explanation from 'cultural deprivation' to 'cultural difference'

The perceived solution: Tolerance of cultural differences. Inclusion of Maoritanga in the curriculum.

Watson, 1967, 1968.
 Labov, 1968.
 Baratz & Baratz, 1969.
 Cole & Bruner, 1971.
 NZ Dept of Ed. (LPMC), (MCT)

3. NACME REPORT 1970

multicultural etc 1970 Maori
 (becoming Dept of Ed. policy in 1974)
 Shift in perspective from tolerance of 'cultural difference' to valuing of cultural diversity.

Policy advocated: Inclusion of Maoritanga in the curriculum.

NACME REPORT 1980 - He Huarahi: Emphasis on 'multiculturalism'.

Inclusion of Maoritanga in the curriculum.

Smith, 1979. 1980.

4. INDEPENDENT ACTIONS OF MAORI COMMUNITY 1983-84

- (a) Establishment of Te Kohanga Reo
 (b) Maori Education Development Conference, Turangawaewae, March, 1984.
 advocates alternative schooling for Maori students.

Response of Dept of Ed.: Emphasis on policy of including Taha Maori in the curriculum.

Development of bilingual schools/classes

NZ Dept of Ed., 1984.
 Walker, 1984

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