

## ***Kei Tua o te Pae***

### ***Assessment for Learning: Early Childhood Exemplars***

## ***What is bicultural assessment? He aha te aromatawai ahurea rua?***

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## Introduction

Te Tiriti o Waitangi is one of the guiding documents for education in Aotearoa New Zealand. It guarantees partnership, protection, and participation to the two signatories. *Quality in Action/Te Mahi Whai Hua* (1996, page 67) states that management and educators should implement policies, objectives, and practices that “reflect the unique place of Māori as tangata whenua and the principle of partnership inherent in Te Tiriti o Waitangi”.

This book, the third in a series on assessment in early childhood education, looks at bicultural assessment practices and how these practices can embody the principle of partnership fundamental to Te Tiriti. *Te Whāriki* is a bicultural curriculum that incorporates Māori concepts. The principles of whakamana (empowerment), kotahitanga (holistic development), whānau tangata (family and community), ngā hononga (relationships), and the different areas of mana that shape the five strands provide a bicultural framework to underpin bicultural assessment. This book of exemplars builds on the *Te Whāriki* framework and includes examples of many developments in early childhood settings that indicate movement along their pathways to bicultural assessment practice. Further examples are woven throughout the other books in this series.

## He kupu whakataki

## Frameworks for bicultural education

## He anga mō te mātauranga ahurea rua

Rangimarie Turuki (Rose) Pere (1991) developed a Māori educational framework or model, te Aorangi (the universe), that illustrates the complexity of te ao Māori.

Pere's model integrates the dimensions of wairuatanga (spirituality), tinana (the body), hinengaro (the mind), and whanaungatanga (the extended family). It also includes mana, the integrity and prestige of the individual; mauri, the life principle, which includes language; and whatumanawa, the expression of feelings.

In March 2003, Mason Durie presented a paper to the Hui Taumata Mātauranga Tuatoru entitled “Māori Educational Advancement at the Interface between te Ao Māori and te Ao Whānui”. In that paper, he states that the essential challenge for those concerned about Māori educational advancement is to understand the reality within which Māori live, as children, students, and whānau. He argues that:

the essential difference [between Māori and other New Zealanders] is that Māori live at the interface between te ao Māori (the Māori world) and the wider global society (te ao whānui). This does not mean socio-economic factors are unimportant but it does imply that of the many determinants of educational success, the factor that is uniquely relevant to Māori is the way in which Māori world views and the world views of wider society impact on each other.

... As a consequence, educational policy, or teaching practice, or assessment of students, or key performance indicators for staff must be able to demonstrate that the reality of the wider educational system is able to match the reality in which children and students live.

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Graham Smith (1992 and 1997) studied Māori-medium primary schools and identified a series of fundamental principles for kaupapa Māori schooling.

Russell Bishop and Ted Glynn (2000) extend these principles into mainstream educational settings. They advocate for kaupapa Māori pedagogy that addresses issues to do with power, initiation, benefits, representation, legitimisation, and accountability.

The following is an abridged version of the principles outlined by Glynn and Bishop (pages 4–5):<sup>1</sup>

**Tino rangatiratanga:** This principle includes “the right to determine one’s own destiny”. As a result, parents and children are involved in decision-making processes.

**Taonga tuku iho:** “the treasures from the ancestors, providing a set of principles by which to live our lives”. Māori language, knowledge, culture, and values are normal, valid, and legitimate.

**Ako:** This principle emphasises reciprocal learning. Teachers and children can “take turns in storying and re-storying their realities, either as individual learners or within a group context”.

**Kia piki ake i ngā raruraru o te kāinga:** The principle of participation “reaches into Māori homes and brings parents and families into the activities of the school [and early childhood centre]”.

**Whānau:** “[W]here the establishment of whānau type relationships in the classroom [early childhood setting] is primary, then a pattern of interactions will develop where commitment and connectedness are paramount, and where responsibility for the learning of others is fostered.”

**Kaupapa:** “Children achieve better when there is a close relationship, in terms of language and culture, between home and school.”

<sup>1</sup> The word “students” has been replaced with “children”.

Writing about the metaphors and images we have for education and children, Bishop and Glynn add:

Simply put, if the imagery we hold of Māori children (or indeed of any children), or of interaction patterns, is one of deficits, then our principles and practices will reflect this, and we will perpetuate the educational crisis for Māori children.

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Jenny Ritchie (2001, pages 25–26) argues that teacher education programmes should aim to equip graduates to facilitate a “whanaungatanga approach” to implementing a bicultural curriculum in early childhood centres.

This approach is characterised by the following features:

- recognition that whānau are central to early childhood care and education;
- responsive, respectful, and reciprocal relationships with children, whānau Māori, and other adults;
- reconceptualising the construct of teacher as expert;
- teachers recognising that “they cannot be experts in another person’s culture if they do not share that cultural background” and that “non-Māori cannot speak for Māori”. Non-Māori teachers create opportunities for Māori to voice their perceptions and are committed to listening and responding to them;
- “a climate of collaboration and genuine power sharing.”

Ritchie also suggests that an appropriate knowledge base for teachers includes:

- knowledge and understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the history of colonisation, and the dynamics of racism;
- an understanding of mātauranga Māori (Māori education) as well as of Western early childhood pedagogy;
- a working knowledge of te reo Māori;
- a sound knowledge of the expectations in *Te Whāriki* related to Māori;
- familiarity with research into second language acquisition and bilingualism, cultural issues in education, racism in education, and counter-racism strategies.

Sue, the head teacher of a kindergarten, notes that in te reo Māori the word “ako” means both to teach and to learn. She writes:

I think we should be kaiako, because the term “kaiako” captures the teaching and the learning. We don’t just teach, we learn all the time, too. “Kaiako” captures the notion of pedagogy in one word. If we swapped our names from teacher to kaiako, that would be a move towards biculturalism.

I’m interested too in the concept of a poutama [a stepped pattern] as opposed to stages of development. It’s like bringing in another view of learning and teaching – we need to know more about this and think more about it.

Sue’s comments reflect her understanding that the very process of moving towards biculturalism is enriching for both Māori and Pākehā.

## Links to *Te Whāriki*

This book asks the question “What is bicultural assessment?” *Te Whāriki* is a bicultural document, written partly in Māori and woven around the principles of whakamana, kotahitanga, whānau tangata, and ngā hononga. Tilly and Tamati Reedy led a team representing Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust Board to develop the kaupapa Māori content. Tilly Reedy (2003) describes *Te Whāriki* as encouraging:

the transmission of my cultural values, my language and tikanga, and your cultural values, your language and customs. It validates my belief systems and your belief systems. It is also “home-grown”.

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In order to achieve bicultural assessment practices, it is essential that teachers share a commitment to:

- Kia whakamana ngā ao e rua kia hono.  
Honouring and respecting both worlds so that they come together in meaningful relationships.
- Kia whakamana ngā rerekētanga ki roto i tēnā i tēnā o tātou.  
Honouring and respecting the differences that each partner brings to the relationship.
- Mai i tēnei hononga ka tuwhera i ngā ara whānui.  
From this relationship, the pathways to development will open.

## Pathways to bicultural assessment

## He huarahi ki te aromatawai ahurea rua

Pathways to bicultural assessment practice will have the following features:

**Acknowledgment of uncertainty:** Teachers will be willing to take risks and to acknowledge that the pathways are not clearly marked out. Advice from the community and reciprocal relationships with families will provide signposts and support.

**Diversity:** There is not one pathway; there are multiple pathways. However, all early childhood settings will be taking steps towards bicultural assessment practice.

**Multiple perspectives:** Listening to children, whānau, kaumātua, and others from the community is part of the journey.

**Celebration of the journey:** The pathways are paved with respect and commitment. The community celebrates the advantages for all of working at the interface of two worlds. All share in celebrating successes and achievements.

**Commitment to the belief that “our development is our learning is our development”:** Development and learning are the same process when they are both seen as sited in relationships of mutual participation and respect.

**Meaningful contexts:** Learning is about making meaning. Bicultural assessment contributes to making meaning within contexts that make sense in the wider world of people, places, and things.

Te Rōpū Kaiwhakangungu, advisers to the Early Childhood Learning and Assessment Exemplar Project, developed the diagram on the opposite page describing possible pathways towards bicultural assessment.<sup>2</sup> This vision for wise bicultural practice has two aspects: outcomes for children and outcomes for assessment practices. The continuum is dynamic (moving forward) and allows for multiple points of entry based on the knowledge, skills, and experience of the learning community. While the speed of development may be affected by a number of factors, for instance, staff changes and other demands, all centres are encouraged to continue to build bicultural understanding and practice.

<sup>2</sup> Te Rōpū Kaiwhakangungu have contributed a Māori perspective to the exemplar project. Their ideas are woven throughout all the books in this series. However, they do not claim to speak on behalf of all Māori.

## PATHWAYS TO BICULTURAL ASSESSMENT PRACTICE

Learning is assessed in holistic contexts that include both Māori and Pākehā dimensions.

Māori and Pākehā viewpoints about reciprocal and responsive relationships with people, places, and things are evident.

### ADVANCING TOWARD BICULTURAL ASSESSMENT PRACTICE

Monocultural assessment practices are evident.

Māori and Pākehā families and communities contribute to assessment and the surrounding curriculum.

Assessment protects and develops children's identities as competent and confident citizens of a bicultural society.

#### POSSIBLE INDICATORS

##### OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN

Children actively participate, competently and confidently, in both the Māori world and the Pākehā world and are able to move comfortably between the two.

Children become more competent in understanding and speaking te reo Māori.  
Children become aware of protocol and customs for particular occasions.  
Children become familiar with the carving, weaving, symbols, and designs of the local area.  
Māori whānau and community contribute to and participate in the curriculum.  
Group tasks and enterprises are represented.  
Self-respect and respect for others are reflected in the diverse relationships within the learning community.  
Children become familiar with the history, geography, stories, and waiata of the local area.

##### BICULTURAL ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

Bicultural practices document children's pathways towards the above outcomes.  
Assessments themselves contribute to and develop "two world" participation and mutual respect for Māori and Pākehā.

Some assessments are in te reo Māori.  
Assessments are represented in ways that are consistent with tikanga Māori. The holistic nature of the context may be reflected via narrative.  
Māori whānau and community participate in the assessment process.  
Contributions from home and the community are in the children's and centre's assessment documentation.  
Assessments include the collaborative and the collective.  
Assessments show respect in seeking advice and interpretation from whānau.  
Children's voices are heard in the assessments.