

A cultural audit for teachers

Looking out for Maori learners with special needs

Jill Bevan-Brown Massey University College of Education

What approach might be helpful in identifying culturally appropriate means of catering for Maori learners with special needs?¹ This article reports ongoing research to develop and trial a cultural audit process.² The cultural audit is based on two guiding principles which can be illustrated by analogy.

The bull's-eye belief

The first analogy compares education in New Zealand to an archery target (see figure 1). To be truly effective we must hit the bull's-eye. We can do this by providing learners with a holistic education which provides knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values in five different domains of development. These domains are cognitive, physical, cultural, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. The latter is probably the most controversial as it includes areas such as emotional, moral, and spiritual development, and aesthetic awareness. If all domains of development are well covered, we hit the bull's-eye. If they are not, the education we are offering learners is incomplete.

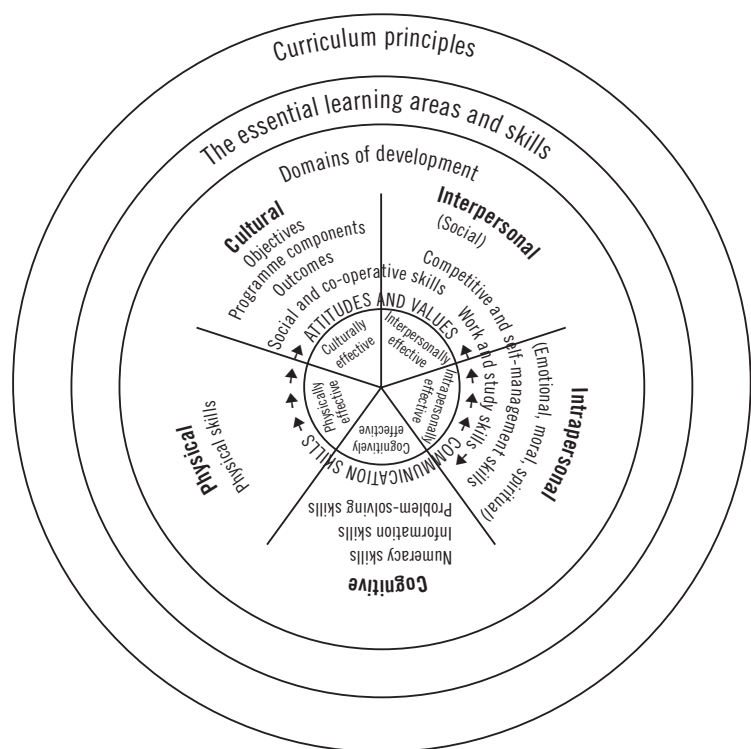
The New Zealand Curriculum Framework, Te Anga Marautanga o Aotearoa supports the notion of holistic education. "All young people in New Zealand have the right to gain, through a state schooling system, a broad, balanced education that prepares them for effective participation in society."³ In the archery analogy the target is composed of the various components of the curriculum framework.

Te kaupapa raranga

How can the five domains of development be effectively incorporated into our schools and early childhood centres? The second analogy of raranga or weaving provides us with an effective answer (see figure 2).

The skills, knowledge, attitudes, and values from the five different domains need to be carefully interwoven into the fabric of the education we provide. When weaving a whariki, or mat, if the warp and weft are not sufficiently interlinked the mat will have gaps and may even

FIGURE 1: THE BULL'S-EYE BELIEF



Bevan-Brown, 1999

become unravelled. Similarly, in a school/centre where the cultural, physical, cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal strands are not securely intertwined, the education learners receive will be of an inferior quality.

Unfortunately, this is the case in a number of New Zealand schools/centres, particularly in respect to the cultural, intrapersonal, and interpersonal strands. Are you familiar with the Maori language week scenario when for five days emphasis is placed on using Maori greetings and names but little *reo* is heard for the rest of the year? Or perhaps the "multicultural unit" rings a bell? This is when the varying cultures of the school/centre neighbourhood are celebrated, national costumes are paraded, ethnic music is played, and food is shared. However, once the unit is completed, minority cultures are virtually ignored! Similarly, in the interpersonal domain, units of work on social skills such as co-operation are taught each year, but because the skills covered are not put into regular practice, they soon slip into oblivion. For education to be truly effective, these aspects of learners' development need to be ever-present. If they are not, the message conveyed is that social skills, minority cultures, and *te reo* Maori are of limited importance, of lesser value. We would be telling students that school is principally about the three R's and everything else is secondary!

Putting principles into practice

With these guiding principles at the foundation of my research, I set about to develop a way in which the cultural strand could be firmly woven into the fabric of the education given to Maori learners with special needs in particular and to Maori learners in general. The answer I came up with is a cultural audit process based on a Maori cultural input checklist and framework. However, before I describe these I would like to explain how the cultural audit process evolved by giving a brief description of the research phases that preceded it.

First, I sent out questionnaires to 149 different special education, disability, Maori, and support groups, asking them about the culturally appropriate, effective services and programmes they offered Maori people with special needs. I received 75 written replies and followed them up with 25 face-to-face interviews. The information was analysed to discover what culturally appropriate strategies were being used. This analysis raised some important questions. How does one judge what is "culturally appropriate"? How do organisations determine this? Do they differ in the criteria used? Who decides on the criteria?

These questions prompted the next phase of the research, which was to come up with some

guidelines for determining cultural appropriateness for Maori. This involved two prongs of investigation. First, a literature review of relevant material and second, consultation with Maori people. I was very lucky in this respect as a great deal of the research conducted in this area has been done by Te Pumanawa Hauora, which is a Maori Health Research Unit based at Massey University where I work. Consequently I had first-hand access to the research findings and to the people who had conducted the research. I also consulted with Maori friends, family, and colleagues, and attended relevant hui.

As a result of the literature review and consultation, I came up with eight criteria for determining cultural appropriateness for Maori. These criteria are partnership, participation, active protection, empowerment, *tino rangatiratanga*, equality, accessibility, and integration.

While it is beyond the scope of this article to go into any detail about these eight criteria, briefly, partnership involves Treaty of Waitangi partners working together to achieve mutually acceptable goals. Participation refers to positive Maori involvement in all aspects of New Zealand society at the individual, hapu, or iwi level.⁴

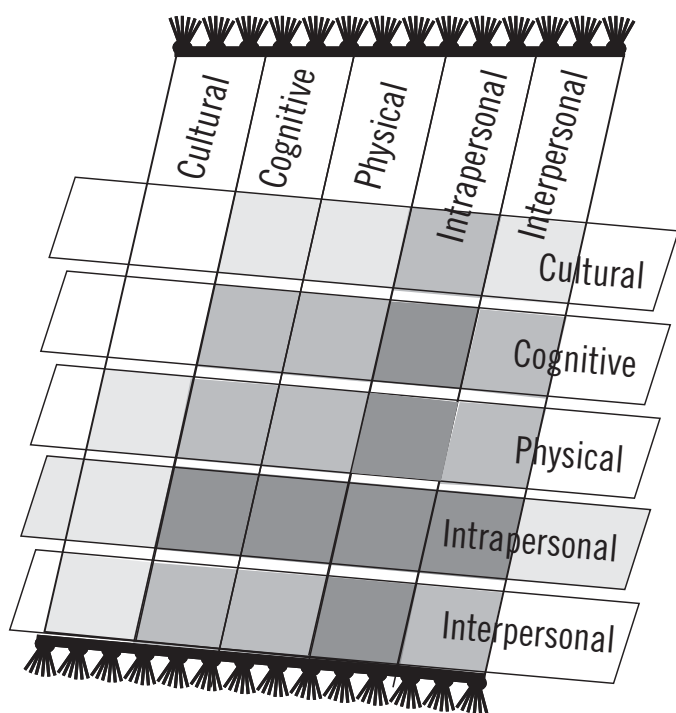
The Treaty of Waitangi guarantees to protect Maori taonga. To ensure the preservation and continuance of these taonga, active protection measures must be taken. These are aimed at developing a learner's cultural knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and identity.

Empowerment involves providing Maori with the skills, knowledge, means, opportunity, and authority to act for themselves and to make their own decisions. *Tino rangatiratanga* is the Treaty provision which guarantees iwi and hapu the power to exercise authority in respect of their own affairs. In the context of criteria for determining cultural appropriateness, empowerment and *tino rangatiratanga* are very similar concepts. The former focuses on individual self-determination while the latter focuses on iwi and hapu self-determination.

Article Three of the Treaty promises Maori equal rights and privileges of British subjects. Implicit in this promise is the assurance of equal access to and enjoyment of social benefits such as health, education, and housing. Where an imbalance exists, proactive measures must be taken to ensure equal accessibility and equality of outcome.

Integration has two levels of meaning. First, it refers to education, health, and social welfare organisations and different levels of the education system working together for the benefit of the learner. Secondly, at the individual level, integration involves taking an ecological, holistic approach to programme content and service delivery.

FIGURE 2: TE KAUPAPA RARANGA
(or, how to provide integrated, holistic education)



Bevan-Brown, 1999

The cultural audit products

Using the eight criteria and the previously gathered survey data, I developed a Maori cultural input framework, checklist, and sample, (see Figure 3).

As you can see, the eight criteria form the X axis of the framework and the Y axis contains the various components of programmes and services offered at schools and early childhood centres, namely, the environment (both physical and emotional), personnel, policy, process, content, resources, assessment, and administration.

The cultural input checklist and sample

Next, questions relevant to each criterion, programme component, and intersecting cell on the framework were developed. For example, for the resources and active protection intersection the question is posed:

What high quality Maori resources are used at your school/centre?

For the content and equality cell the question asked is:

How is the Maori content in programmes accorded equal value and status as other curriculum content?

I also prepared a sample of a completed checklist to help clarify questions and to provide some "real life" examples. For the two previous questions, the following are cited:

Library contains books in te reo Maori, New Zealand history books from a Maori perspective, Maori biographies, stories with Maori characters, and novels by Maori authors. Charts and posters displayed contain Maori people, themes, and art work.

School report and IEP/IDP [individualised education programme or plan/individualised development programme or plan] form contains a section on the learner's effort and progress in the Maori language and cultural activities.

The cultural audit process

The cultural audit process consists of six steps. These are shown in figure 4.

Step 1: Introduction and preparation

The guidelines for teachers using the cultural audit include a copy of the checklist, a completed sample, and a brief explanation of the eight criteria for determining cultural appropriateness, organised in a six-page handout.

Step 2: Information gathering

Educators can gather information in a variety of ways. Some suggestions are:

- Staff members jot down in individual diaries all the culturally appropriate strategies they come across during a week.
- Senior staff member (preferably someone who does not have responsibility for a class) collects data on the environment, personnel, policy, and administration categories across the school/centre. Other staff members collect data on the process, content, resources, and assessment categories in relation to their own classrooms/teaching.
- Large sheets of paper with criteria or programme component headings are hung in the staffroom for a specified period. All staff add entries as they come to mind.
- One staff member collects information via staff interviews conducted over a one- or two-week period.
- Information is collected at a professional development day or cultural audit staff meeting. Everyone has the checklist questions. During a combined brainstorming session, data are charted for all to see.

A weakness of the last method is that staff do not have the benefit of time to reflect on school/centre practices, so the likelihood of missing culturally-appropriate strategies is greater than when information is collected during one to two weeks. Note that in the previous suggestions the term "staff member" has been used. I believe this exercise should involve all those employed at the school/centre. It is especially important to include education support workers and teacher aides, as learners with special needs may spend more one-to-one time with these staff members than with anyone else.

Step 3: Sorting and analysing information

Whatever method is used to collect information, the next step in the cultural audit process is to sort and analyse the data. Again, a number of

approaches can be used but one that works well is to sort the various strategies into their relevant categories and to record them on a large wall chart, overhead transparency, or computer print-out. If numerous strategies have been collected it may be simpler to number each strategy and record these numbers on a cultural input framework. No matter how information is organised, the next task is to analyse data to determine the school/centre's weaknesses and strengths. Useful questions that can be posed include:

- Data spread: is there a good coverage across the entire framework or are there large gaps in particular areas?
- Data comparison: have any predominant patterns emerged and if so what are their implications? (An example that arose in research trials was the predominance of participation strategies but absence of entries in the empowerment column. A close examination of the participation strategies used showed that Maori parents and whanau were regularly being asked to help but rarely given any say in what they could do or how they could do it.) Are policy entries evident in practice?
- Origin of data: are strategies being employed in all areas of the school (for example, junior and senior classes) and at all levels (for example, senior management and ancillary help)? Are strategies being initiated by all staff members? Does the data contain both general and special education strategies? (Maori learners with special needs are first and foremost Maori learners. To be effective a school/centre must provide culturally appropriate strategies across the board, not just in the area of special needs.)
- Involvement: is involvement widespread? Are learners, parents, whanau, and community all involved or do certain groups or people dominate to the exclusion of others? Does involvement include a range of processes

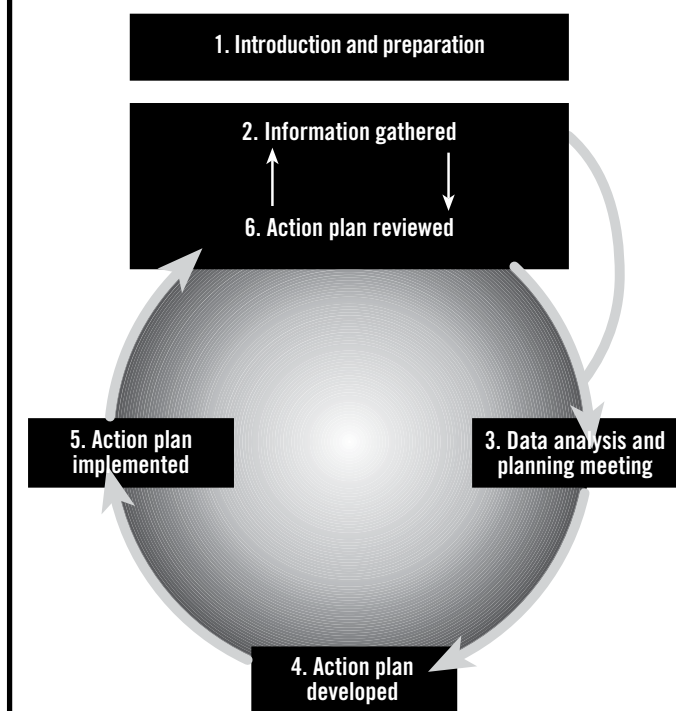
GLOSSARY

hapu: sub tribe
hui: gathering, meeting
iwi: tribe
kapa haka: Maori performing arts group
te kaupapa: principle, foundation
raranga: weaving
reo: language
taonga: treasures
te reo Maori: Maori language
tino rangatiratanga: iwi and hapu self determination
wero: spear of challenge
whanau: extended family
whariki: mat

FIGURE 3: THE MAORI CULTURAL INPUT FRAMEWORK

	Partnership	Participation	Active protection	Empowerment and Tino rangatiratanga	Equality and Accessibility	Integration
Environment						
Personnel						
Policy						
Process						
Content						
Resources						
Assessment						
Administration						

FIGURE 4: THE CULTURAL AUDIT PROCESS



including initial consultation, planning, development, implementation, and evaluation?

These are just some of the analysis questions that can be asked.

Step 4: Developing a plan for future action

The next step is to formulate a plan of action arising from the data analysis. Staff need to ask themselves, "What strategies can be utilised to build on the strengths and rectify the weaknesses that have been identified?" At this stage, if answers are not immediately evident, the completed sample may provide some inspiration. My ultimate aim is to compile a booklet to accompany the framework and checklist. This booklet will contain a large selection of strategies under each category heading. If, for example, there is a weakness in the area of administration, you can turn to that section in the booklet and it will contain a range of helpful suggestions.

The action plan that is formulated can be drawn up in a variety of ways but I have found the IEP/IDP format particularly helpful. Figure 5 shows an action plan for a hypothetical school.

Step 5: Implementing the action plan

Now comes the challenge of putting the action plan into practice. While people listed as having responsibility for a specific strategy have the task of initiating and overseeing that strategy, a collaborative, collective approach should be taken. The responsibility for making a school/centre more culturally appropriate for Maori learners with special needs rests with all staff members employed there.

Step 6: Reviewing the action plan

Similar to an individual IEP/IDP, a school/centre's Maori cultural input action plan should be reviewed at least twice a year, the review date being set in advance. At the review meeting progress is examined, a new plan is formulated, and so the cycle continues.

The cultural audit process and instruments are still being trialled. Already weaknesses have been identified. Certain questions are confusing and the active protection criterion, with its link to specific cultural input, is not explained clearly enough. Obviously, changes will need to be made to rectify these problems.

I have also consulted with a large group of Maori parents and have received some helpful but disturbing feedback. They are concerned that many strategies identified may be mere tokenism. As a result, a school/centre may intentionally or unintentionally appear to be performing better than it really is. The following example is a strategy listed in the participation/assessment cell of the framework:

Parents fill out home portion of an ecological assessment prior to initial IEP/IDP meeting.

The point was made that while this may sound good on paper, what use is it if parents' input is not taken into consideration in planning the programme? This criticism must be taken very seriously. The whole point of the cultural audit will be lost if it is used to mask inadequacies, and so I am presently working on strategies to guard against this happening. One possibility would be to involve members of the Board of Trustees and

FIGURE 5: MAORI CULTURAL INPUT ACTION PLAN

Plan developed by Tawhai School staff on 15/9/98					
			Review date: 15/3/99		
Principle	Objective	Checklist category	Strategy	Responsibility	Target date
Participation	To increase Maori involvement in all areas of school life	Participation/personnel	1. Enlist whanau help to organise kapa haka concert in November	Mr Jones (DP)	15/11
		Participation/assessment	2. Design a user-friendly IEP assessment form for parental use	Ms Black (special needs co-ordinator)	30/9
		Participation/administration	3. Consult with Maori parents about spending priorities for reo-tagged funding	Mrs White (Principal) and Mr Kaiwai (Maori language co-ordinator)	15/10
Active protection	To increase Maori resources throughout the school	Resources/active protection	1. Examine classroom and library resources for Maori content, list what is available and what is needed	All teachers and librarian	15/10
		Resources/active protection integration	2. Use school newsletter and whanau contacts to compile a list of community people with Maori expertise available to contribute to lessons and activities	All teachers, Ms Grey to compile final list	15/11
Accessibility/participation	To encourage Maori parents to attend IEP meetings	Accessibility/environment	1. Offer and organise baby-sitting service/allow parents choice of time and venue for IEP meetings	Ms Black (special needs co-ordinator)	As needed

Maori parents of learners with special needs as participants in the audit process. Another possibility I am looking at introducing is a monitoring strand that is part of the action plan. Staff would select existing strategies to monitor. For example, the strategy I have mentioned previously would be monitored by finding out how many parents have actually filled in a pre-IEP/IDP assessment and then looking for evidence of where their input has been incorporated into the IEP/IDP. Where parents have not filled out home assessments, staff could investigate the reason behind this.

Conclusion

While research is still in progress, the Maori cultural input checklist, framework, and cultural audit process show promise as effective means of weaving cultural input into the fabric of a school/centre's programme. The audit is designed to identify any weak or missing strands and the action plan is the method by which necessary darning can be done. This process could be effective not only for incorporating Maori cultural input but also for including input relevant to other minority cultures. The criteria on the X axis of the framework will be different and the checklist questions will vary but the process itself is appropriate and applicable. Similarly, the frequently neglected interpersonal and intrapersonal strands could be more effectively woven into school/centre programmes as a result of the audit process.

A wero has been laid down!

NOTES

Acknowledgment: The author thanks Professor Luanna Meyer for her feedback on an earlier draft of the paper on which this is based and her PhD supervisors, Dr. K. Ryba, Dr. Robyn Munford, and Professor T. Glynn for their support and guidance in the research on which this article is based.

1. Research also reported in: Bevan-Brown, J. (1998). The cultural audit of school services for Maori children with special needs. Unpublished presentation given at the Twenty Third Annual International Conference for the Association for Persons with Handicaps, Seattle, Washington, US.
2. This research is on-going: Bevan-Brown, J. (in progress). Catering for Maori learners with special needs.
3. See Ministry of Education (1993). *The New Zealand curriculum framework. Te anga marautanga o Aotearoa*. Wellington: Learning Media, p.5.
4. Definitions of participation and partnership developed from: Durie, M. H. (1994). *Whaiaora. Maori health development*. Auckland: Oxford University Press.

set subscriber specials

Save \$ \$ \$ \$

School-wide Assessment: The Big Picture James Irving

This book addresses the big questions about assessment and describes the key requirements and components of a successful programme. It emphasises the need for assessment programmes which have a positive effect on student learning and progress.

NZCER 1997 • PRICE: \$14.85 • SPECIAL PRICE: \$9.00

Evidence of Student Achievement Fran Baker

This book focuses on processes for gathering, analysing, and using evidence of student learning in portfolio systems—both student-centred and school/department standards-referenced. Types of portfolios are described and supported by case studies of portfolio development from primary, intermediate, and secondary schools.

NZCER/KOHIA TEACHERS CENTRE 1997 • PRICE: \$14.85 • SPECIAL PRICE \$9.00

Improving Teaching and Learning Ruth Sutton

Much has been written about the rigorous analysis of student achievement using statistical data—test scores, examination grades, and so on. However, such analysis may not provide insights into how student achievement can actually be improved. The aim of this book is to explore ways in which a broad range of information might be gathered and used to improve teaching and learning, and the effective organisation of our schools. Ruth Sutton, an education consultant based in England, is well known to New Zealand teachers. She has worked with a wide range of New Zealand educators.

NZCER 1998 • PRICE: \$14.85 • SPECIAL PRICE: \$9.00

Note: Special prices apply until 31 August 2000.

No trade orders

ORDER FORM — set SUBSCRIBER SPECIALS

To: NZCER Distribution Services, PO Box 3237, Wellington. Fax (04) 384 7933

Price includes GST. Post and packing extra if goods are invoiced

			QUANTITY
13223	<i>The Big Picture</i>	\$9.00	<input type="text"/>
13238	<i>Evidence of Student Achievement</i>	\$9.00	<input type="text"/>
13245	<i>Improving Learning and Teaching</i>	\$9.00	<input type="text"/>

Name: _____

School/Organisation: _____

Address: _____

Payment enclosed _____ Please invoice _____

Visa _____ Expiry date _____

Card number _____

Signature _____

JILL BEVAN-BROWN is a senior lecturer in Special Education in the Department of Learning and Teaching, Massey University College of Education, Palmerston North. Being of Maori heritage (Ngati Raukawa, Ngati Wehiwehi, Ngati Awa, and Ngai te Rangi) she has a long-standing interest in Maori children with special needs and has been researching in this area for the last 10 years.

E-mail: J.M.Bevan-Brown@massey.ac.nz