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Outdoor learning in Aotearoa New Zealand: voices past, present, and future

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Many of the principles and practices that have influenced outdoor education in Aotearoa New Zealand find their genesis in the United Kingdom and North America. In recent times, many of these foundational assumptions have been called into question. This paper highlights how emerging 'local' voices are questioning and reframing how outdoor education is conceptualised and practiced. In large part this is due to a sense of distinctiveness borne from the bicultural foundations that underpin governance and policy-making. This paper explores how outdoor educators are developing pedagogies that acknowledge the particularities of our context, particularly the bicultural foundation of Aotearoa New Zealand. The paper highlights how social and cultural influences shape educational policy and how outdoor educators are responding, both theoretically and practically, to meet the needs of learners in an increasingly diverse society.

Keywords: *Māori; Culture; Place; Curriculum; Sustainability*

Preamble

Outdoor learning occurs in many contexts and in multiple forms in Aotearoa New Zealand.¹ This learning may occur in both formal and informal educational settings including schools and tertiary institutions, as well as through clubs and other voluntary service organisations. This article focuses on formal education settings as many of the social and cultural tensions that are currently shaping outdoor education

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in Aotearoa New Zealand find expression through educational policy documents. Outdoor education in schools is a key learning area within the Health and Physical Education (HPE) curriculum. Outdoor education is also seen as a way to enrich the whole curriculum, allowing students to connect classroom learning with their lived experiences. This form of outdoor education is called education outside the classroom (EOTC).

Introduction

The impact of different cultural perspectives from ‘outside’, and perhaps more importantly within, national boundaries is a central issue in contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand. What counts as New Zealand identity or culture is contested and fluid (King, 2007), and hence debates about social policy, educational reforms, literature, the arts and the choices of recreational activities that New Zealanders engage in often reflect this struggle and fluidity.

This article highlights how different cultural perspectives have influenced outdoor learning practices and how educators are responding to the particular social, cultural, geographical and ecological conditions in twenty-first-century Aotearoa New Zealand. In this article we focus on the bicultural foundation of Aotearoa New Zealand, which is laid out in the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, the Nation’s founding document. This document sets out how the country will be governed and how the two cultures, Māori and settlers, interact. We have chosen to focus on this bicultural relationship in this article as it is a unique feature of this country. We, the authors, all identify as Pākehā² and this paper is a reflection of some of the issues we are each grappling with in our attempts to negotiate and fashion outdoor experiences that are genuinely bicultural.

The paper begins with a brief historical overview and critique of contemporary outdoor education theory and practice followed by a more detailed explication of the bicultural foundations of governance and how this is articulated in official curriculum documents. We then describe how one tertiary institution involved in the preparation of outdoor educators is responding to the issues facing contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand in a manner that endeavours to take account of the particular cultural and environmental milieu in which it educates. The paper draws to a close by highlighting some of the challenges and opportunities for outdoor education of engaging with the bicultural foundation of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Voices past: historical influences

The roots of outdoor education in Aotearoa New Zealand can be traced back to the early days of settlement. Māori were the first human settlers, migrating from about 1300 AD onwards in a sequence of deliberate explorations by canoe. Navigating by solar and celestial markers, these intrepid explorers braved long ocean passages to discover a country of considerable natural resources including mountains, lakes and a long coastline (King, 2007). Their feats parallel the adventures of later waves of

explorers and then migrants, who started arriving in this country in large numbers from the 1800s.

Pākehā were predominantly British, with 95% of the non-Māori population coming from England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales in that order, but with small numbers of Chinese, Dalmatian, Dutch and Scandinavian migrant groups (King, 2007). The new settlers focussed on extraction industries, land acquisition and the re-creation of their new country as a better Britain (Belich, 2001). Hence the introduction of birds, trees and flowers along with game such as deer, rabbits, ducks and trout. Prior to Pākehā settlement, Māori engaged in not only the requisite outdoor skills for daily living but also outdoor recreational pursuits including *waka* (canoeing), *kaukau* (swimming), *whakaheke* (surfing) and *tōreherehe* (tobogganing) (Best, 1925).

The Treaty of Waitangi, signed in 1840 by many Maori chiefs and the British Crown, is Aotearoa New Zealand's founding document. The two cultures were initially in a relationship of mutual exchange with Māori communities adhering to traditional values and unwritten *tikanga* (principles/customs), yet able to incorporate facets of Pākehā culture on the basis of needs and usefulness. By 1896 Pākehā formed over 90% of the population and there was a predominance of western values, criteria, practices and priorities (King, 2007). Essentially Aotearoa New Zealand developed as a compound culture (Belich, 2001), a hybrid of English-speaking cultures also influenced by a Māori culture of remarkable resilience.

Life for the early Pākehā settlers often involved living in small rural communities; a rugged physical environment, hard physical labour, a risky workplace and isolation were realities for many. King suggests that 'a myriad of echoes of old New Zealand still resonate within the contemporary culture' (2007, p. 433). In the same vein, Kane and Tucker (2007) argue that New Zealand's image as an adventurous location has its historical roots in migration stories, the geographical isolation of the country, and European experiences of pioneer society where success was linked to physical endeavours and strong bonds of mateship.³ As Kane and Tucker note, the physical environment of the country had a part to play in this as it presented challenges to early settlers and is now seen as a natural playground.

King (2007) details some of the values of the stereotypical New Zealand (male) identity that he argues in part were shaped by the pioneer history of this country. These include a man-alone ideal; mateship; the ability to improvise successfully; a practical do-it-yourself tradition; a hunting, fishing, shooting ethic; informal social attitudes; and egalitarian values amongst other things (King, 2007). These pioneer values have come to be personified in the image of Sir Edmund Hillary; the skills and attributes that were privileged were not only physical ability, but a form of masculinity that was tough, self-effacing and self-reliant, yet espoused loyalty amongst mates (Belich, 2001).

As King (2007) notes, a country that has a dominant culture of British origin was fertile ground for the values and culture of the home country to take root. It was not uncommon for Pākehā New Zealanders of British origin to refer to Britain as 'home' even though they were born and raised in Aotearoa New Zealand. Given the strong cultural affinity with Britain, we argue it is unsurprising that some of the

strongest and oldest discourses in outdoor education in the United Kingdom about adventurous outdoor pursuits, ‘which involve some degree of physical challenge and risk’ (Gair, 1997, p. 2), should influence conceptualisations of outdoor education in Aotearoa New Zealand. Undoubtedly Kurt Hahn’s beliefs in education for active citizenship through community service, physical skill and durability, self-discipline, craftsmanship and outdoor expeditions have been powerful (Boyes, 2012). Boyes asserts that these beliefs and practices are evidenced in the establishment of Outward Bound (instigated in New Zealand in 1962 by British aristocrat and then Governor General, Lord Cobham), the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme, adventure education, adventure tourism and corporate team-building through outdoor activities. Lynch details how forms of outdoor recreation ‘were part of the cultural baggage brought to New Zealand by British and European settlers’ (2006, p. 33) and influenced the early development of formal education, especially for boys.

Both Lynch (2006) and Stothart (1993) document curriculum-related field trips, educational visits and school-based outdoor excursions that began as early as 1849. Dowling and MacPherson (1974) identify these outdoor excursions as the basis of another predominant discourse; outdoor education as a curriculum methodology, focusing on outdoor learning experiences that can enrich all curriculum areas, now called education outside the classroom. This is paralleled by UK and American understandings of outdoor education as education in, for and about the outdoors (British Council on Outdoor Education, 1989; Smith, Carlson, Masters, & Donaldson, 1972). This conceptualisation opened the door for stronger links to be made with environmental education; with outdoor education being broadly defined as, ‘the interrelationship of the human being and the natural resources upon which societies depend, with the goal of stewardship in mind’ (British Council on Outdoor Education, 1989, p. 31). Again, these sentiments were influential in the New Zealand context (see Abbott, 1990).

More recently, North American outdoor education practices have influenced outdoor education in schools here. Examples of this are the introduction of Project Adventure and Adventure Based Learning (Boyes, 2012). Thus the influences of learning in the outdoors can largely be traced to a combination of British and North American practices that were adopted to reflect particular societal needs—needs largely framed by western values and aspirations.

Voices present: questioning assumptions

In recent years the assumptions embedded in outdoor education theory and practices in Aotearoa New Zealand have come under greater scrutiny from a number of quarters. For example, outdoor education has been critiqued for the way in which it has seemly ‘imported’ ideas and practices uncritically from America and from the United Kingdom (see, e.g., Brookes, 2004; Lynch, 2006; Wattchow & Brown, 2011). These authors argue that these practices were seen as problematic because the emphasis on pursuits rendered the environment as a backdrop and the militaristic roots of outdoor education, from the United Kingdom in particular, favoured activities that

required a high level of physical ability. The way in which the environment is used as a gymnasium or backdrop for activities is now receiving some critique in Aotearoa New Zealand (see below), but the ways in which outdoor education, gender, class and ethnicity intersect have received little attention in this country. Bell (1996) noted that much of the work that had been done on gender in outdoor education had occurred in somewhat of a vacuum, ignoring more recent scholarship in relation to gender. Fifteen years later we contend this is still largely the case with outdoor education research and theorising in this country.

The practices and purpose of outdoor education have changed over the years, with Lynch (2000) observing that these reflect the wider social and educational changes in Aotearoa New Zealand. The mid-1980s saw a very radical shift in the political landscape with the introduction of a new right agenda that emphasised the market economy and accountability (Culpan, 1998). An effect of the legislative changes that occurred from the mid-1980s saw major changes in health and safety laws that shifted responsibility for safety to individual employers and schools. At the same time the adventure tourism industry was expanding rapidly, which raised many concerns about safety. An outcome of this has been a move to professionalise outdoor education with the introduction of qualifications and tertiary-level courses in outdoor instructing (Dumble, 2003). Lynch (2000) noted that the purpose of outdoor education in schools became increasingly functional, with a greater emphasis on developing skills for employability. One of the benefits of this has been that outdoor education became a school subject in its own right in 1999 when it was identified as a key learning area in the HPE curriculum.

Discourses of risk and safety have dominated much of the debate around outdoor education in Aotearoa New Zealand in the last 20 years, which in turn has driven practices. Zink (2003) argued that in a perverse way the emphasis on risk and safety has reinforced the place of pursuits-based activities in outdoor education. While safety concerns can be traced as one of the key drivers that have shaped the professionalisation of outdoor education, risk has also been located as a key pedagogical tool in outdoor education (Priest & Gass, 2005). However, risk and safety discourses have come under some scrutiny (see, e.g., Sullivan, 2006; Sullivan, Carpenter, & Jones, 2011), but we argue that they deserve far more interrogation, particularly in relation to how they work to shape and limit outdoor education practices. For example, Brown (2008a, 2010) has called into question some of the assumptions that have underpinned practices based on the assumptions that pushing people out of their comfort zones will enable them to learn and that they can transfer this learning to other contexts.

Lately the way in which the outdoor environment is ignored has come in for closer examination. For example, Zink and Burrow's (2008) work explores the ways in which outdoor and indoor spaces are categorised, reiterating the norms of schooling in outdoor education rather than offering a different educational experience as is often purported to occur. Concerns driven by climate change and sustainability are raising many questions about how outdoor education can respond to these challenges. An approach being suggested by Wattchow and Brown (2011), and by Straker

(2010), for example, is to take place seriously as a pedagogical tool in outdoor education. A common theme in this work is that place-responsive pedagogies may allow students to connect with the communities in which they live and learn, and through this connection students can develop a sense of care for these places. Another related strand of critique is concerned with confronting the issues raised by education for sustainability contextualised within outdoor education (see, e.g., Hill, 2010; Irwin, 2010). This includes questioning where and how outdoor education occurs, how students travel to those locations, the equipment needed, along with the types of activities utilised. This work often has an explicit 'action orientation' where students are asked to examine their current values and behaviours and explore more sustainable ways of being.

The questions being asked about outdoor education practice in Aotearoa New Zealand are not necessarily unique to this country (see, e.g., Brookes, 2004; Lugg, 2004); however, responses are born out of the tensions that exist between traditional ideas of outdoor education imported from the United Kingdom and North America and the local contexts of New Zealand environments, cultures and society. For us, one of the keys to understanding the cultural milieu of contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand lies in the foundational document signed between the British Crown and many Māori leaders in 1840.

Voices: past and present

The Treaty of Waitangi, signed in 1840, is the founding document of Aotearoa New Zealand and is central to, and symbolic of, our national heritage, identity and future (Waitangi Tribunal, n.d.). The Treaty is a broad statement of principles on which the British and Māori made a formal arrangement to found a nation-state and build a government in New Zealand. The Treaty of Waitangi has two texts, one in Māori and the other in English. The English text is not an exact translation of the Māori text:

Despite the problems caused by the different versions, both represent an agreement in which Māori gave the Crown rights to govern and to develop British settlement, while the Crown guaranteed Māori full protection of their interests and status, and full citizenship rights (Waitangi Tribunal, n.d., Introduction, para. 1).

The Treaty of Waitangi provides a base for biculturalism and support for the status of Māori. However, in a democracy based on majority rule, Māori, who in time became a minority group, have faced constraints through the development of policy and institutions that ignored or marginalised Māori culture, language and knowledge(s) (Macfarlane, Glynn, Grace, Penetito, & Bateman, 2008). In education, Eurocentric curricula, pedagogy, assessment apparatus and achievement objectives have tended to dominate and Māori ways of knowing have been devalued. Prior to the 1970s, educational discourse in New Zealand was characterised by an emphasis on the transmission of knowledge, school spirit and hierarchy. The discourse relating

to Māori education was ‘assimilation’, an attempt to bring everyone into the culture of the dominant Pākehā society. Government attitudes were paternalistic, Māori were viewed as a ‘problem’ and policies were based on deficit discourses (Jesson, 1990).

The emergence of Māori political activists in the 1970s agitating for national support of Māori language and culture forced recognition of grievances, disputes over land and cultural identity to the political forefront. With cultural renaissance and revitalisation of treaty settlements, Māori perspectives have become incorporated into statute. For example, the Resource Management Act 1991⁴ placed *kaitiakitanga* (guardianship) into legislation and required *hapū* (subtribe) and *iwi* (tribe) to be involved in the management of all natural resources (for a fuller discussion, see Blundell, 2006).

As already noted, a neoliberal ideological shift in politics and policy in the mid-1980s brought about major reforms of many state activities. These reforms included an extension of the Waitangi Tribunal’s⁵ jurisdiction with the power to examine Māori land grievances retrospective to 1840, and the introduction of bicultural policies within state institutions (McMurchy-Pilkington & Trinick, 2008). Educational discourse changed to focus on personal growth, self-development and cultural diversity. Māori educational failure was identified as being caused by low self-esteem, arising from a lack of cultural identity. This new strategic direction aimed to foster the rich, diverse culture of this country, including its multicultural character, and was based on the belief that an effective approach to multicultural education is through bicultural education (Walker, 1994).

In the decade from 1998 to 2008, research initiatives and evaluations provided more information on Māori student achievement (see, e.g., Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh, & Teddy, 2007). The Ministry of Education began working with Māori initiatives such as *iwi* partnerships. In support of Māori education, the recent release of *Ka Hikitia—Managing for Success* (Ministry of Education, n.d.) represents a collective call to action that requires everyone in the education system to take responsibility for Māori educational success alongside *whānau* (family) and *iwi*. This policy is education’s current response to the Treaty of Waitangi. In the context of *Ka Hikitia*, managing for success means stepping up the performance of the education system to ensure Māori are able to enjoy educational success as Māori. Philosophically, *Ka Hikitia* moves away from a focus on deficit discourses, to a focus on making the most of opportunities for Māori success. This strategy does not mean that non-Māori students are ignored but rather that educators are challenged to make systemic and cultural changes to build their capability with Māori knowledge, language and cultural practices. *Ka Hikitia* means to *step up*, *lift up*, or *lengthen one’s stride*—an appropriate analogy, we contend, for outdoor education. The principles that underpin *Ka Hikitia* endorse and extend The New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) and *Tē Marautanga o Aotearoa* (see below). In particular, *Ka Hikitia* reinforces the importance of effective teaching and learning in ways that are contextualised and meaningful.

Outdoor learning in the curriculum

Changes experienced in the last 30–40 years as a result of Aotearoa New Zealand's shifting position in the global economy, realignment of international relationships (e.g. our nuclear weapons free stance) and our growing awareness of our place in the Asia-Pacific region, rather than as an outpost of Britain, have also been the backdrop for significant educational reforms. Since the millennium, we have experienced a major stock-take and review of the school curriculum and the subsequent release and implementation of new curricula: The NZC (Ministry of Education, 2007) and *Tē Marautanga o Aotearoa* (Ministry of Education, 2008).⁶ The Ministry of Education (2007) states that these curricula give expression to the partnership at the hub of The Treaty of Waitangi. They are less prescriptive than previous curriculum policy, and offer schools considerable opportunity for school-based curriculum development (Byres, 2008; Ministry of Education, 2007).

The national curriculum is an articulation of 'what we deem important in education' (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 4) in Aotearoa New Zealand, and aims to 'set the direction for student learning and to provide guidance for schools as they design and review their curriculum' (2007, p. 6).⁷ To guide this process, the 'front end' of the NZC outlines desired philosophical and educational directions through the vision, values and principles statements (McGee, Cowie, & Cooper, 2010). More specifically, the curriculum documents articulate a broad vision of young New Zealanders who are creative, enterprising, actively contributing to a sustainable future, connected and lifelong learners. These documents also detail eight principles⁸ that should 'underpin' school-based curriculum decision-making. An acknowledgment of the influence of individuals' and institutional values on curriculum decision-making and school interactions foregrounds eight values⁹ that 'enjoy widespread support' and are to be 'encouraged, modelled, and explored' (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 10). Five key competencies—thinking; using language, symbols, and texts; managing self; relating to others; and participating and contributing—round off this philosophical vision. References to students developing connectedness to and sustainable relationships with places, people and the land peppered throughout this philosophical framework reflect the more significant presence accorded environmental and sustainability precepts in this national curriculum statement compared with its predecessor (Ministry of Education, 1993).

Although *Tē Marautanga o Aotearoa* (Ministry of Education, 2008) comes from 'different perspectives', it has been noted that it similarly starts with a vision of young people as developing competencies required for successful schooling, work and lifelong learning. The English translation of *Tē Marautanga o Aotearoa* reveals an emphasis on the socio-cultural nature of teaching and learning that, by necessity, recognises the centrality of students' home, community, culture and *hapū* to their learning and educational success (Macfarlane et al., 2008). The five overarching principles in *Tē Marautanga o Aotearoa* arise from the Treaty of Waitangi and affirm the learner as central to all teaching and learning endeavours. In a similar vein to the English version of the NZC, it affirms 'the place of the student in their own

world' within the principle 'Environmental health is personal health' and it gives rise to the proposition that school-based curriculum 'supports a sustainable environment' and 'holistic' approaches that facilitate 'student engagement with their environment' (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 7).

In the second part of the NZC, eight learning areas¹⁰ are detailed with descriptions of what each is about, why learning in the area is considered important, and the particular structure of the learning area. The conceptual heart of HPE in which outdoor education¹¹ sits consists of four interdependent underlying concepts. These are: *Hauora*, 'a Māori philosophy of wellbeing' (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 22) including the dimensions of *taha wairua* (spiritual well-being), *taha whanau* (social well-being), *taha hinengaro* (mental and emotional well-being) and *taha tinana* (physical well-being); attitudes and values that support the well-being of individual students, others and the environment; the socio-ecological perspective, which promotes understanding of the interrelationships between individuals, others and society; and health promotion, a process involving personal and collective action to establish and maintain supportive physical and emotional environments. Furthermore, the curriculum proposes that learning activities in HPE flow from the integration of these four underlying concepts, the seven key areas of learning in HPE, and the four strands and their associated achievement objectives. With the four strands addressing personal health and physical development, movement concepts and motor skills, relationships with other people, and healthy communities and environments—and achievement objectives articulating learning, knowledge and skills relative to strands and year levels of learning—the focus of HPE is squarely on: 'the well-being of the students themselves, of other people, and of society through learning in health-related and movement contexts' (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 22).

Penney and Harris argue that policy has the capacity to be a potent foundation for either 'stability or inequity in schools and societies' or 'active resistance and change' (2004, p. 96). This notion of curriculum policy as potentially 'leaving doors ajar' (2004, p. 99) for change is one that resonates with our proposition that the official HPE curriculum in Aotearoa New Zealand provides fertile ground for pedagogical practices in outdoor education that are responsive to the needs of students and their communities. Bishop and Berryman (2006) advocate for learning settings where the learner's culture is taken into account, meaning that all learners including Māori can bring who they are to the setting because their cultural knowledge is valued as legitimate ways of knowing.

While we recognise that the pedagogical interpretation of curriculum policy is not a neutral or uncontested process, and a range of other texts (Penney & Harris, 2004) contour practice, nevertheless pedagogical shifts reflecting the intent of the NZC are increasingly evident in school-based outdoor education (see, e.g., Furminger, 2011; Major, 2010; Townsend, 2011; Wattchow & Brown, 2011). Critical reflection on individualised and decontextualised activity-based approaches (Brown, 2008b) leads to different approaches to outdoor learning and teaching that demonstrate a responsiveness to the specifics of the people and contexts and their unique social, cultural and ecological histories (and futures).

We therefore suggest that the NZC allows educators to address issues with contemporary practices in creative ways that encourage engagement with students and their communities rather than relying on imported solutions from afar. One such response is now examined in more detail for the ways in which it is endeavouring to respond to the changing political, social, environmental, economic and cultural landscape in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Future voices: what options are available?

We acknowledge that voices from the past will continue to resonate in contemporary practice and theory. One of the challenges for outdoor educators in Aotearoa New Zealand is to imagine a future where other voices can be heard so that outdoor learning opportunities can be enriched in a society based on bicultural principles of partnership. As we highlighted earlier, it is only relatively recently that Māori voice(s) have been heard in policy and curriculum documents that give weight to authentic opportunities for engagement to achieve educational success. It is clear that some voices have been silenced or marginalised in the past—the question for us is whose voices will emerge and be heard in the future? In the following section we outline an example of how a tertiary institution is endeavouring to reconfigure their programme to open the door to other voices.

Possibilities for outdoor learning: new voices

The Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology (CPIT) offers a Bachelor of Sustainability and Outdoor Education. This degree programme grew out of a recent review that challenged staff to develop courses that would equip their students to provide educationally appropriate responses to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and sustainability in schools. The Bachelor of Sustainability and Outdoor Education weaves together education for sustainability, outdoor education, social studies and human geography, and health, and is primarily concerned with preparing graduates for secondary school teaching (Irwin, 2010).

Across the degree, opportunities are created through a variety of strategies to encourage students to reflect upon and engage with the enduring impacts of colonisation, explore the meaning of biculturalism and multiculturalism, develop ecological literacy, and engage with human impact on local and global environments. Students are also required to undertake a project of their own choice and design that is aimed at encouraging engagement with the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and more sustainable attitudes and behaviours.

One project that has been undertaken since 2004 sees several senior students working with local Kura Kaupapa Māori (Māori language immersion schools). The students meet with teachers from the Kura and work in a collaborative manner to design and deliver a series of educational outdoor experiences for the *kura rangatahi* (teenaged school students). The inclusion of *tikanga* Māori can change the dynamic and nature of the outdoor education experience (Legge, 2006; Townsend, 2011).

The process of working collaboratively means a number of things in the context of these projects, but most importantly the students discuss with the Kura teachers a range of curriculum topics the *kura rangatahi* are studying and design outdoor education experiences to incorporate these. Such a process sees students re-conceptualising outdoor education as they understand it, adapting strategies of outdoor learning they are familiar with in order to negotiate the curriculum needs of a culture they are generally less familiar with. Over the years students have reported that this is a significant learning event, with the following account identifying the type of insights that the tertiary students have gained.

Students had negotiated with Kura teachers to explore a section of a local inner-city river and to investigate the impacts of industrialisation in the natural environment. They compare this with an area of land that has undergone habitat restoration as an example of what the environment might have looked like in the past. While discussing food gathering on the Ōpāwaho in pre-European times, a *kura rangatahi* remarked that ‘we cannot even use the water cress [for food] anymore’. A CPIT student later reflected:

The murky waters of Ōpāwaho are such a powerful example of how the culture I belong to has created such great distance between ourselves and the people of this place by the mismatch in value we place upon our resources. What was once a rich food source, a means of transportation between the raupō (bullrush) and tussocks of the Canterbury Plains, has today become a convenient way to dispose of waste (Irwin, 2010, p. 78).

As with a number of other students that have worked with the Kura Kaupapa, this student found the project challenging in that they came face to face with the impact of Pākehā cultural practices on this river. Creating a negotiated learning experience required these students to consider how to reconfigure outdoor education so it provides meaningful learning experiences in another cultural context. It also can give them an opportunity to view practices within their own cultures in a different way.

Although the curriculum allows for such learning spaces to be created, the act of creating them is not always easy. However, the intent of the Treaty of Waitangi and the most recent curricula documents are clearly imagining a future of partnership as expressed through the Treaty of Waitangi, which cannot be achieved by repeating the education of the past. It is our experience that the negotiated learning experiences described here begin to move students towards these aspirations in the hope that as educators they will have the courage to develop new ways of teaching and learning in the outdoors.

Concluding thoughts

The preceding description of a change in focus at CPIT gives one example of an educational institution that is grappling with the challenges of educating with the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi in mind. It offers a vision of learning in the outdoors that reflects the distinctive characteristics of education in Aotearoa New Zealand at the start of the new millennium. Being culturally and place-responsive is a conscious pedagogical decision. Outdoor education can feel ‘out of place’ by failing

to acknowledge there are other ways of knowing or acting than those frequently portrayed in textbooks or toolkits written in other cultural contexts. This passive omission, rather than active exclusion, may equally result in a lack of student engagement.

This suggests to us the need for outdoor educators in Aotearoa New Zealand to have a high level of cultural awareness, an understanding of the Treaty of Waitangi and its obligations, and a genuine interest in gaining other worldviews. This requires a willingness to learn about one's own cultural horizons and identity, in addition to accepting the limits of one's own cultural competence. Furthermore, the role outdoor educators play in this ideal is through the adoption of outdoor practices where culture counts (Bishop & Berryman, 2006), participants are connected and committed to one another through a shared understanding of cultural values as they are expressed in outdoor contexts, and outdoor pedagogies account for the environment and the participants in ways that are culturally sensitive, interactive and dialogic.

Māori achievement is dependent on support from the wider community to ensure that educational aspirations for their children are realised (Bishop & Berryman, 2006). This requires interweaving elements of Māori culture into planning and teaching in the outdoors. The development of meaningful relationships between outdoor educators and Māori, as people of the land, may facilitate the co-creation of knowledge about Māori culture and their relationship to the places they frequent (Legge, 2006). To achieve this, we suggest that outdoor educators will need to refine and adapt their pedagogy by choosing teaching styles and developing contexts that encourage exploration of Māori values and beliefs in the outdoors.

Outdoor learning that focuses on culture is sowing the seeds for some very different ways of doing outdoor education than those that are premised on adventure and risk. We argue that, to remain relevant, outdoor education has to respond to a changing world. Cultural and place-responsive pedagogies have emerged out of critiques of more traditional approaches to classroom and outdoor education practices and in response to what is seen as a looming environmental crisis. An ongoing task for us as researchers and practitioners is to retain a critical disposition and a high degree of reflexivity in order to continually respond to changing circumstances and to avoid developing new orthodoxies that act to exclude the 'other'. Educators involved in learning in the outdoors in Aotearoa New Zealand, be it through the NZC in schools or tertiary institutions, are required to grapple with multiple cultural realities: those inherited from European settlers, the pervasive influence of globalisation, the bicultural foundation of governance and the increasingly multicultural composition of communities. As we have highlighted, the bicultural foundation of Aotearoa New Zealand places an onus on all educators to take seriously the requirement to respond to culture in thinking about how we structure outdoor learning experiences.

Notes

1. Aotearoa is the Māori term for New Zealand. As Māori is an official language it is increasingly common that both the Māori and English terms are used. Parliament has yet to formalise Aotearoa New Zealand as the official title of the country.

2. Term for non-Māori, usually those of European descent.
3. Mateship refers to friendships, typically between males, based on equality and loyalty. It embraces an egalitarian ethic.
4. The Resource Management Act requires decisions relating to natural resource use to be based on sustainable principles. Key requirements include community participation in decision-making and consideration of the needs of future generations (Ministry for the Environment, 2009).
5. Established in 1975, The Waitangi Tribunal deals with claims brought by Māori relating to actions of the Crown that breach the promises made in the Treaty of Waitangi (Waitangi Tribunal, n.d.).
6. The NZC is the official statement of policy for teaching and learning in all English-medium state and integrated schools, while Te Marautanga o Aotearoa is the parallel curriculum for Māori-medium schools, where Māori is the language of instruction.
7. Schools in Aotearoa New Zealand are self-governing and are expected to set curriculum in consultation with their local community.
8. The eight principles are high expectations, Treaty of Waitangi, cultural diversity, inclusion, learning to learn, community engagement, coherence and future focus (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 9).
9. The eight values are excellence; innovation, inquiry, and curiosity; diversity; equity; community and participation; ecological sustainability; integrity; and respect (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 10).
10. The eight learning areas in NZC (Ministry of Education, 2007) are English, the arts, health and physical education, learning languages, mathematics and statistics, science, social sciences, and technology.
11. Outdoor education is one of seven key areas of learning in HPE (Ministry of Education, 2007), with the others being mental health, sexuality, sport studies, physical activity, food and nutrition, and body care and physical safety. While two-page descriptions of the key areas of learning were given in the previous HPE curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1999), they are only listed rather than explained in the current HPE statement.

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