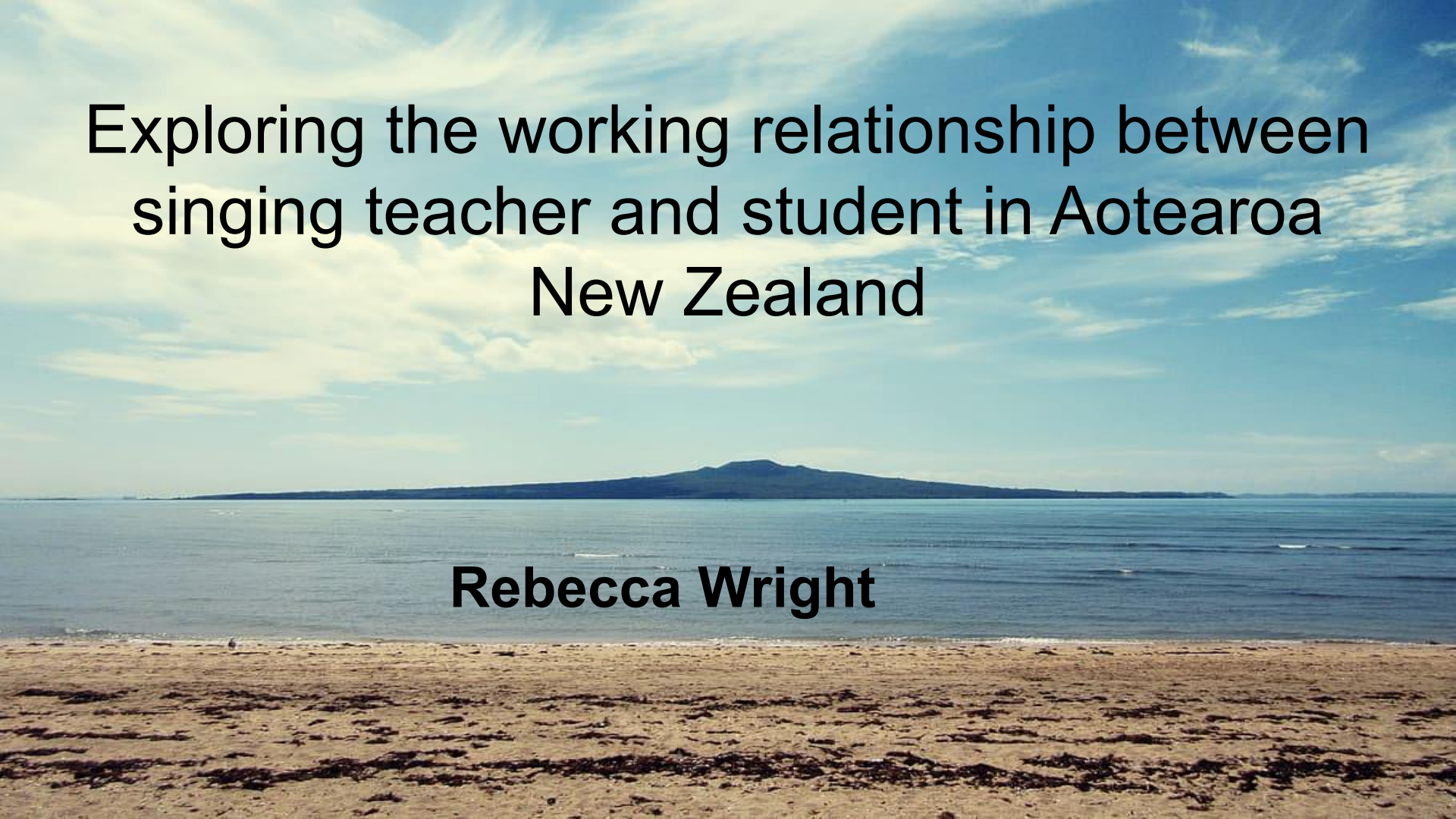


A scenic view of a beach with a large island in the background under a blue sky with clouds.

Exploring the working relationship between singing teacher and student in Aotearoa New Zealand

Rebecca Wright

Aotearoa New Zealand - The Cultural Context

- Te Tiriti o Waitangi (1840) - Foundation of bi-culturalism between Māori and Pākehā (Dunn & Locke, 2022).
- Importance of Māori perspectives in education and the arts (The Ministry of Education, 2017).
- Importance of language in learning (Albert, 2012).

Key Research Questions

What do students and teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand value in the working relationship?

Do these values align with those found in Māori pedagogy?

Do these values align with the concepts found within student-centred theory? (Rogers, 1951)





The Working Relationship

- The meeting between two people to work on a particular issue or task (Jacobs, 1982; Jacobs, 2010).
- A comfortable, safe and positively co-created relationship (McWilliams, 2004).
- Plays a vital, or determining factor, in the role of teaching and learning (Nelson, Low & Nelson, 2005).

Student-centered Teaching

- The teacher acts as a facilitator of the learning experience, encouraging students to set their own learning objectives (Rogers, 1951). The student who should lead the line of inquiry within the learning process rather than the teacher.
- Empathy: described as the ability to recognise or experience what another may be feeling (Rogers, 1951; Jacobs, 2010). The ability to engage with a student in a manner that aligns with their intellectual and emotional expressions.
- The teacher and student are co-workers in the teaching space, where they are both regarded as equals, rather than the teacher as expert (Rogers, 1951).

Māori Literature Contextualisation

Ako

- Teaching is not simply a “transmission of knowledge” (Derry, 2013, p.45) but a sharing or co-creating of the learning experience (Dunn & Locke, 2022).

Tuakana-teina

- Refers to the relationship between an older (*tuakana*) and younger person (*teina*). In the context of teaching - the *tuakana* is the one with knowledge and experience, the learner is the *teina*.

Manaakitanga

- A set of behaviours that reflect concern, generosity, hospitality and mutual respect, for the other (Hall et al., 2012), or “a process whereby *mana* (power, authority) is translated into actions of generosity” (Durie, 2001, p. 83). By upholding the principles of hospitality found within *manaakitanga*, which is deeply respectful to the other, a mutual understanding and connection can unfold (Morice, 2003).

Connection

- Acknowledging the interconnectedness of all things.

Methodology

Hermeneutics

- A researcher's prior beliefs and prejudices, along with their philosophical framework will influence the ways in which data is gathered and analysed (Gadamer, 1975).

Kaupapa Māori

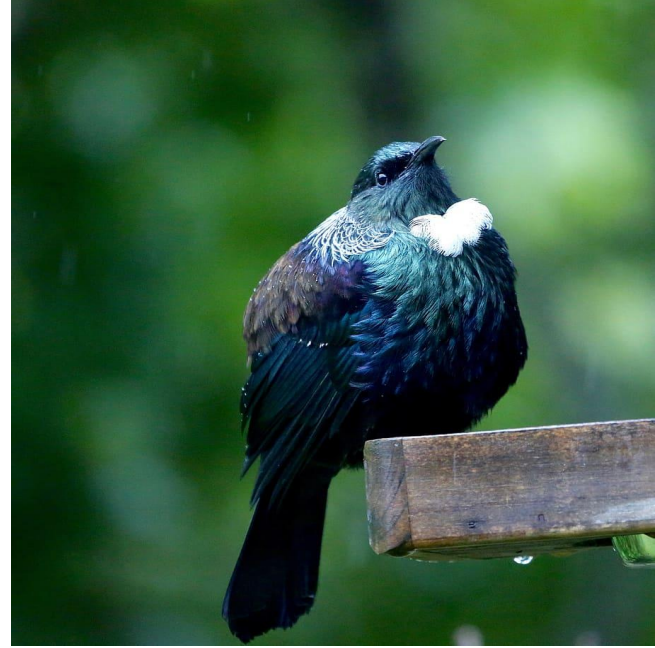
- Uphold the validity of Te Ao Māori (Māori world view).

Thematic analysis

- A thematic analysis was implemented through six steps outlined by Braun & Clark (2006) to uncover reoccurring themes and patterns.

Insider research

- Insider-researchers are those who choose to study a group that they themselves belong (Breen, 2007).
- Shared understandings of subtle nuances that occur within the inner circle of those being researched (Costley, et al, 2013).



Ethical considerations

Cultural ethics

- In many cases previous “research of indigenous peoples has effectively silenced minority voices while emphasising the voice of the powerful coloniser” (Rameka, 2015, p. 39).

Insider ethics

- Acknowledge power discrepancies (Winter, 2022; Costley, et al., 2013).

Data collection - Online survey and interview

- Likert Scale
- 13 Questions
- Based on Carl Rogers (1951) student-centred teaching
- 71 people responded to the survey
- Interview with one established Māori vocal pedagogue

	Māori	Non-Māori
All participants	7	64
Students	4	52
Teachers	3	24



Analysis of the findings

Agree with Student-centred Theory	Disagree with Student-centred Theory
<u>Unconditional positive regard</u> • Both Māori and non-Māori were in agreement with creating a space of non-judgment and positive regard	<u>Teacher as expert</u> • General view - teacher as expert • Collens (2015) students remained “deferential to the expert teacher”
<u>Student responsibility for learning</u> • Majority were in agreement that the student is responsible for learning • A small minority suggest there are other factors perhaps tuakana-teina can be applied here?	<u>Teacher-led motivation</u> • The teacher providing the line of enquiry was most popular overall disagreeing with student-led theory • However, this could still support the concept of ako and tuakana-teina

Implications for Teaching

1. Empathy
2. Manaakitanga [kinship, kindness]
3. Ako [reciprocal learning]
4. Connection



Empathy and unconditional positive regard

- Attentive and non-judgmental listening, paying attention to verbal and non-verbal expressions, as well as body language (Rogers, 1951; Robertson, 2005).
- Empathic engagement through empathetic language and vocal tone to acknowledge and validate emotions (Rogers, 1951; Jacobs, 2010).
- Encouraging self-expression to validate the uniqueness of each student (Saunders, 2021; Shereef, 2020).

Manaakitanga in the studio

- A warm and welcoming studio environment (Morice, 2003).
- Empathic communication (Rogers, 1951).
- Demonstrating or offering acts of kindness and generosity. This could be as simple as offering a drink (Morice, 2003).
- Demonstrate cultural sensitivity and awareness by educating yourself about *Tikanga Māori* [practices] and *Te Reo Māori* [language] (Shereef, 2020; Saunder, 2021)
- By acknowledging and valuing diversity (Shereef, 2020).

Connection in the studio

- Learning through peer observation (Saunders, 2021)
- Masterclasses (Long et al., 2012)
- Facilitating peer-to-peer teaching and learning (Saunders, 2021)

Ako or Tuakana-teina in the studio

- Embrace the concept of shared learning by encouraging students to ask questions as well sharing insights and ideas (Saunders, 2021).
- Actively value students' knowledge and encourage the sharing of it (Saunders, 2021)
- Student ownership of learning through creating their own goals, exploring areas of interest (Rogers, 1951), whether that is in repertoire or in particular vocal techniques.
- Encourage a growth mindset (Dweck, 2006) emphasising effort and perseverance.
- Employ the concept *tuakana-teina* where teacher and student alternate between the two roles (Ministry of Education, 2009a).

Limitations and areas of further research

- Small sample size
- Lack of Māori participants
- To further reflect a Māori world view more interviews or kanohi ke ti kanohi (face-to-face) time
- The role of whanau (family) in Te ao Māori (Saunders, 2020).
- Transference and counter-transference in the student-teacher relationship



Summary

This research aimed to explore perspectives and beliefs regarding the working relationship between singing student and teacher and how this relationship affects learning.

The findings suggest that incorporating Māori principles of ako, tuakana-teina and manaakitanga in the singing studio, alongside student-centred theory (Rogers, 1951) could help develop and maintain good working relationships as well as culturally respectful ones.

The inclusion of Te ao Māori (Māori world view) and Māori tikana (Māori practices) in the singing studio may help foster relationships based on mutual respect and collaborative partnership (Saunders, 2020).

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