4
Teaching about Indigenous Forms of Knowledge: Insights from Non-Indigenous Teachers of Visual Arts Education in New Zealand

Jill SMITH

The United Nation's (1948) declaration to promote human rights, the forces of international globalisation and the complex issues arising from population migrations inevitably demand national and ethnic recognition and identity. The unique position of indigenous peoples has placed increasing pressure on teachers to examine and change their practice. This chapter focusses on the problems faced by non-indigenous teachers in visual arts education who are required or desire to teach indigenous forms of knowledge. Contextualised within New Zealand, a country in which the indigenous Mäori are protected by *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* – The Treaty of Waitangi signed in 1840 with the British Crown – all students, whatever their ethnicity, are required by statute to become cognisant of the art and culture of the indigenous people. Visual arts teachers, whether indigenous or non-indigenous, therefore have this as a curriculum responsibility. Drawing on my experiences as a non-indigenous teacher and teacher educator in the visual arts, and on case study research in New Zealand schools, I highlight issues related to the kinds of learning that teachers may need when judging how they position indigenous knowledge in their programmes. Underlying philosophical issues, curricular demands and educational practice in the problematical context of the changing nature of indigenous knowledge are also discussed. I assert that non-indigenous visual arts teachers can be empowered to work with indigenous forms of knowledge with integrity and sensitivity. The challenges they face and the professional strategies for teacher learning are considered relevant to all teachers in other curriculum areas working within culturally diverse societies.

Philosophical Issues

A primary concern is the problem of teacher demographics common to many nations in which indigenous peoples (those who inhabited the land before invasion or colonisation) are under-represented in the teaching community. For example, in Canada and Australia, despite multi-cultural policies, the presence of the indigenous peoples (Indian and Aboriginal, respectively) is often ignored (Irwin et al. 1999) with the majority of teachers being of non-indigenous origin. In New Zealand, a country with bi-cultural policies, teachers (including those in the visual arts) are predominantly European or *Päkehä,* a name given by the indigenous Mäori to non-Polynesian New Zealanders of European ancestry (Smith 2003a, 2005). Sleeter (2001, p.94), citing statistics from the United States Department of Education, has also drawn attention to the "overwhelming presence of whiteness" of pre-service teachers in the United States. When the teaching force is dominantly non-indigenous, questions must be asked about its responsibility to meet the curriculum needs of the indigenous population.

Another issue relevant to non-indigenous teachers was identified by Sleeter (2001) in her review of 80 research studies of the effects of strategies used in pre-service teacher education to prepare teachers for multi-cultural schools. Sleeter reported that while a large proportion of white pre-service teachers in the United States anticipated working with students from cultural backgrounds other than their own, they brought little cross-cultural knowledge and experience to their teacher preparation. Banks (2001), also commenting on the consequences of the "monocultural experiences" and the "privileged racial and class status" of many white students in United States teacher education programmes, noted the tendency of white students "to view themselves as noncultural and nonethnic beings who are colorblind and raceless" (p.11). As a consequence, he claimed, these students "often view race and culture as something possessed by others and view themselves as 'just Americans'" (ibid, p.11). Parallels exist in New Zealand where many teachers and students regard themselves as 'just New Zealanders', or 'Kiwis' (a colloquial name for New Zealanders). The plurality of cultures within nations today suggests that such narrow interpretations by non-indigenous teachers not only excludes recognition of other cultures but inhibits consideration of their own cultural dispositions.

Limited awareness of discrimination, especially racism, as noted by Sleeter (2001) in reference to white pre-service students, may also shape

the attitudes of non-indigenous teachers. For example, the prevalence of racism in some sectors in Australia and Canada has been demonstrated by the belief that segregation was a viable policy, particularly with Aboriginal peoples (Armitage 1995; Irwin et al. 1999). The question has been raised in New Zealand as to whether European or *Päkehä* teachers are sufficiently willing to be held accountable and face up to a responsibility to cater for cultural differences in classrooms (Bishop & Glynn 1999; Hall & Bishop 2001). This issue is reinforced by Cochran-Smith's (2001, p.3) claim that teacher education should help prepare teachers "to challenge the inequities that are embedded in systems of schooling and in society". Her assertion that teaching must be recognised as a political activity aligned with Nieto's (2000) argument to move beyond superficial culturally responsive education. To position, as these two authors suggest, issues of equity at the forefront of teacher education, and hence teaching, has substantial implications for the non-indigenous teacher.

Another issue for non-indigenous teachers is imposition by the power-holding and controlling sector of culturally specific curricula, whether mono-cultural, bi-cultural or multi-cultural. The curricula most often imposed by colonising administrators have been predominantly, if not totally, mono-cultural, ignoring any need to sustain indigenous cultures (Chalmers 1999; Bishop & Glynn 1999). Multi-cultural governmental policies, as in the case of Australia, have been seen as applicable to immigrant populations but not to the Aboriginal peoples (Irwin et al. 1999). In comparison, New Zealand's bi-cultural policies of the 1970s, deriving from *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* – The Treaty of Waitangi (1840), which gave Mäori and settlers equal rights of citizenship under the British Crown, have required educational provisions which take account of both the indigenous and non-indigenous sectors. It could be argued that this emphasis has failed to accommodate 'other' immigrant cultures. Thus political ideologies can have a powerful influence on educational policies and practices, and may override teachers' concerns to offer fair and equitable provision for all within a culturally diverse society.

One further underpinning issue for non-indigenous teachers is the paucity of theoretical and evidence-based research that could assist them to learn to work with indigenous forms of knowledge with all students. Some useful insights have been provided by studies that focussed on educational models by and for indigenous educators. For example, there are models which are built around strong educational communities that are family-centred, based on indigenous epistemologies and spiritual

beliefs in indigenous settings, and which focus on preserving and revitalising indigenous languages and cultures (Smith 1997; Ah Nee-Benham 2000). Studies on the socio-political dynamics of bilingual programming in bi-cultural settings have, similarly, focussed on the education of indigenous students (Goldstein 1998; Ritchie 2003). Although these models may be useful in contributing to the education of indigenous students they are less helpful in assisting non-indigenous teachers to incorporate indigenous knowledge for the benefit of all students.

The issues articulated above have not only influenced my practice and research as a non-indigenous teacher and teacher educator in the visual arts but they also underpin the challenges teachers in other nations, whether in the visual arts or other disciplines, could confront when teaching about non-indigenous forms of knowledge.

Challenges to Non-indigenous Teachers

In nations with indigenous peoples the challenges faced by non-indigenous teachers will be the outcome of varying educational policies, practices and attitudes. A search for appropriate educational solutions to particular circumstances would therefore need to be prefaced by a rigorous evaluation of accepted and conventional practices and the policies behind them. Such evaluations are likely to demand of the non-indigenous teacher research and critical self-appraisal, and un-learning as well as learning. In confronting teachers with the need to review their own and others' attitudes and understandings, is it worth asking the question: what are my attitudes and states of knowledge, and those of others, towards indigenous peoples and their cultures?

Critical to challenging teachers' attitudes is an examination of the literature that documents both the source springs of knowledge of indigenous peoples and the debates over the contemporary status of indigenousness. In nations such as New Zealand, Canada and Australia, that have invasion or colonisation of indigenous peoples in common, such an investigation showed that similar attitudes were displayed by early European settlers towards indigenous peoples. Armitage (1995), who illuminated the relationships between indigenous peoples and settlers in Australia, Canada and New Zealand, noted that in Australia:

> [D]uring the initial contact period there was no difficulty in determining who was an "Aborigine". Aborigines were black, uncivilized, and pagan. This meant they were not British subjects and,

hence, were excluded from all citizenship rights (p.22).

In common with other colonised nations, some literature in New Zealand has also supported an historical view that the indigenous people were considered an inferior species and their culture, language and way of life were regarded as insignificant (Vasil 1993; Walker 2001). For example, while writing a long romantic poem about the love of an Englishman for a Mäori maiden, Domett (briefly a New Zealand Premier in the 1860s) at the same time wrote to a colleague: "Your nigger philanthropy rather sickens me…it is unthinkable that savages should have equal rights with civilized men" (cited in Walker 2001, p.116). Many *Päkehä* considered the Mäori an uncivilised people, and believed that it was for their own good that they be assimilated into the superior culture of the *Päkehä* (Vasil 1993). Although more diverse points of view are evident in the contemporary literature, overtly racist attitudes towards Mäori and European cultural superiority persist in New Zealand (Christie 1999). Close scrutiny by non-indigenous teachers of such attitudes towards non-indigenous peoples in their own nations, both past and present, is a challenge to be confronted.

Within a visual arts context similar attitudes pertaining to the art and culture of indigenous peoples are found in the literature. Art education theorists such as Chalmers (1995), Irwin et al (1999), and Freedman (2000) argued that how non-indigenous people view indigenous art has been affected by European accounts: perceptions have been coloured by what European missionaries, traders, explorers, anthropologists and administrators have said about it. The treatment of indigenous art of the Northwest Coast First Nations in North America as a "quaint variant of 'real' art" (Chalmers 1995, p.113), or "objects of ethnological interest" (ibid, p.116) challenges the non-indigenous visual arts teacher to question such assumptions of cultural superiority. The issue has been further complicated when, at the insistence of the tourist trade and market place, indigenous artists continue to make 'native art' that accorded with Westernised ideals of beauty, rejecting that which was seen as 'brutal', 'crude' or 'grotesque' (ibid, p.117). Such marginalisation of 'primitive', 'folk', or 'tribal art' within the fine arts hierarchy has its parallels in New Zealand. Prior to the 1970s Mäori art was referred to as 'tribal art' and *taonga* (treasures) were considered mere objects of ethnological curiosity. The relationship between how indigenous people and their colonisers viewed indigenous art was summed up by Mead (1997) who maintained

that up until the 1980s:

> [T]he study, protection and care of, and the speaking about Mäori art were largely the province and domain of the dominant culture. Mäori art was a captured art, and museums could be regarded as repositories of the trophies of capture (p.181).

This 'colonisation' of indigenous art and culture has meant that in many instances the non-indigenous members of a society have grown up with a limited, often erroneous and patronising view of indigenous art. The challenge is to grasp the history of indigenous/non-indigenous relationships and understand why the art (or any other form of knowledge) of indigenous peoples was not seen as of equal worth to that produced in accordance with Euro-Western values: the 'right' art. If non-indigenous teachers seek to learn to work with integrity with indigenous forms of knowledge they will need to examine such views, and seek to understand the particularity of 'indigenous knowledge'.

An analysis of the concept of indigenousness may well reveal that it does not lend itself to simple definition. Non-indigenous teachers could discover that indigenous knowledge is not only complex and differentiated according to its location but is liable to flux and change over time. Over-simplistic interpretations which typify indigenous knowledge as 'traditional', of the past, and irrelevant in today's world can do it disservice, debasing both the indigenous condition and the societies from which it originates and evolves.

Within a visual arts context in New Zealand, for example, indigenous educators such as Whitecliffe (1999 p.223) endorsed the need to challenge "classical and romantic notions of inclusion of the indigenous culture" and to confront problems of definition. Jahnke (2003), similarly, warned of the dangers of conflating all indigenous knowledge as 'traditional' and able to be dismissed as an historical curiosity. He suggested that the non-indigenous visual arts teacher can find a way through apparently conflicting definitions of indigenous knowledge by using the term "Mäori visual culture" as a culturally appropriate substitute for "Mäori art" (p.18) thus circumventing "the need to address issues of appropriation, hybridity and essentialism" (ibid, p.19). In elaboration, Jahnke argued that while Mäori visual culture of the nineteenth century was grounded within the traditions of the *marae* (the meeting place and repository of Mäori tradition), visual culture of today "tends to

shift from the customary index to the non-customary in a state of flux that is largely determined by the philosophical position and the ideology of an individual or group" (ibid, p.22). Jahnke, then, preferred the term 'customary' rather than 'traditional'. Non-indigenous educator, Duncum (2001), also commenting within a visual arts context, questioned the use of the term 'traditional' – if that is taken to mean that indigenous knowledge is stable and unchanging and defined in terms of its past history. Instead, he saw it as translated rather than transmitted, as new circumstances arise and successive generations question taken-for-granted assumptions. Anderson's (1997) view, however, was that "art in traditional/indigenous societies is conservative, having a primary purpose of reinforcing and transmitting core cultural values and beliefs" (p.66). Such variety of definition requires non-indigenous teachers in the visual arts to examine the particular nature and significance of the indigenous knowledge they work with. There may apply different, but equally valuable, educational rationales.

Another challenge confronting the non-indigenous visual arts teacher whose views have been shaped within the modernist art aesthetic may be to comprehend the concept of the inseparable connection between art and life as a form of indigenous knowledge. For many indigoenous peoples, the first occupiers and users of the natural environment, a central concept is of belonging to the land. In this interpretation no distinction is made between humankind, the spiritual world, and the natural world. While in the Euro-Western world of modernism an 'art work' is seen as having its own self-sufficient identity in many indigenous societies it is a living and animate form with spiritual powers and presence as significant as its physical form. Nieto (1992), from a North American perspective, explained the difference:

> [N]ot all people separate knowledge in this way…not only is the content of our schools that of Euro-American, Western experience, but so is the very framework by which knowledge is presented. In this conception, for example, philosophy and religion are different "subject areas", which would not be how most American Indians might conceive of the very same knowledge (p.77).

Within the New Zealand context indigenous art curator Hakiwai (1996), when comparing what the Western world has classified as 'art' and what Mäori call '*taonga'*, explained an important distinction:

> Taonga or treasures embody all those things that represent our culture. Our treasures are much more than objects d'art for they are living in every sense of the word and carry the love and pride of those who fashioned them, handled and caressed them, and passed them on for future generations (p.54).

The significance given to *taonga* as valued cultural property illustrates one interpretation of indigenous knowledge that is at the heart of a culture not to be found elsewhere in the world. It could be argued that education which aims to preserve and protect indigenous knowledge as a dimension of the total social fabric aligns with the intent of the Declaration of Human Rights. However, an uncritical pursuit by non-indigenous visual arts teachers of so-called 'traditional' indigenous knowledge may need to be questioned.

Mäori themselves, for example, whilst reinforcing the cultural significance of *taonga* and the educational responsibility to respect it, do debate how this concept is interpreted. Elders such as Mead (1984) have argued that "Mäori art is made by Mäori artists working within Mäori stylistic traditions of the *iwi* (tribe) for the *iwi*" (p.75). In comparison, a younger generation of contemporary artists considered that Mäori art has always been innovative and responsive to change; that it can use techniques and materials available worldwide to give expression to issues pertinent to a live culture. If indigenous culture is seen in these terms as evolutionary, incorporating global knowledge as a dimension of the contemporary culture – what Duncum (2001) calls "indigenisation of global culture" (p.5) – the educational emphasis may shift. Teacher learning might not focus so much upon acquisition of cultural knowledge as upon making critical assessment of how cultural knowledge influences and operates within society (Grierson & Mansfield 2003). A sound knowledge base would be required, the acquisition of which challenges non-indigenous visual arts teachers venturing into new territory to ask what might be their rights, limitations, roles and responsibilities as non-indigenous teachers required or desiring to work with indigenous forms of knowledge.

Questions of cultural independence, cultural integration or cultural interaction, common to nations with indigenous peoples, are complex issues confronting non-indigenous teachers. Demands by indigenous peoples for respect of their status, for protection of their cultural inheritance, and their resentment or resistance to intrusion by other cultures,

raise critical questions for teachers about rights of access to cultural knowledge. In New Zealand, for example, some Mäori artists and educators resist *Päkehä* encroachment on their territory (Whitecliffe 1999). Albeit with reference to non-indigenous curators commenting on Mäori art, a statement by Jahnke (1995) has prompted non-indigenous visual arts teachers to reflect on their position:

> Anyone can speak about a culture without an awareness of that culture. In order to speak for Mäori one must earn the right. The right is not self-imposed but is decreed through genealogy, through acknowledgement or through deed. Even Päkehä may earn the right to speak for Mäori but it is a right conferred by Mäori not by *Päkehä* (p.11).

The non-indigenous teacher challenged by this demand might well be tempted to walk away. In New Zealand that is not possible. *The arts in the New Zealand curriculum* (Ministry of Education 2000) requires students (and therefore teachers) to develop "an understanding of art forms in relation to the *tangata whenua* (and) to bi-culturalism in New Zealand…" (ibid, p.7). Further, "…all students should have opportunities to learn about traditional and contemporary Mäori art forms" (ibid, p.71). The small number of indigenous visual arts teachers in New Zealand schools means that education about Mäori art and culture or 'visual culture' cannot realistically be left as the exclusive domain of indigenous teachers (Smith 2001, 2003a, 2005). This situation, an outcome of teacher demographics, could well be paralleled in other nations.

A challenge confronting non-indigenous teachers in the visual arts will be to not only ask themselves what they need to know but what their responsibilities are in using such knowledge. Cultural appropriation, common to nations with indigenous peoples, is one such issue. In New Zealand, for example, the "deliberate...promiscuous plundering of Mäori motifs – designs, forms, myths by leading Päkehä artists", is deplored by Mäori such as Te Awekotuku (cited in Pound 1994, p.107). A counter view is advanced by indigenous artists such as Matchitt and Wilson (cited in Pound 1994) who have argued that *Päkehä* references to Mäori culture are acceptable when approached with the necessary respect, and the use of Mäori motifs could be seen as homage, a gesture of respect, a translation and a re-vitalisation. Whitecliffe (1999), on the other hand, claimed that superficiality, unwitting demonstrations of cultural superi-

ority, or of cultural spoliation puts the indigenous culture "at risk of dilution via iconographic appropriation" (p.223). Such actions, he argued, can "hybridise *Päkehä* and Mäori into a sort of homogenised 'Kiwi' iconography which disenfranchises both Mäori and *Päkehä*" (ibid, p.224). A responsibility for non-indigenous teachers will therefore be to examine these issues, common to nations with indigenous peoples.

The interfaces of indigenous and non-indigenous knowledge are complex and tendentious. Non-indigenous visual arts teachers, for example, who ask why they should venture into this territory are answered by those who argue that art is not only a significant feature of cultural life in all societies but that its practice can be remedial in empowering minorities and celebrating difference (Chalmers 1996; Efland, Freedman & Stuhr 1996; Boughton & Mason 1999; Freedman 2000; Grierson & Mansfield 2003). Others are in no doubt that teachers need to make their classrooms a place in which they consciously work against racism and exclusion in all its forms (Nieto 2000; Chalmers 2003). In the interests of a just and fair society it is essential to restore, maintain and celebrate the personal and group identity of indigenous peoples.

These writers argue for a theoretical and philosophical rationale for the place of indigenous knowledge within the curriculum. If teachers are persuaded by such arguments and if they desire to acknowledge and celebrate indigenous forms of knowledge, they will have to accept responsibility for new kinds of learning. I have had to undertake such learning and explore strategies which prompt and give confidence to non-indigenous visual arts teachers to do likewise (Smith 2003a, 2003b). Support and encouragement has been given by Mäori colleagues who consider I have achieved the requisite state of knowledge and appropriate attitudes (the required status or '*mana*'). The views of Mäori researcher, Linda Smith (1998), have been influential in terms of cultural sensitivity. Her advice to non-Mäori researchers, such as myself, to avoid becoming involved with issues which are the proper domain of Mäori, to learn *te reo* (Mäori language), to become knowledgeable about Mäori concerns, to consult Mäori, and to seek their support and consent, is pertinent to all non-indigenous teachers. I remain aware that my approaches are always under scrutiny if I am to teach about indigenous forms of knowledge in visual arts education with integrity and sensitivity. With these cautions in mind I have explored strategies that take into account the New Zealand situation. I offer these possibilities for teachers in other nations confronted with similar challenges.

Strategies for Non-indigenous Teachers as Learners

A useful starting point for non-indigenous teachers' learning could be to recognise the reality of their personal and professional attitudes and states of knowledge. Confronting their limitations as well as acknowledging their strengths in respect of cultural knowledge (Goldstein 1998) will help to eliminate barriers to learning. A strategy for non-indigenous teachers might be to see their role as facilitators of culturally inclusive practices, rather than deliverers of cultural knowledge, accepting that it is indigenous students themselves and their families and tribal communities who are the experts in their culture (Ritchie 2003). Implicit in this strategy is recognition that whatever their support and sympathy for, or knowledge about indigenous forms of knowledge, non-indigenous teachers do not own, belong to, or live inside the indigenous culture.

It follows, then, that an important learning strategy for non-indigenous visual arts teachers will be consultation with indigenous experts in the culture**.** In New Zealand, for example, knowledge acquisition would be guided by consultation with revered Mäori elders (*kaumatua*), staff members or peers, and with Mäori in the community. Research from secondary sources could include the use of Mäori models such as the framework for visual culture developed by Jahnke (2003). His classification of works of art, not by maker but according to customary or non-customary confluence, included references that contribute to the making of works of Mäori visual culture – "*whakapapa* (genealogy), *matauranga* (knowledge), *ahua* (appearance), *waihanga* (process), *wahi* (site) and *tikanga* (protocol)" (p.20). Such a model provides a useful framework for changing art teachers' practice in New Zealand by taking them beyond the indigenous forms themselves to their cultural contexts, both customary and contemporary. It is a model that could be adapted to teaching about differing forms of indigenous knowledge in other nations with indigenous peoples.

Learning about the particular nature of indigenous knowledge and how it differs from Euro-Western knowledge is an essential strategy. Within a visual arts context, for example, the modernist art and art education movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have downplayed context in favour of the self-sufficient art work which stands apart from its social, political and cultural contexts (Efland et al. 1996; Freedman 2000; Grierson & Mansfield 2003). In comparison, the model of how indigenous forms of knowledge are placed within socio-cultural and political contexts can enable teachers to look beyond art as self-sufficient.

Changing their practice could involve visual arts teachers in investigating the contexts in which traditional and or customary forms were made, the role of the early indigenous art maker, and the much-changed roles of contemporary indigenous artists. They could learn how indigenous peoples have traditionally embraced artistic, cultural and spiritual values very different from those of modernist Euro-Western art. Fertile ground for teacher learning then is an examination of what underlies indigenous art: recording histories, giving shape and form to beliefs and narratives, exemplifying personal and communal qualities and characteristics, defining and differentiating status, membership and ownership, and celebration and commemoration. Such strategies need to go beyond a focus on the "overt signifiers of culture such as clothing, food, and music" which neglect the deeper values that inform cultural worlds (Ritchie 2003, p.15). It would require a change of practice in which learning of indigenous knowledge is acquired at a deep, rather than superficial, level. It may also require some re-learning about Euro-Western contexts of knowledge.

Quality learning, therefore, is a key strategy for planning and implementing programmes that will avoid tokenism, cultural appropriation of artefacts, motifs and patterns, mimicking of cultural objects, and disregard of cultural context. This view is supported by multicultural theorists (such as Sleeter 2001; Chalmers 1996, 2003; Efland et al. 1996) who condemned so-called multi-cultural education which comprised 'additions' to curriculum, and superficial practices that ignore and may affront indigenous beliefs and behaviours. What Chalmers (1996) referred to as the 'totem-poles-out-of-toilet-rolls' approach has parallels in visual arts education in New Zealand. As example, the imitation of sacred *taonga* (treasures) as *pápier mâche hei tiki* (stylised human figure pendants), the inking on student's faces of *moko* (tattoos) without reference to their meaning, or the copying of *kowhaiwhai* (traditional patterns) onto 'Mäori-looking' T-shirts represents gross disrespect of indigenous art and culture. An important strategy for teacher learning is to recognise that teaching about indigenous forms of knowledge is substantially different from making art objects that 'look' indigenous.

Depth of knowledge can also assist in the careful and sensitive selection of issues and themes as an integral and substantial part of programmes. As example, I have seen explored within a Mäori context issues and themes that are likely to permeate the art and culture of other nations with indigenous peoples. One such theme, related to the univer-

sal search for 'identity', focussed on sub-themes of personal identity, including *whakapapa* (genealogy), *türangawaewae* (one's place to stand), *whänau* (extended family), *whanäungatanga* (kinship, relationship), *tupuna* (ancestors), *moko* (tattoo indicating genealogical affiliations), *käkahu* (clothing), personal adornment, performance and ritual, and *körero* (speech making and oratory). To illustrate in more detail, one non-indigenous visual arts teacher explored with students the sub-theme of *whakapapa* (genealogy) with a visit to a local *marae* (ceremonial courtyard) in front of a *wharenui* (meeting house). They followed the *kawa* (protocol) of welcome as *manuhiri* (visitors or guests) by the *tangata whenua* (people of the land). A *karanga* (ceremonial call of greeting) by a Mäori woman, *karakia* (prayer) and *körero* (speech making), all part of the formal *powhiri* (welcome), preceded entry into the *wharenui*. Here the *kaumätua* (revered elder) of the *marae* introduced the concept of ancestry through recitation of his *whakapapa* and his *tupuna* (ancestors) implicit in their visual manifestations in *whakairo* (carvings) in the meeting house. Thus, the whole proceedings employed all the arts in holistic terms. To undertake this programme it was essential that this non-indigenous visual arts teacher understood and was thoroughly acquainted with the meanings and significance of this customary ceremony, and in turn was able to adequately prepare the students for their part in the proceedings. Those explorations formed part of a visual arts programme in which art became inseparable from cultural knowledge and context. It provided an effective strategy for the teacher and students to learn about the social and cultural contexts of an indigenous people. Further, it led to explorations by the non-indigenous teacher and students of their own traditions of ancestry. This example is intended to illustrate a universal theme and an approach that could be adapted within other nations with indigenous peoples.

In-depth learning must, however, be accompanied by strategies which show how non-indigenous teachers and students can effectively use their indigenous knowledge. My stance, contextualised within visual arts education in New Zealand, is that non-indigenous students *cannot* make 'Mäori art', no matter how steeped they become in the lore, traditions and protocols of the indigenous people. Students may *draw upon* traditional or customary and contemporary forms of Mäori art and visual culture and the socio-political sources of cultural knowledge. Their art making may derive from, or *use as a catalyst* the ideas, beliefs, significance, and contexts that underpin indigenous knowledge. In the end,

however, students can only make their 'own' art (Smith 2003a, 2003b). This strategy, which I believe is central to the issue of non-indigenous visual arts teachers working with indigenous forms of knowledge, was a focus of case study research conducted in a sample of differing types of secondary schools in New Zealand (Smith 2001).

The Relationship between Research and Practice

The aim of my research was to investigate the relationship between national education policy, which requires teachers to include the study of art and culture of the indigenous Mäori in visual arts programmes, and the realities of classroom practice. To enable a variety of perspectives to be heard, participants included indigenous and non-indigenous principals, visual arts teachers, and students aged between 14 and 18 years. The underpinning issues presented at the beginning of this chapter – teacher demographics, lack of cultural knowledge and experience, signs of discrimination and inequity, and a range of attitudes towards culturally specific curricula were evident to varying degrees in each school. From interviews and observations in classrooms it became clear that where non-indigenous visual arts teachers were supported by their schools, and were prepared to acquire new learning, they moved beyond their limited and often superficial knowledge of indigenous art and culture and its connection with life. Many had not only acquired in-depth knowledge of the forms and significance of Mäori art and culture, but an understanding of the traditions, practices and beliefs of Mäori (*Mäoritanga*) and respect for Mäori cultural values (*tikanga*). A non-indigenous head of art department explained that in her school:

> I would like to think that we are very explicit about that. It's not just about going and drawing but the idea of knowing and understanding. In the last few years in particular we have made great effort to ensure that it wasn't tokenism, it wasn't going into museums and drawing Mäori things but there was some understanding about the relationship between traditional concerns and social conflict and values, and how these have informed contemporary Mäori art. (cited in Smith 2001, p.88).

It was also evident through interviews with students in schools in which indigenous knowledge was positioned as a major part of visual arts programmes that ethnicity was not a major factor affecting their

attitudes or performance. While some Mäori students appeared disaffected with learning about their art and culture others saw it as an opportunity to find and reclaim their cultural heritage. Some *Päkehä* students lacked interest, whilst others showed considerable empathy with, and knowledge of, Mäori art and its significance. As example, when asked whether she considered the visual arts course at her school to be 'bi-cultural', a fifteen-year-old *Päkehä* student replied:

> Yes it is, because it is incorporating half European and half Mäori – bi-cultural as in two cultures. I feel as if the Treaty of Waitangi sort of comes across in my work. All the assignments are based around *Pukekawa*…which means the hill of bitter memories…and the wars between the Europeans and the Mäori and things like that. We're using that theme and applying all these different techniques…. In the woodcuts we've just done we had to incorporate…an equal amount of Mäori things like carving and *kowhaiwhai* patterns, and the classic architecture of the museum and its surroundings…the Morton Bay fig tree…we can do our own theme within the theme (cited in Smith 2001, pp.104-105).

Conversely, in a school where learning about indigenous knowledge was not a significant part of its policies and practice, the head of art department explained that while students were given the opportunity to study Mäori art their learning was confined to its 'forms':

> We tend to just go to museums, but we don't talk about the significance of the forms. We don't tell stories or get Mäori educators in to speak to them (the students) about the whole history of Mäori art…ancestor figures, what they are. We don't get into the whole spiritual side. We give the students a lot of information, but we don't get involved in any of the spiritual dimensions of Mäori art which I know is something that we shouldn't miss out (ibid, p.88).

The research findings, albeit illustrated by these few examples, exposed the differences that existed in terms of teacher learning about bicultural policy and practice. There was evidence that non-indigenous visual arts teachers had taken up the challenge to examine their attitudes and states of knowledge, to gain awareness of the particularity of indigenous knowledge, and to be sensitive towards their roles and rights as

non-indigenous teachers. There was evidence that the strategies employed by these teachers – consultation with Mäori, informed and sensitive programme planning, and appropriate use of indigenous knowledge – had resulted in convincing teaching about and with indigenous forms of knowledge.

Conclusion

In terms of the Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the indigenous peoples of the world have the right to the protection of their unique existence and the fabric of their society. I have adopted this as the central tenet of this chapter.

Learning and teaching are an essential means of protecting and sustaining indigenous forms of knowledge. If teachers who are not of the indigenous people are to accept this educational responsibility they will need to question their existing dispositions towards the multiple dimensions of indigeneity, acquire special knowledge, and put in place strategies to gain the requisite insights and competencies. There are three major dimensions of knowledge involved. The first of these is knowledge of how societies, their own and others function and how within indigenous societies, in particular the arts, culture and life are intrinsic, necessary and inseparable dimensions. The second is how non-indigenous teachers can properly and with requisite sensitivity, acquire indigenous knowledge. The third is knowledge of learning and teaching strategies that permit the planning and implementation of programmes that utilise indigenous knowledge for the benefit of all members of society.

In New Zealand the indigenous people have an entitlement under state legislation for recognition of their art and culture. In this chapter I have drawn upon my past and on-going research, personal and professional knowledge, and practice within the field of visual arts education to develop strategies for teacher learning which meet the particular bi-cultural circumstances of New Zealand education. There is evidence from the research, and from my teacher education programme, that where non-indigenous teachers are motivated to become 'teachers as learners' of indigenous forms of knowledge, they can be empowered to do so. At the same time, I have endeavoured, in this chapter, to emphasise that my focus has not been upon teaching of the indigenous people but upon using indigenous forms of knowledge for the benefit of all within a culturally diverse nation. Although there is always more to be done it is my belief that such strategies as I have developed and

advocated are contributing towards a culturally healthy New Zealand society. I would hope that they might encourage teachers in other societies and nations to explore these possibilities.

References

Ah Nee-Benham, M.K.P. (ed.) (2000): *Indigenous educational models for contemporary practice: In our mother's voice*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Anderson, T. (1997): 'Towards a postmodern approach to art education', in Hutchens, J. & Suggs, M. (eds.), *Art education: Content and practice in a postmodern era.* Reston, VA: The National Art Education Association, pp.62-73.

Armitage, A. (1995): *Comparing the policy of Aboriginal assimilation: Australia, Canada, and New Zealand*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Banks, J.A. (2001): 'Citizen education and diversity: Implications for teacher education'. *Journal of Teacher Education,* Vol.52, No.1, pp.5-16.

Bishop, R. & Glynn, T. (1999): *Culture counts: Changing power relations in education*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press.

Boughton, D. & Mason, R. (eds.) (1999): *Beyond multi-cultural art education: International perspectives*. New York: Waxmann.

Chalmers, F.G. (1995): 'European ways of talking about the art of the Northwest Coast First Nations'. *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies,* Vol.XV, No.1, pp.113-127.

Chalmers, F.G. (1996): *Celebrating pluralism: Art, education, and cultural diversity*. Los Angeles, CA: The J. Paul Getty Trust.

Chalmers, F.G. (1999): 'Cultural colonialism and art education: Eurocentric and racist roots of art education', in Boughton, D. & Mason, R. (eds.), *Beyond multi-cultural art education: International perspectives*. New York: Waxmann, pp.173-183.

Chalmers, F.G. (2003): 'Dragon boats and other waka: Implications for art education in Aotearoa, New Zealand', in Grierson, E. & Smith, J. (eds.), *Nga Waka, Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Art Educators refereed conference proceedings.* Wellington: Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Art Educators, Vol.1, pp.257-274.

Christie, W. (1999): *New Zealand education and treatyism.* Auckland: Wyvern Press.

Cochran-Smith, M. (2001): 'Learning to teach against the grain'. *Harvard Educational Review,* Vol.61, No.3, pp.279-310.

Duncum, P. (2001): 'Theoretical foundations for an art education of global culture and principles for classroom practice'. *International Journal of Education and the Arts,* Vol.2, No.3, retrieved 12 December 2004, from http://ijea.asu.edu/v2n3

Efland, A. Freedman, K. & Stuhr, P. (1996): *Postmodern art education: An approach to curriculum*. Reston, VA: The National Art Education Association.

Freedman, K. (2000): 'Social perspectives on art education in the U.S.: Teaching visual culture in a democracy'. *Studies in Art Education,* Vol.41, No.4, pp.314-329.

Goldstein, B.S.C. (1998): 'Creating a context for collaborative consultation: Working across bi-cultural communities'. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation,* Vol.9, No.4, pp.367-374.

Grierson, E.M. & Mansfield, J.E. (eds.) (2003): *The arts in education: Critical perspectives from Aotearoa New Zealand*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press.

Hakiwai, A. (1996): 'Mäori society today: Welcome to our world', in Starzecka, D. (ed.), *Mäori art and culture*. Auckland: David Bateman, pp.50-68.

Hall, A. & Bishop, R. (2001): 'Teacher ethics, professionalism and cultural diversity'. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies,* Vol.36, No.2, pp.187-202.

Irwin, R., Rogers, T. & Farrell, R. (1999): 'Multi-culturalism denies the realities of Aboriginal artist and culture', in Boughton, D. & Mason, R. (eds.), *Beyond multi-cultural art education: International perspectives.* New York: Waxmann, pp.49-64.

Jahnke, R. (1995): 'Dialogue: Talking past each other', in Holmes, J. (ed.), *Bi-culturalism, multi-culturalism and the visual arts: Papers presented at the Auckland Conference of University Art and Design Schools.* Hobart: University of Tasmania, pp.5-17.

Jahnke, R. (2003): 'Mäori visual culture on the run', in Grierson, E. & Smith, J. (eds.), *Nga Waka, Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Art Educators refereed conference proceedings.* Wellington: Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Art Educators, Vol.1, pp.13-26.

Mead, H.M. (ed.) (1984): *Te Mäori: Mäori art from New Zealand collections*. Auckland: Heinemann.

Mead, H.M. (1997): *Landmarks, bridges and visions: Aspects of Maori culture*. Wellington: Victoria University Press.

Ministry of Education. (2000): *The arts in the New Zealand curriculum*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Nieto, S. (1992): *Affirming diversity: The sociopolitical context of multi-cultural education*. New York: Longman.

Nieto, S. (2000): 'Placing equity front and center: Some thoughts on transforming teacher education for a new century'. *Journal of Teacher Education,* Vol.51, No.3, pp.180-187.

Pound, F. (1994): *The space between: Päkehä use of Mäori motifs in modernist New Zealand art*. Auckland: Workshop Press.

Ritchie, J. (2003): 'Bi-cultural development in early childhood care and education

in Aotearoa/New Zealand: Views of teachers and teacher educators'. *Early Years,* Vol.23, No.1, pp.7-19.

Sleeter, C. (2001): 'Preparing teachers for culturally diverse schools: Research and the overwhelming presence of whiteness'. *Journal of Teacher Education,* Vol.52, No.2, pp.94-106.

Smith, D.J. (1997): 'Indigenous peoples extended family relationships: A source for classroom structure'. *McGill Journal of Education*, Vol.32, pp.125-138.

Smith, J. (2001): *Bi-culturalism: The relationship between education policy and art education practice in secondary schools in Aotearoa New Zealand*. Unpublished Master of Education thesis, University of South Australia, Adelaide.

Smith, J. (2003a): 'Must we? Should we? Can we...teach Mäori art? The dilemmas of bi-cultural policy in art education practice in Aotearoa New Zealand', in Grierson, E. & Smith, J. (eds.), *Nga Waka, Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Art Educators refereed conference proceedings*. Wellington: Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Art Educators, Vol.1, pp.49-66.

Smith, J. (2003b): 'Supporting non-Mäori art teachers to teach Mäori art education'. Paper presented at Nga Waka, Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Art Educators Conference, Auckland.

Smith, J. (2005): 'Visual arts education: Investigating curriculum content in Auckland Secondary schools' programmes at years 9-10'. Unpublished research report, University of Auckland, Faculty of Education, Auckland.

Smith, L. (1998): *Decolonising methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. New York: Zed Books.

United Nations (1948-1998): 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights, December 1948', retrieved 12 May 2000, from http:www.un.org/Overview/rights.html; http://www. unhchr.ch/udhr/lang/eng.htm.

Vasil, R. (1993): *Bi-culturalism: Reconciling Aotearoa with New Zealand*. Wellington: Victoria University Press.

Walker, P. (2001): *The fox boy*. London: Bloomsbury Press.

Whitecliffe, G. (1999): 'Issues of multi-cultural art education in New Zealand', in Boughton, D. & Mason, R. (eds.), *Beyond multi-cultural art education: International perspectives*. New York: Waxmann, pp.213-229.