Teaching in context:
Some implications of a racialised social order

*Te Kotahitanga Voices Conference*

Keith Ballard
Ministry of Health & University of Otago (2006)

Decades of disparity III: Ethnic and socio-economic inequalities in mortality.

Maori life expectancy compared with non-Maori:
Maori lived 6-7 years less in early 1980’s
Maori lived 8-9 years less by 1999.
Ministry of Health & University of Otago (2006)

- Data not explained by life-style variables (smoking, diet, alcohol) so can reject a deficit interpretation.
- Inequality of life expectancy evident within socio-economic groups.
- Data reflect a “racialised social order” of inequalities of resources and power.
Poverty and inequality

UNICEF *Child poverty in rich countries (2005)*:

Out of 24 OECD countries NZ is one of five that show “exceptionally high rates of child poverty” correlates with problems in:

- health
- nutrition
- education
- social participation

Accrues long term cumulative damage (Ministry of Social Development, 2004).

Disproportionate for Maori and Pasifika people (Waldegrave et al, 1999).
Income inequality:
    NZ has one of the highest levels of income inequality in the OECD.


University of Texas Inequality Project (2001).

Statistics NZ (2007):
    Gini coefficient = 0.693
    10% of NZ’s own 51.8% of total net worth
    50% of NZ’s own 5.2% of total net worth
Income inequality in NZ (Mowbray in Povey, 2002):

For period 1982-1998

Mean household equivalent disposable income (adjusted for number of people and in $1998):
  - Lowest income decile: -17%
  - Highest income decile: +36%

Overall, in this period 80% households declined in income.
Explaining poverty

(1) “Welfare dependency”
Locates poverty in the motivation and morality of the individual.

(2) Galbraith (2001):
Poverty not explained by data in trade or technology but by “the quasi-violent financial regime change in the 1980s.”

Stiglitz (2003) Senior Vice President and Chief Economist of World Bank:
Increases in poverty and inequality result from the free market policies of the World Bank and the IMF.
Explaining poverty

UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre (2007):

- Child poverty is “policy susceptible.”
- No correlation GDP and child poverty.
- NZ child poverty = 19 of 25 in OECD.
- NZ is 24 of 25 in OECD for health and safety of children.
- NZ is worst in OECD for child death from accidents.
- These are indicators of the “overall level of commitment to children.”
Racism

Ministry of Health & University of Otago (2006):

1981-1999 “decades of disparity”
Maori in comparison with non-Maori show a decline in life expectancy. Reflecting a “racialised social order” of economic and health inequality.

In the latest study to 2004 disparity remains “especially high” and “without doubt” this is not explained by socioeconomic position alone (Blakely et al, 2008).
Racism

Where inequality and injustice disproportionately affect a particular ethnic group (Malin, 1999).

eg. Schools consistently meet needs and wishes of one group, Pakeha, and consistently meet less well needs and wishes of another group, Maori. (Te Puni Kokiri, 1998; Human Rights Commission, 2006).
NZ market model of schooling:

- Widens gap between wealthy and poor schools.
- Increases ethnic and SES segregation.
- Declines in student performance in market losers.

Populist racism
Opposing racism:

- Understanding whiteness as institutionalised privilege (Hytten & Adkins, 2001) and racialised status (Scheurich, 1993).

- Avoid depoliticised “tourist” study of the oppressed Other (Sleeter, 1993).

- Examine the shared “common sense” of media racism (Macedo & Bartolome, 2001).

- Recognise an “education debt of longstanding inequities and disenfranchisement” (Ladson-Billings, 2008).
Ideas as context

Openshaw/ PPTA (2007).

*Evaluation of Te Kotahitanga - Phase 3.*

“Approximately 1000 questionnaires”

308 responses, of which
264 had participated in TK.

No interviews or observations of practice.
Openshaw/PPTA (2007).

- 48.7% said they did not feel “completely free” in the decision to participate in TK (p.33).

- 52.8% said they did not feel “completely free” to opt out (p.34).

- Some comment that TK is “blaming teachers” for low student performance and not other factors (p.38).
Openshaw/PPTA (2007)  
(pp.36-42)

63.4% respond that TK can “dramatically improve Maori student performance”.

“large majority” say the Effective Teaching Profile is “beneficial or highly beneficial”.

65% rated facilitators “high for credibility”.  
59% respond that TK has improved their teaching.
Openshaw/PPTA (2007)

Openshaw says Te Kotahitanga is part of the “school effectiveness movement”

because TK authors refer to a “crisis” in Maori education.

(School effectiveness proponents often refer to a crisis in education with blame targeted to teachers).
TK is not “school effectiveness”. It is similar to other research which identifies issues needing attention.

For example:

Thrupp (1999) refers to problems of schools in economically poor areas as “truly alarming”.

Smyth & Hattam (2004) identify need to enhance student/teacher relationships and address issues of class, gender, racism and homophobia.
Te Kotahitanga is similar to work on social justice in disability.

To achieve social justice for disabled students in education requires:

   Rejection of the medical model of disability (a deficit model focusing on “problems” in the individual).

   Adoption of a social model of disability (a model focusing on problems created by disabling environments).

   Teachers critically examine assumptions, policies and practices in this area.
(see *The New Zealand Disability Strategy, 2001*).
Openshaw/PPTA (2007)

Maori academics a “middle class capitalist neo-tribal elite” (p.23)

Promoting an:

“ideology of culturalism” (p.24)
“fundamentalism” (p.24)
with aspects of “pre-war facism” (p.25).
Openshaw/PPTA (2007)

The early childhood curriculum *Te Whaariki* and South Auckland reading programmes for Maori and Pacific Island children (McNaughton)

Involve an ideology of “culturalism” and “surveillance” of teachers (p. 23)

That could lead to performance pay for teachers and a voucher system for education (p. 48).
Maori comprise:

“wheelers and dealers of the neo-tribal elite”

people of “low literacy, poor education … benefit dependence, sole parenthood … drug and alcohol abuse, physical violence and illegal cash cropping.”

a “primordial” ethnic group whose “social practices” include “body snatching at funerals”

(Rata, 2008, p.3).
Openshaw/PPTA (2007)

Maori should be seen as a low socioeconomic group rather than as an ethnic group (Rata, 2008, p.3).

Political recognition of Maori as an ethnic group is not justified (Openshaw/PPTA 2007, pp. 24-30).

PPTA support for these ideas has significance for classroom practice.
Some implications

A racialised social order exists in and through social relations.

We should strive to be aware of how our interactions with others may be collaborative or oppressive.

Comparative epidemiological data shows inequality relates to:
- Health and life expectancy.
- Less cohesive social relationships.
- Less empathy and concern for the social good.
- Deteriorating quality in family relationships.
- Greater levels of anti-social and violent behaviour.

Implication: Our belief systems and ideologies create contexts that determine the quality of our social relationships.
Implications:

• We strive to be critically aware of the assumptions and beliefs that we hold about others.
• Consider how these shape our expectations and interactions in classrooms and communities.
• Understand that through our relationships with others we create contexts that support, or fail to support, fairness and justice.