

Māori cultural citizenship education

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KEY POINTS

- Citizenship education has the potential to empower Māori students, leading to increased engagement and achievement.
- Cultural citizenship is a specific approach that incorporates Māori cultural values and knowledge into the conventional citizenship education curriculum.
- *The New Zealand Curriculum* has the ability to enable the provision of cultural citizenship that can produce active Māori citizens

It is debatable whether citizenship education in New Zealand has presented a version of citizenship that resonates with Māori. This article explores the ability of *The New Zealand Curriculum (NZC)* to meaningfully provide citizenship education for Māori. This article suggests that there needs to be a mindshift away from the conventional approach of a generic “New Zealand citizen” to one that more fully acknowledges Māori as tangata whenua. This reconceptualising of non-colonial citizenship education is an opportunity to use *NZC* to transform and empower Māori students. The author also uses his own experience in establishing two partnership schools as a basis for considering how meaningful citizenship education can be developed and implemented.

Introduction

This article explores the need to move away from a generic approach to citizenship education to one that empowers Māori students and increases their opportunity for educational success. The historic non-Māori focus of citizenship education frames this argument, which views citizenship as Māori and citizenship education as a tool for social transformation. The key point of this article is that citizenship education should not be considered solely in terms of a conventional focus on civics and political processes. While these processes are still part of citizenship education, broadly scoped citizenship education also builds citizens who can actively participate in the various communities and societies that they are part of. This may be linked back to using *The New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007) (*NZC*) as a means of promoting and developing citizenship education for Māori within our schools. Finally, a case study of Te Kāpehu Whetū is given as an example of an attempt to provide formal and informal citizenship education for Māori.

Citizenship education in New Zealand

Citizenship education has existed in various guises within our education system and curriculum since the Education Act 1877. It is not a stand-alone subject or area but rather is incorporated into various curriculum areas. The initial focus was tied very closely to being a part of the British Empire. For Māori this focus included the objective of assimilation into being loyal subjects of the Empire. The two world wars moved the focus towards a patriotic expression of

citizenship that espoused service, loyalty and sacrifice. This was followed in the 1960s by a more global outlook with a social-justice focus, as various social factors such as Māori urbanisation led to increased awareness of biculturalism and a focus on integration. The major worldwide economic changes of the 1970s, coupled with the rising voice of women, Māori, and youth, created further tensions in the definitions of citizenship and its promotion through education (Mutch, 2003). This was a period of change in New Zealand that was ultimately to result in recognition of the Treaty of Waitangi and the advent of total-immersion Māori education. Currently, civics and citizenship education is embedded in the principles, values, and key competencies of *NZC*.

Citizenship as Māori

Citizenship as Māori can be linked to ideas of identity and culture, and is premised on the fact that Māori in New Zealand walk in two worlds. The everyday “mainstream” world has developed through our history as a part of the British Empire which privileges behaviours, values, and attitudes derived from European cultures as the norm. The second “Māori” world includes our marae, hapū, and iwi which contain different values, beliefs, and attitudes. The most obvious example of the fundamental differences between these two worlds is language. Most Māori can, or are expected to be able to, walk in both of these worlds. The inability to comfortably operate in the Māori world can have a dramatic negative effect on an individual’s identity and can influence their contribution and level of participation across all other facets of their life, including participation in political processes and society building and enhancing activities.

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Citizenship as Māori New Zealanders is the intersection between the two worlds described above. Māori, as part of the broader society, have rights and responsibilities to support the ongoing development of the nation. Lack of belief in this part of citizenship can be seen manifested in Māori voter apathy and political disengagement. These are examples of a lack of understanding around why being an active citizen is important or desirable. However, rather than this situation being presented as the fault of the disengaged, questions need to be asked about how civics and citizenship education is presented and taught so that it is valued and considered relevant by Māori.

Citizenship education can also be seen as a tool to combat the long-term intergenerational low achievement rates of Māori within our education system. The current positioning of Māori as a virtual underclass, based on the negative social statistics of health, education, poverty, and incarceration, can be linked back to the colonial experience of the 19th and 20th centuries. Education, and the social mobility that it promises, can be viewed as a vital ingredient in reversing the effects of these phenomena and creating an opportunity for a far more positive future both for Māori and for New Zealand as a whole. Using citizenship education that empowers Māori as Māori and situates them within broader society has the potential to be an effective tool in (re)engaging Māori learners.

Cultural citizenship

In the New Zealand context, Māori cultural citizenship education would provide access to those things that should be a birthright in a true bicultural democracy such

as te reo Māori and Māori cultural knowledge. It should seek to produce Māori citizens who are ready to be active participants in society, both the general New Zealand society, and their own iwi or Māori society. The nature of our postcolonial society is such that this citizenship education would need to emphasise not only civics-based ideas but be strongly counter-hegemonic to reverse the negative effects of colonisation.

The idea of cultural identity in the modern world is one that is often discussed and various characteristics put forward as universally important for the maintenance of Māori cultural identity. The first, and usually considered pre-eminent, of these characteristics is te reo Māori (the Māori language). The significance of te reo Māori to Māori culture and identity cannot be understated. As posited by the late Sir James Henare:

Ko te reo te mauri o te mana Māori.

Ko te kupu te mauri o te reo Māori.

E rua ēnei wehenga kōrero e hāngai tonu ana ki runga i te reo Māori.

Ko te reo, nō te *Atua* mai.

The language is the life force of the mana Māori.

The word is the life force of the language.

These two ideas are absolutely crucial to the Māori language.

A language, which is a gift to us from God. (Henare, 1988)

Using a Māori values approach means we take those cultural concepts that are considered to be fundamental to being Māori and infuse them with the curriculum of the individual school. There are no one set of Māori values that are prescribed as the most important; however, there is certainly a group used commonly by a range of organisations and institutions, for example:

Manaakitanga—showing respect, generosity and care for others.

Whanaungatanga—reciprocal relationships.

Kaitiakitanga—guardianship, stewardship, trusteeship.

Rangatiratanga—leadership

Wairuatanga—spirituality.

So a citizenship model based on a Māori-values approach would ensure that students understand what these values mean and how they are enacted in everyday life. Furthermore, the links between these values and the various tikanga, knowledge, and cultural practice within a Māori worldview would be clear.

NZC has the ability to deliver citizenship education which can be relevant and useful for Māori students as they navigate the various aspects of being Māori in the 21st century. *Future focus* is a principle of NZC. It aims to encourage students to look to the future by exploring such significant future-focused issues as sustainability, citizenship, enterprise, and globalisation. All these broad ideals have the ability to be shaped into a citizenship-

education approach that enhances Māori opportunity for educational success within our schools. It requires, however, the will and a purposeful approach to maximise the opportunity available within *NZC*.

Te Kāpehu Whetū—Navigating Māori Futures

This brief case study of Te Kāpehu Whetū is an example of how other schools may use *NZC* to implement citizenship education as described above. Te Kāpehu Whetū is a kaupapa Māori-orientated partnership school that offers bilingual education from new entrants to Year 13. The students are 100 percent Māori, with the vast majority being Ngā Puhī. The school uses the motto “Navigating Māori Futures” which plays on the metaphor of the twin-hulled voyaging canoes that brought Māori to New Zealand. This imagery is used to promote an environment that seeks to create explorers who are brave and innovative, in the same mould as the ancestors who sailed those canoes across the wide expanse of the Pacific Ocean.

The school has three central pou, which are the educational and operational drivers. They are: Kia Māori—be Māori, Kia Mātau—be educated and Kia Tū Rangatira Ai—be leaders (see Figure 1).

NGĀPUHITANGA		
Values		
Whakapapa Whanaungatanga Manaakitanga Rangatiratanga Wairuatanga Ūkaipōtanga Kōtahitanga Pūkengatanga Wairuatanga		
Kia Māori	Kia Mātau	Kia Tū Rangatira
Live as Māori Live with mana	Be educated	Actively participate as citizens of the world
Curriculum		
A culturally informed localised curriculum Place-based and experiential education		

FIGURE 1. TE KĀPEHU WHETŪ:
THE THREE CENTRAL POU

Within Te Kāpehu Whetū, *NZC* was strategically used to progress towards meeting our citizenship goals and graduate profile. All teachers were expected to take into account the three pou of the school when planning and delivering their course content. Regardless of the subject area, each teacher considered how Māori knowledge or perspectives could be included and then how the pedagogy they employed would help support the development of personal attributes and character. (Re) integration across curriculum areas was also a goal so that learning could be linked and students could use all related previous knowledge to aide in their acquisition of

new knowledge. Below are three examples, two formal using the curriculum, and one informal using school practice, of how citizenship education is enacted at Te Kāpehu Whetū.

Example 1

Throughout the science programme the teacher endeavoured to include mātauranga Māori alongside the conventional course material wherever possible. One of the te reo teachers from the local hapū accompanied him on field trips to give the local cultural knowledge perspective. One such trip was looking at the formation of the harbour and hills that surrounded it including vegetation and rock and soil types. The mātauranga Māori perspective was the Māori narrative associated with the formation of the land as well as the reasons Māori chose to inhabit certain sites and the various types of food they grew and gathered. The outcome was that not only did students learn from the two knowledge areas, western science and mātauranga Māori, but both were validated and shown to have value.

Example 2

The senior history students were learning about the “A” Company of the 28th Māori Battalion, who were primarily from Ngā Puhī. Most of the students had family links to them, while the senior English students were studying the biography *Ned and Katina* by Patricia Grace, which was a story about an “A” Company soldier Ned Nathan and how he met and fell in love with his wife Katina in Greece during World War 2. This meant that the students were connected to the course work in both subjects and the new knowledge gained in one subject was relevant in the other.

Example 3

An informal approach to citizenship education is when the whole school gathers at the beginning of the day to participate in karakia and waiata using the Ngā Puhī format for formal welcome as you would find on the marae. Senior students were thus getting regular practice in the requirements for this cultural practice so that they could gain confidence in not only participating but also leading this tikanga. The junior students were having the practices modelled for them with the expectation that in due course they too would take lead roles. A significant part of this is that the first part of the rituals is completely student led before they hand back over to the staff who in turn acknowledge the students in te reo Māori, using the correct format that visitors to a marae would use. This gives the students ownership of the day from its outset.

Lessons learned

The lessons that were learned through our approach outlined above were fairly simple. The response from our students affirmed the findings of the Te Kōtahitanga project, and the fact that culture counts. We enjoyed increased engagement and motivation from our students and very positive feedback from their whānau. Creating a framework from which to enact these initiatives was a challenge, so we relied primarily on the ideas espoused through place-based education which gave our teachers, Māori and non-Māori, a starting point. Another challenge was ensuring we got a balance that did not saturate the curriculum or school day with this citizenship education so that students would grow weary of it. It took trial and error and worked slightly different with various cohorts, this needed to be taken into consideration. Overall, NZC did provide the opportunity for us to approach education with the goal of developing active Māori citizens as outlined above.

Conclusion

The need to develop active Māori citizens that can contribute to both the general New Zealand and Māori society is as important as it has ever been. This article has argued that this can be achieved through the use of a non-colonial-based Māori cultural citizenship approach. This approach has been briefly explored by considering how we define the citizen and then how NZC could be used to better provide citizenship education that is not only engaging but has the potential to transform the students. The hope would be that this would help to

reverse the underachievement of Māori students that has been prevalent throughout most of our recent history. The benefits of this would also include a better understanding of Māori culture by all New Zealand citizens, which surely is a goal worth pursuing.

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