# "She didn't ask me about my grandma"

## Using process drama to explore issues of cultural exclusion and educational leadership

Pare Kana and Viv Aitken

*University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand*

## Abstract

**Purpose** – This purpose of this paper is to describe a collaborative project from the University of Waikato, Hamilton New Zealand, in which the authors used process drama to engage final year teaching students with complex issues of cultural diversity, enabling them to "grow into" different kinds of leadership positions in an imagined educational setting. The paper describes the project and makes a case for process drama as a means of providing opportunities for leadership and as a potent tool for learning about issues of social justice.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The drama was based on a fictional scenario described by Hall and Bishop, where a beginner teacher (of European descent) unwittingly diminishes the experiences of Maori and other non-European children in her class. Using a three-phase process planning model and with facilitators in role alongside the students, the drama explored the scenario from all points of view. Students were encouraged to build empathy for the beginner teacher and for the children and also to explore the dilemma faced by the teacher's tutor in deciding whether, and how, to confront the teacher on the issue.

**Findings** – Through the drama, students built a sense of empathy for all sides of the issue and engaged in deep thinking about the experience of cultural exclusion. The safety and distance provided by the drama "frame" spurred students to take leadership roles and "stand up" for issues of social justice. The authors suggest that through such dramas students gain skills and perspectives that they may carry into their professional lives.

**Research limitations/implications** – The paper describes a small project, over one lesson with a specific group of students. More research is needed into the effectiveness of process drama as a sustained strategy for teacher education.

**Originality/value** – This scenario explored in the drama has currency in Aotearoa New Zealand, where the population is increasingly culturally diverse, where underachievement of Maori students continues to be of concern, and where research has shown the centrality of teacher-student relations in raising educational achievement for Maori. The authors believe this paper makes a compelling case for the value of drama as a tool for student teachers to encounter social justice issues in a meaningful way, and suggest that the paper is a valuable contribution to more than one discipline, as it straddles the fields of professional practice and drama as pedagogy.

**Keywords** Dramatization, Social justice, Education, New Zealand

**Paper type** Research paper

This Special Issue of *JEA* focuses on issues of "empowerment", "leadership" and "social justice". These notions were right at the heart of a collaborative project between Pare Kana, Lecturer in Professional Studies, and Viv Aitken, Lecturer in Drama in Education, at the School of Education, University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand, in April 2006. The authors co-taught a class in which process drama was used to engage final year teaching students with issues of cultural exclusion in a classroom

setting. Through role-play, the students, who were mostly of European origin, were able to engage authentically and safely with the experience and issues of cultural exclusion. They were also empowered to "grow into" different kinds of leadership positions in an imagined educational setting. The following article describes this project in detail, outlining the planning, the implementation and the outcomes and making the case for process drama as an effective and empowering learning tool. To begin, however, the authors outline the unique New Zealand context for issues of empowerment, social justice and leadership with respect to te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi) and mainstream education. A definition and explanation of process drama is followed by the description of the project.

## The context for empowerment, leadership, and social justice in Aotearoa New Zealand

Issues of empowerment, leadership and social justice have a particular resonance in New Zealand because of our unique historical, political and cultural situation, central to which is our founding document known as te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi). Signed in 1840, te Tiriti signalled a partnership between Māori as indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand and the Crown. Essentially, there are three components to te Tiriti, which relate to notions of *partnership* between the treaty partners on issues of governance, *protection* of resources both tangible and intangible, and *participation* in the rights and benefits of citizenship[1]. Although there are ongoing tensions regarding the place of te Tiriti in public life, the document is acknowledged as the philosophical basis of government policies, including those of the Ministry of Education.

## Context for empowerment, leadership and social justice in relation to education in Aotearoa New Zealand

*Pre-service teacher education*

Pre-service teacher education in New Zealand has a strong element of training for "leadership" and personal and professional empowerment. The realities of the sector in New Zealand, as elsewhere, involve pressures arising from an overcrowded curriculum and fiscal limitations. However, in the face of these pressures, many teacher educators' ideals are still strong. Many see their role as empowering students to become effective pedagogues who take account of socially just education.

Such is the philosophical underpinning for the paper, PP&I 3 (Professional Practice and Inquiry level 3) within which this drama project occurred. PP&I 3 is a core paper offered to students in their final year of the Bachelor of Teaching programme at the University of Waikato. Students working on this paper are likely to teach in mainstream primary (elementary) schools. The paper promotes critical analysis of educational developments at the classroom, school and national levels. Students are encouraged to develop their own philosophy of teaching through critical reflection and discussion.

*Teacher registration*

Students apply for provisional registration with the New Zealand Council of Teachers (NZCT), after which they can apply for positions as beginning teachers in schools. As beginning teachers, they have access to an advice and guidance programme where

they work closely with a tutor-teacher. Leadership and empowerment characterise this relationship, as student and tutor-teacher work together to reach the required standards and "satisfactory dimensions" to achieve full registration. (Ministry of Education and New Zealand Council of Teachers, 2006, p. 2, appendices 2).

Part of gaining full registration as a New Zealand teacher is the recognition of the public function of teachers' work. Teachers have moral and ethical responsibilities towards their students As Hall (2001) and others have noted, injustices can arise from several sources, including the compulsory nature of schooling in New Zealand, factors associated with choice, or lack of choice, in education, issues related to equity of treatment and of outcome, as well as locus of power and control (Bishop and Glynn, 1999; Ministry of Education, 2005). Such injustices have a disturbing potential to render students and their families defenceless and vulnerable (Soder, 1991). To counter these possibilities, there are several strategies in place to guide teachers and to support students and their families. Significant amongst these is the NZTC code of ethics that applies to all registered teachers in New Zealand. Four fundamental principles underpin the code of ethics and govern the professional interactions of teachers in New Zealand:

(1) autonomy to treat people with rights that are to be honoured and defended;

(2) justice to share power and prevent the abuse of power;

(3) responsible care to do good and minimise harm to others;

(4) truth to be honest to others and self (Ministry of Education and New Zealand Council of Teachers, 2006, p. 21, appendices).

The code of ethics takes into account the requirements of the law and the obligation of teachers to honour te Tiriti, by paying particular attention to the rights and aspirations of Māori as indigenous people of New Zealand.

## Current situation for Māori in mainstream schooling in Aotearoa New Zealand

Disparities in educational outcomes for Māori have long raised concerns in New Zealand. Statistics show early exit from school, exit with low or without formal educational qualification and over representation in stand downs, suspensions and expulsions (Bishop and Glynn, 1999; Ministry of Education, 2005). These outcomes are in sharp contrast to a Tiriti promise of full participation in the benefits of a new society and guarantee to Māori people of full control over their cultural and physical resources within an operational partnership (Shields *et al.*, 2005). Clearly there continues to be a need for intervention on a broad scale to overturn the negative indices for Māori in compulsory mainstream education. This is especially so since an overwhelming majority of Māori students at all levels attend mainstream schools.

New Zealand is experiencing a two-fold response to educational issues for Māori. On one hand, there are initiatives driven by Māori themselves. These have grown steadily since the 1980s, beginning with Kohanga Reo (early childhood "language nests") followed by Kura Kaupapa Māori (primary schools), Whare Kura (secondary schools) and Wananga (tertiary institutions). Given the imperative of emerging from traditional impositional colonizing models of education, such movements are incredibly significant and that story is told elsewhere (Bishop and Glynn, 1999; Smith, 1992). In addition, there are a number of initiatives focussed on Māori within mainstream

education. Examples include projects such as "Te Kauhua", "Te Kotahitanga", "Te Hiringa i te mahara" and "Te Mana"[2]. These projects are funded by the Ministry of Education and work in different ways to raise the achievement of Māori students. Central to all these initiatives is a growing awareness that for Māori in education "culture counts" (see Bishop and Glynn, 1999). This simple but critical message has resonance beyond Māori education, too, as our New Zealand society becomes increasingly multicultural. This notion that "culture counts" was also the central theme of our drama.

### The context for process drama in Aotearoa New Zealand

Drama has been taught in New Zealand schools and universities for many years and its popularity has surged since it was defined as a core subject within the Arts in the NZ Curriculum (Learning Media, 2001) and, more recently, as a mandated subject area for the NCEA (National Certificate of Educational Achievement) at secondary level. Though the curriculum structure embraces multitudinous approaches to drama, the approach known as "process drama" has an important place in the New Zealand context. This is partly because of a close and continued relationship between drama educators in the country and international practitioners of process drama, including its leading progenitor, Dorothy Heathcote.

In process drama, rather than working towards a performance, participants engage in a series of structured improvisations with an emphasis on the process of collaborative discovery and idea development. Rather than focussing on technical skills, the aim is to build skills of engagement, empathy and problem solving. In a process drama experience, periods of action are followed by periods of reflection, so that participants are always making links between the fictional world of the drama and the world of their everyday reality. Another key feature of process drama is that the teacher or facilitator of the drama often participates alongside the students by taking one or more roles in the drama. These philosophical and pedagogical features of process drama are worthy of closer examination here. For, almost by definition, process drama is a means of challenging traditional knowledge, power and leadership structures in the classroom.

First of all, to accomplish its objectives, a process drama experience is based on learning through direct, embodied experience. Since the work of Gardner, and others, we have come to understand more about the importance of experiential learning, particularly for kinaesthetic learners (Gardner, 1983). It has also been demonstrated across a range of age and learning areas, that where drama is used as a teaching tool, learners tend to remember longer and reflect more thoroughly (Fleming *et al.*, 2004; Heyward, 2006; Hughes, 2006). This makes process drama a valid tool for learning in any subject area and particularly apposite when learning about human experience, including the kinds of social justice issues we wished to tackle in this project.

Another key characteristic of process drama is that it is based on the human capacity for empathy. By inhabiting a role, participants find themselves "walking in someone else's shoes", and this empathic quality makes drama a particularly powerful tool for confronting social justice issues. Participants may inhabit a role, or a series of roles, where the perspectives are very different from their own. In this way, they may be challenged to reflect on the position from a new standpoint. Indeed one might argue that the only possible route to social justice is through developing empathy. Certainly

Neelands (2002), O'Connor (2006) and others have argued compellingly that in a world of "competency" based learning, empathy deserves to be seen as the most crucial "key competency" for humans existing in today's world:

> Empathy, the ability to think and feel what it might be like to be other than yourself, sits at the centre of morality and is the most important competency for a world living under the threats of terrorism and its response. Without empathy we can strap packs on our backs and blow up innocent people on subways, without empathy we can attack mosques and Jewish cemeteries in Auckland, without empathy we can demand tax cuts for the rich as the gap between rich and poor widens (O'Connor, 2006).

If empathy is a humanizing force, it can also be a complicating one. By "walking in someone else's shoes", participants can be encouraged to recognise the complexity inherent in social justice issues. Participants have the opportunity to recognise that there may be multiple perspectives on an issue, and to reflect on these diverse points of view rather than resorting to simplistic, or polarised ways of thinking (Heyward, 2006).

While process drama offers authentic engagement, it also offers safety. Working in role provides a sense of distance from the issue. The participant is protected from social or emotional impacts that might occur if s/he were faced with these issues out of role. This sense of distance also provides a degree of liberation, as Bolton describes here:

> At a visible, concrete level they [the drama tasks] demand normal intellectual application from whoever is carrying out the task, but at a subsidiary level there is a "no penalty" awareness felt by the doer, a sense of freeing the individual, so that they may find themselves "caught off guard" into identifying skills they did not know they had, into seeing some aspect of themselves in a different light, into revising the way they habitually think about themselves (Bolton, 2003, p. 136).

In other words the sense of "just pretending" brings an *increased* sense of agency for participants in role. They can feel more empowered than in real life scenarios because they are protected from real life consequences. For this reason, process drama teachers are careful to ensure that participants are not "swept up" in the drama to the point that they mix reality with the fiction. Participants' awareness of the two worlds of the drama and the classroom (metaxis) is carefully maintained (Boal, 1995; Edmiston, 2003). Explicit transitions in and out of role are used to ensure participants stay aware and empowered.

That process drama operates with this complex awareness of two realities also enhances opportunities for reflection. By pausing the drama, stepping out of role, reflecting and negotiating before stepping back in, participants have the opportunity to recognise and articulate their learning. Not only do participants "rehearse" the action they might take in a real life situation (Boal, 1992), they are also encouraged to pause and realise what they are doing. Process drama can be a highly conscious, and thus consciousness-raising, process.

Another feature of process drama that makes it pertinent for exploration of social justice issues is the way it can upend traditional knowledge and authority structures in the teacher-student relationship, particularly through the strategy of teaching in role. By taking on a role themselves, the teacher can explore a range of status positionings that may not be available in a traditional classroom. Morgan and Saxton (1987) identify at least nine different role "stances" that a teacher of process drama might take from

the "devils advocate" to the "one who knows nothing". These role stances can be novel and potentially liberating for the teacher. Perhaps more importantly, they also allow a re-positioning of students into new and unexpected roles, often high-status ones in which they, not the teacher, become the "expert". For many teachers of process drama, this potential to usefully disrupt the traditional teacher-student power relationship is the most exciting and potent aspect of their work. Edmiston explains this well:

> One of the key reasons why as a teacher I use drama is because when we create an imagined world we can imagine that we frame events differently so that our power and authority relationships are changed. A long-term aim of mine as a teacher is as much as possible to share power and authority with students. I want students to have opportunities to use words and deeds to act appropriately but in ways that are often not sanctioned in classrooms (Edmiston, 2003, p. 223).

For all these reasons, we felt that process drama was an appropriate tool to encourage our students to engage meaningfully with the scenario we had in mind.

## The project

### The pretext

The starting point for our project was a journal article, "Teacher ethics, professionalism and cultural diversity", by Alan Hall and Russell Bishop (Hall and Bishop, 2001). Hall and Bishop describe a scenario where a beginner teacher (of European descent) unwittingly diminishes the experiences of Māori, Asian and other non-European children in her class.

> Megan's junior school class at Kapai School is made up of a cultural mixture of children: one-third are Māori, two are Indian children, two are of Dutch descent, and the remainder are the descendants of migrants from the UK. As a beginner teacher her practice is supervised by an experienced tutor teacher, Annie, with whom she gets on well. Annie visits Megan's classroom on a regular basis and often comments on her teaching as part of her mentoring role.
> Today, both she and Miriama, Megan's special needs teacher aide, watch the commencement of a new social studies unit on grandparents. (Miriama is there to work with Anaru who has spina bifida.) Megan has put a lot of work into this unit and has planned a number of exciting activities.
> Afterwards, Annie discusses the lesson with Megan, who says how pleased she was with the dynamics of the lesson and her management of the questioning. Annie agrees that those were pleasing features. But then she points out that all the discussion was with children of European descent and that not one Māori or Indian child contributed, or was even invited to do so (Hall and Bishop, 2001 p. 187).

As this extract shows, Hall and Bishop's article explores an authentic professional dilemma faced by the tutor-teacher in deciding whether, and how, to confront the teacher on the sensitive issue. Hall and Bishop's article was clearly full of potential both in terms of the professional issues it exposed and in terms of the drama possibilities it offered.

From a professional practice point of view, the reading provided an ideal starting point for engaging with the important issues of cultural inclusion and exclusion. The context allowed for an exploration of the code of ethics in a meaningful way. It also allowed for exploration of issues of leadership through the gains, joys and challenges potentially inherent in the tutor-teacher and beginner-teacher relationship.

Furthermore, the reading described a scenario extremely pertinent to the real life situation the students were about to enter. Most students in the class were non-Māori like Megan; they were about to become beginner teachers and would most likely teach in mainstream schools. Also, like Megan they were about to enter a mentoring relationship with a tutor-teacher. Thrupp (2004) has noted that to address social justice issues in a meaningful and lasting way, it is important to work on ideas close to everyday practice and real experience. We hoped that by working with this recognisable scenario illustrating an apparently subtle and "minor" everyday occurrence, we could expose students to wider social justice issues of cultural exclusion and prejudice.

From a drama point of view, the scenario was also full of potential. The reading was populated with interesting characters and it already contained plenty of dramatic tension – the essential element for effective and engaging drama. The figures of Megan and Annie also offered possibilities for teaching in role – a key feature of process drama, as already discussed. Apart from the potential within the reading itself, there were also aspects of the context we were operating in that lent themselves to successful role-play. For one thing, there was a certain amount of trust and group safety in place. Students in the class had been members of the same study group for almost three years and were very close. Students knew Pare well and had done some drama with Viv in the past. It was also an advantage that there were two of us (and the assistance of a third lecturer) and that we had more than one space available, so we were able to put the class into groups.

*Planning process*
Planning for the drama followed the three-phase model identified by O'Toole and Dunn (2002). In this model, the drama begins with an "initiation phase", in which the teacher hooks participants into the drama, allocates roles and undertakes activities to build belief in and commitment to the imagined scenario. The next phase, the "experiential phase", occurs when the teacher introduces some kind of tension or problem for the students to resolve through drama, building on the expertise they have established in the initiation phase. Finally, in the "reflection phase", participants step out of the imagined scenario to reflect on parallels with real life situations. As O'Toole and Dunn (2002) make clear, reflection is significant for participants to recognise not only their mastery of drama skills and language but also "what change of understanding has taken place about the context and subject matter" (p. 23). In other words, there is an assumption that drama can and does affect personal and social change.

*Allocating roles*
From the outset, we could see that the key perspectives to explore in this drama were going to be those of the Māori children, the non-Māori children, the teacher and the tutor-teacher. As Bowell and Heap (2002) have noted, when putting a whole class into role it is generally helpful to bind them together in a joint, or "blanket" role which, while allowing for individual differences, creates a collaborative "feel" to the drama. Therefore we decided to put half the students in role as the children in the class and half as an expert tutor-teacher group (a role we added to the original story). As facilitators, we assumed the roles of Annie and Megan. This allowed us to take leadership in terms of controlling the direction of the drama but since we deliberately

played the roles as "low status" figures within the drama, this ensured that students could grow into high status, leadership positions as the drama developed. Given our ages, ethnicities and existing relationship with the students, it was natural to put Viv in role as Megan the beginner teacher, and Pare in role as Annie. This raised another interesting possibility. We discussed how Pare, as a Māori, could increase the tension of the drama by "playing" Annie as sympathetic to Megan's point of view and unwilling to confront her on the issue of her cultural blunders. In the event, this was a particularly effective aspect of the role-play, as we shall see.

*Initiation phase: hooking the students in and building belief*
The two groups were "hooked in" to the drama in different ways. Pare (in role as Annie) sent a letter on headed paper to the tutor-teacher group inviting them to attend a meeting in a room across the hallway from the main classroom. When they arrived, certain activities were carried out to encourage them to buy into their role. For example, they were asked to sign in and make a name-tag for themselves, in role. As a group they were also asked to discuss the "mission statement" for the new tutor-teachers' group, and to come up with a group logo. A key factor in the success of process drama is the time spent on building belief and through these activities (verbal and symbolic) the students were committing to role and building belief in the imagined situation.

While Pare was working with the tutor-teachers in the meeting room, Viv was building belief with the 18 students playing the roles of the children in the classroom. One of the complexities of putting this group in role was the fact that we needed to divide the class into different ethnicities. The reading specified the cultural make-up of the class as being one-third Māori with the rest of the class being children of Indian, Dutch and British descent. We needed to give each child a distinct background as well as seeding the idea of each child's unique relationship with their grandparents. To achieve this, short character profiles were written in advance. Profiles for the Māori children were written by Pare and Viv wrote the profiles for the non-Māori children, with advice from friends of the appropriate nationality. Here is an example of a profile for one of the Māori children:

> Up to this year Iti has been at a kura kaupapa Maori where it was like living in one big family. He misses the open and friendly relationship of the kura and he's struggling a little with finding a "place for himself" in this school. His parents think that he should "toughen up" and learn to live with others. The grandparents however think that the shift is too much of a culture shock for him. They worry about him being able to build respectful relationships with the non-Māori teacher and the other kids.

Students were handed these profiles attached to a blank outline of a child and a blank name-tag. The gender and age of the child were also specified.

While we needed to specify certain facts about the children, we were also keen to give students as much ownership and creative control over their roles as possible. So, after reading the profile and filling in the name tag, students were asked to create a "role on the wall" of the child: they wrote words around the outside of the blank outline to describe their physical appearance. On the inside, they wrote words to do with the likes, dislikes, feelings and emotions of their character. In this way, students were able to decide for themselves whether their role was shy, confident, if they had a favourite colour, or whatever. Like the tutor-teacher group, they committed to their role in written and symbolic form.

At this point one further activity was used to deepen belief and to provide background information needed later in the role-play. Each child's profile made mention of a grandparent figure. Students were asked to imagine their role's relationship to that grandparent, and to imagine a photograph of themselves and the grandparent doing something special together. Students were placed in groups of three, and took turns to mould the other two students in their group into a freeze frame representing their personal photograph.

In drama terms, all participants were building belief and committing to their role. This process could equally be characterised in terms of emergent leadership, in that participants were being invited to "grow into" a position of expertise and knowledge (on one hand the "expert knowing" of a tutor-teacher, and on the other the "expert knowing" of a child's perspective on the world). In both cases, students were being positioned as "experts" and were gradually inhabiting that role to the point that they could play out their responses to the issues within the safe "frame" of the drama.

At this stage both student groups were in role and had spent some time deepening their belief, and Pare was also in role as Annie. Viv had not yet gone into role as Megan. We should also mention how the other lecturer, Kelly, was included. The original reading included reference to Anaru, a child with spina bifida and the teacher aide assisting her. We wanted to include this child but without asking the student to "act disabled". So, we found a way to represent Anaru's disability. We instructed the student playing that role that she should be fully involved in the role-play but must ask her teacher aide (played by Kelly) to speak on her behalf and move her chair from place to place. No special voice or movement was required of the student playing the role of Anaru, just these extra steps to take for communication and mobility. In this way, the character of Anaru was played respectfully and the other lecturer, Kelly, was involved as teacher in role, without needing to guide or direct the drama.

*The experiential phase*
As the students playing children finished their freeze frames, members of the tutor-teacher group were given the details of their first mentoring task. They were told they were about to visit a young beginner teacher. They were particularly asked to look out for her management and questioning techniques and to be ready to offer feedback. The issue of cultural inclusiveness was not raised at this point – quite deliberately, as we wanted to see whether it would emerge organically from the role-play, and we wanted to allow students to feel for themselves the difficulty of raising this issue in a "real life" interaction.

As the tutor-teachers entered the room, they were introduced to the students in role as children. At this point Viv went into role as Megan. She used a name-tag to signal the role, and she changed her voice and body language slightly. Megan greeted Annie warmly and welcomed the tutor-teachers to the classroom. The tutor-teachers positioned themselves around the space equipped with clipboards ready to take notes. Then we started a fictional lesson along the lines described in Hall and Bishop's article – a social studies unit on grandparents.

At this point, Viv encountered an unforeseen problem. Having only ever been a drama teacher she found it difficult to role-play the "talk and chalk" approach to teaching! However she did her best to initiate some whole class discussion of grandparents. Children were asked to talk about grandparents in stories, their own

grandparents and to contribute ideas to a drawing of a rather stereotypical Western "granny" and "granddad" on the whiteboard. To make it easier to successfully ignore the contributions of students playing non-European roles, we had colour coded the name-tags. Viv could easily spot the children of European descent and focus on them. Viv also deliberately pushed Megan's Anglo-centric (and ageist!) position by responding to descriptions of any other kind of grandparent with statements like "your grandparents are quite unusual then, aren't they?" or "ooh, that's exotic".

At this point, several of the students in role as children began playing out responses that suggested they had "built belief" in their role. For example, one student in role as a Māori child got so sick of being ignored that he began to misbehave (in role). This gave Viv the opportunity to play out the management techniques that Megan may have used. Other students in role as Māori children exhibited more compliant behaviour, though we noticed some signs of boredom including fidgeting and rolling of eyes. Meanwhile, the students in role as children of European descent all received some level of attention from Megan. On the whole these students role played a greater level of engagement and appeared to enjoy telling their stories about their grandparents.

### Introduction of tension

After the "lesson" had finished, the students in role as children were asked to remove their nametags and come out of role while the tutor-teachers offered their feedback to Megan. Tutor-teachers offered professional feedback on questioning and management. They had a number of specific pieces of advice on these issues. Annie then asked them if they had any further feedback.

The students in role as tutor-teachers did not offer specific feedback about Megan's exclusion of non-European children. However, at this point one of the students who had been in role as a child (the misbehaving Māori boy, played incidentally by a non-Māori male student) made a comment something like "she doesn't talk to the black kids!". At this, we invited the tutor-teachers to listen as we went back to hear from the children. The tutor-teachers removed their name-tags and came out of role. The students who had been playing children were still seated in a group on the floor. Viv moved around the group asking each person to hold up his/her name-tag and say what their role character was thinking or feeling at the end of the lesson. Answers were given spontaneously and were spoken with feeling. Responses included statements like "She just ignores me, I had my hand up the whole time", or "That doesn't look anything like my grandma" or "I wish I'd had the chance to tell my story". Other responses were "I felt shy about having to tell the class my private stuff" or "I didn't want to talk about my granddad. He died and I'm sad".

After this tapping of the children's thoughts, we staged an interaction between the tutor-teachers and Annie. Annie asked them for their thoughts on the issue of Megan's treatment of her non-European students. This was the point where Pare as a Māori lecturer was able to explore playing the stance of "devil's advocate". She deliberately tried to play down the significance of the issue and defended Megan saying, "I'm sure she's not racist or anything" and "surely the main thing is that she's an effective teacher". In response, students in role as tutor-teachers made a forceful case for the other point of view. This felt like a real highlight of the lesson both pedagogically and in terms of teachers growing into leadership positions. Here was a group of students articulating with passion the main points of learning while their lecturer listened and

gently tried to fend them off – an exciting reversal of the more common classroom scenario where a lecturer articulates with passion in front of students who listen but perhaps do not fully accept the arguments. Teacher-pleasing responses were most definitely avoided. Instead, students were pitting themselves *against* their teacher, in role. They were enacting "authentic" leadership within an "authentic" (though fictional) scenario, on real issues of social justice.

*Resolution of tension*
All the students were clear that it was important to let Megan know that students in her class felt excluded. At the same time they avoided simplistic responses to how this could be done. The process drama had led them to a point where they could see the complexity of the issue. They were positive about the good things she was doing in the classroom and they were aware of the sensitivity with which the issue needed to be broached. In fact, they had several practical suggestions for Annie for how she might raise the subject in a future discussion with Megan. If there had been time, it would have been useful to invite students to deliver that feedback to Megan themselves, perhaps as an improvised phone call or a letter written in role.

*Reflection phase*
At this point the discussion opened out to include all students and teachers out of role. Students commented on the complexity of the issue and the tutor-teachers noted how they had not spotted the lack of inclusion of Māori children, or had not thought it significant until they had heard the children's inner thoughts on the lesson. Students in the class demonstrated a level of empathy for people on both sides of the issue – both the children of diverse backgrounds in the classroom *and* the teacher who unknowingly discriminated against them. The authors found that the level of engagement and empathy attained by the students led to some deep thinking about the causes and experience of cultural exclusion. The insights and new perspectives gained from the drama experience opened up rich discussion that continued in subsequent lessons with this group. In later discussions with Pare, students said that the experience had been memorable and enjoyable and had really helped them to understand the issue of cultural exclusion on a deeper level. Several also commented that the drama had really brought Hall and Bishop's article to life when they read it after the class.

## Conclusions and implications for educational leadership
We suggest that the use of process drama for this class was successful in that it complicated and globalised students' responses, encouraging them to engage in deep thinking about the experience of cultural exclusion. At the same time, the drama allowed students to engage in rich and authentic experiences of various kinds of leadership within an educational context. Some inhabited roles as tutor-teachers charged with providing feedback to the teacher. These participants were positioned as "experts" from the start and operated from that status. In addition, the drama demonstrated the need for people in leadership positions to take into account and never to overlook the voices and experiences of children. The safety and distance provided by the "frame" of drama spurred these students to grow into positions of leadership in the imagined situation and "stand up" for issues of social justice for these children. As

mentioned, the moment where students "stood up" to Annie was a high point. By challenging Annie, students were, in a sense, challenging Pare too – an example of the usefulness of adopting oppositional attitudes in confronting issues of social justice (Rapp, 2002; Thrupp, 2007). For those students inhabiting the roles of children, the challenge was to face up to the issues of status, power and "leadership" in the classroom context. There are many different leaders within a classroom, including within the student body. Participants in role as children felt for themselves (again in a safe way) how it was to be either privileged or overlooked, and how hard it could be to stand up as a child and take control over this.

We suggest that having engaged with these issues and taken leadership roles in an embodied way in the drama, these students may be more likely to bring these new perspectives into play when faced with similar situations in the real world. This suggestion aligns with the theories of Augusto Boal (1992, p. 155), who argued in his seminal work *Theatre of the Oppressed* that drama could most certainly bring about social change:

> Perhaps the theatre is not revolutionary in itself but have no doubts; it is the rehearsal of revolution! (Boal, 1992 p. 155).

Our objectives may have been less overtly "revolutionary" than those of Boal, who was describing revolution in the direct political sense. Nevertheless, the authors would suggest that experiences in process drama may provoke a quieter, more personal "revolution" by taking students to a place where they can find their way, where they are optimistic, willing and able to act from a space of agency within future real life scenarios.

## Notes

1. It is impossible to summarise here the complex and diverse debate around the meanings and intent of te Tiriti o Waitangi. For more detailed analysis see, for instance Ranganui Walker's Maori perspective (Walker, 1990) or the State State Services Commission information package (State Services Commission, 2005) or Michael King's acclaimed history of New Zealand (King, 2003).

2. Further details about each of these projects can be sourced under "Maori education" at the Ministry of Education website (see www.moe.govt.nz). In addition, a recently published report by Bishop *et al.* (2007) provides an update on Te Kotahitanga project.

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## Corresponding authors
Pare Kana and Viv Aitken can be contacted at: parekana@waikato.ac.nz and viva@waikato.ac.nz