

CULTURAL DISSONANCE IN TERTIARY EDUCATION

History repeating itself

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Abstract

In Aotearoa New Zealand, the largest growing cohort of Māori engaging in tertiary education at degree level is mature Māori women. For most Māori beginning university there are considerable challenges to achieving a university-level education and qualification. This paper reports on a study that used Kaupapa Māori and Mana Wāhine research approaches to give voice to five mature Māori women who shared aspects of their first year at university, highlighting the cultural dissonance they experienced and how they overcame the challenges they faced as students. Attitudes to education as the result of the colonising effects of assimilation and educational policies contributed to the lives of these wāhine as children and also later in life as tertiary students. This paper contributes to the understanding of tertiary education experiences from mature Māori women's worldviews and explores the role cultural dissonance plays in educational engagement.

Keywords

mature Māori women, mature Māori students, cultural dissonance,
Māori identity, Kaupapa Māori, Mana Wāhine

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Introduction

In Aotearoa New Zealand, increasing the number of Māori participating in and completing tertiary higher learning is of priority to the government, and resources and funding specifically target Māori under the age of 24 years (Ministry of Education, 2015). Yet despite efforts to expand this age group of tertiary students, Māori participation overall continues to decline. In contrast, the number of Māori women over the age of 24 entering tertiary education continues to grow, although this group is disadvantaged by current educational policies, including the recently changed student allowance policy that discriminates by age. The study reported in this paper contributes to the body of literature on Māori in tertiary education with an exploration of the factors that have affected mature Māori women returning to education.

Mature Māori women in education

Early childhood, primary and secondary education has generally been accessible for most Māori, and participation and achievement in tertiary education has increased steadily over the past decade. The number of Māori students participating at bachelor degree level or higher increased by 7 per cent to 21,900 between 2007 and 2012. Priority Three of the Tertiary Education Strategy 2014–2019 (Tertiary Education Commission, 2014) and the Māori Education Strategy, *Ka Hikitia—Accelerating Success 2013–2017* (Ministry of Education, 2013a) have focused on increasing academic participation and achievement of Māori in higher level tertiary education. The accompanying focus of government funding is for Māori students under the age of 25, supporting them to enter, participate and complete tertiary education (Tertiary Education Commission, 2014).

In 2014, the government student allowance for people over 40 years of age was reduced to the equivalent of three academic years of study.

Changes to the student allowance thus restricted the ability of mature students to complete a four-year undergraduate degree or begin a master's degree with continued access to financial assistance. Financial challenges are the largest contributor to the decrease in Māori retention statistics in tertiary education across all age groups (Jefferies, 1997). Therefore, without the much-needed government financial support during tertiary study, Māori women who choose to study later in life are further financially disadvantaged. International literature exploring mature female student experience in tertiary education has emphasised the stress factors of financial struggle and balancing of study, work and family responsibilities (Fulmer & Jenkins, 1992; O'Shea, 2014; Ramsay, Jones, & Barker, 2007; O'Shea & Stone, 2011). In Aotearoa, non-Māori research has historically focused on the challenges, barriers and educational underachievement of Māori (G. H. Smith, 2012; Tassell, Flett, & Gavala, 2010; Tomlins-Jahnke, 1997; Williams, 2010), highlighting struggles to manage family responsibilities as well as study and work (Bennett, 2001; Coombes, 2006; Cram, Phillips, Sauni, & Tuagalu, 2014; Jefferies, 1997). Despite this, even though the number of Māori female students aged 25 years and older has continued to decline over recent years, the number of Māori women aged 40 years and older who study at a bachelor's degree level has still continued to increase. Mature Māori women are the largest group of Māori students participating in the universities of Aotearoa (Ministry of Education, 2015). In 2014, more Māori women over the age of 25 participated in degree-level studies than non-Māori women over the age of 25 (Ministry of Education, 2013b, 2015).

Given the government's priority to increase participation in higher learning for younger Māori, this is an interesting phenomenon that deserves exploration. Māori research has been increasingly orientated towards understanding the academic success and achievement of Māori at tertiary level (Kaumoana, 2013; Mayeda,

Keil, Dutton, & Ofamo'oni, 2014; Millward, Stephenson, Rio, & Anderson, 2011; Selby, 1996; Williams, 2010), and contributing factors to achieving academic success include whānau and whanaungatanga (Bennett, 2001; Houkamau, 2011; Jefferies, 1997; Kaumoana, 2013; Selby, 1996; Williams, 2010). Additional Kaupapa Māori research with an increased focus on the diversity within Māori university student experience and insight into the experiences of mature Māori wāhine will contribute to understanding this phenomenon. To add to the growing body of literature in the field, this paper presents and discusses some findings from a qualitative study into the first-year university experiences of five mature Māori women aged between 45 and 75 years spanning two generations. All women had commenced their first year of university study between the ages of 37 and 48 years within mainstream tertiary institutions in Aotearoa. The study sought to understand the challenges the educational environment presented to mature wāhine Māori and how the role of being a mature Māori woman supported first-year university experiences. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were used to explore the lived experiences of these women as mature students and were conducted *kanohi ki te kanohi*, as was culturally appropriate and guided by tikanga Māori (Mataira, 2003). Capturing Māori student voice enables meaning and understanding of tertiary experience from a Māori worldview to be explored (Bennett, 2001; Williams, 2010) and better understood. This access to student voice was supported by Kaupapa Māori and Mana Wāhine approaches.

Kaupapa Māori

Sometimes viewed as anti-colonial and reactive, Kaupapa Māori theory decolonises, reclaims and renames Māori space and experiences in a critically reflective way that is proactive and pro-Māori (Pihama, 2001). Kaupapa Māori is a legitimate and valid approach to Māori research using a Māori-centred worldview to explore

the lived realities and experiences of Māori (Pihama, Cram, & Walker, 2002; G. H. Smith, 1997; L. T. Smith, 1999). The epistemology of Kaupapa Māori demonstrates the authenticity of this approach due to its inclusion of ancient observances and practices of *te reo Māori me ona tikanga* as a means and advancement of self-determination. Core principles provide a culturally specific framework in order to protect the rigour of Kaupapa Māori research. These principles are based on cultural aspirations for autonomy and wellbeing for Māori culture and society, including *mana*, *whānau* and *manaakitanga* (Mataira, 2003; G. H. Smith, 1997). *Tikanga Māori* is also used within this framework as an ethical guide to ensure cultural validity and integrity by guiding, not dictating, the process of how and why research conducted with Māori should occur. In essence, if the principles of Kaupapa Māori are absent, the power and empowerment of Māori to challenge deficit theorising, effect social change and maintain the survival of *te reo Māori me ona tikanga* are jeopardised. The practice of these elements in Kaupapa Māori research and its purpose to empower Māori can be applied across any setting or discipline, reflecting the overall relevance, significance and portable nature of Kaupapa Māori as a methodology (Pihama, Smith, Taki, & Lee, 2004).

Mana Wāhine

In addition to a Kaupapa Māori approach, this study used a Mana Wāhine perspective to create space for Māori women's worldview to be privileged. Independent of Western ideologies of feminism, Mana Wāhine theory privileges Māori women and their fight against their oppressors. Mana Wāhine refutes the homogenising effects of Western feminist theory and challenges the homogeneity of Kaupapa Māori theory, which does not specifically acknowledge the diversity of Māori women within Māoridom (Hutchings, 2002). Mana Wāhine acknowledges the diversity of the experiences

Māori women have and their meanings and learnings from a viewpoint that it is specifically for Māori women, by Māori women, about being Māori women.

The voices of five wāhine Māori—Kay (73), Whaea Em (68 years of age), Adele (43) Kahuirangi (45) and Raiha (48)—are presented here to share insights into their lived experiences in education in Aotearoa. All participants gave consent for their first names to be used.

Experience of cultural dissonance

A key theme arising in this study was the participants' varying experiences of cultural dissonance. Cultural dissonance is the clash or conflict which results from the difference between values, beliefs, practices or ideologies of two or more cultures. The individualistic values of Western cultures are often in direct conflict or disharmony with the collectivist values of Indigenous cultures. The varying degrees of cultural dissonance experienced by Māori within education is the product of the different "lived realities of whānau" (Tomlins-Jahnke, 2006). The experiences captured in this study thus need to be understood within the local historical setting and as consequences of social factors such as education, politics and religion (Moeke-Pickering, 2010). The cultural dissonance that can be experienced in education is a reflection of the continuation of colonisation.

In Aotearoa, early colonisation—an expression of imperialist ideologies based on economic expansion, cultural domination and knowledge control (L. T. Smith, 1999)—began the positioning of Māori as oppressed and "othered" in their own land (Gemmell, 2013). This marginalisation was not an isolated event that occurred when early settlers arrived in Aotearoa. Instead, it is perpetuated today as Māori continue to suffer at the hands of laws and policies enforced by government, ministries and state-run or -funded institutions (Moeke-Pickering, 1996, 2010), including those relating to education.

The disruption to a sense of belonging for Māori caused by colonisation has meant many Māori feel dissociated from both Māori and Pākehā worlds—not fully, or comfortably belonging to either as they increasingly become "urban Māori" (Gemmell, 2013). As colonisation sought to suppress Māori tikanga, it also suppressed mana wāhine and impeded Māori women's political participation (Mikaere, 1994; L. T. Smith, 1999). Accounts of the presence and importance of Māori women are found in numerous whakataukī, haka, carvings, marae and cosmologies which highlight significant roles in tribal leadership. Today Māori women continue to hold leadership roles which effect change for Māori wellbeing (Mikaere, 1994; Tomlins-Jahnke, 1997).

The replication and assimilation of European customs, language and values was hastened by the early Pākehā education system that asserted dominance and governance while ignoring obligations to protect Māori and their culture (Ka'ai-Mahuta, 2011). Many Māori actively sought missionary-mentored education, desiring to be included in the education movement and also gave land to the church for schools to be established (Moeke-Pickering, 2010). The 1847 Education Ordinance and 1867 Native Schools Act made missionary schools subject to government control, and in order to secure much-needed funding, the education of Māori children had to be conducted in the English language alongside Christian religious instruction (Gemmell, 2013).

The participants' socialisation and childhood education experiences as Māori children in a Pākehā society had huge impacts on their attitudes towards, and their accessing of, tertiary education later in life. The extent of cultural dissonance experienced by the women in this study was felt differently according to the degree of assimilation that occurred as part of their socialisation as children, but even those "raised Pākehā" were not immune from experiencing cultural dissonance. Instead, it appears they were able to adapt, or adjust, more quickly,

perhaps due to the commonality of elements of their Pākehā upbringing and the Western tertiary environment. Those “raised Māori” struggled longer and harder as they tried to reconcile the gap between the strength of their value base and that of the value base of their learning environment. How these women were raised became either a protective factor or a risk factor for their engagement with the education system of Aotearoa; the more assimilated they were, the easier it was. The key contributors to cultural dissonance for these women were identified as the colonial history of Aotearoa and being raised between two worlds, experiences in a non-Māori school system and a new “language” needed for tertiary education participation.

Being raised between two worlds in a colonised country

The women in this study were either “raised Pākehā” or “raised Māori”, and this played an important part in their socialisation and development of identity. This social construction of how one was raised categorised the way the women viewed themselves and were viewed by others. This dichotomy denies the cross-over between worlds that has and continues to be experienced by many Indigenous peoples raised in a Western culture or society. Being “raised Pākehā” was associated with the degree of assimilation of Western values, practices, language and norms. Western attitudes towards order, cleanliness, civility and material possessions were visible socially constructed indicators of “successful” assimilation (Fitzpatrick, 2015). The replication of Western fashion, trends and norms also suggested acceptance of the dominant culture (Moeke-Pickering, 1996). The adaptation by Māori to a Western lifestyle often meant alienation from the Māori world:

We were fussed as little kids by our Māori uncles cause they thought we were really flash

I think because we were raised Pākehā . . . They’d say “Oh, you’re the Pākehās” but that didn’t mean anything to me. (Kay)

Outward appearances of Pākehā life did not necessarily mean acceptance from non-Māori neighbours either, and the pressure to adapt had mixed reactions and pressures. As Kay stated:

My mother worked so hard because she was Māori. We just naturally had to be perfect for her in her eyes because she was living in this Pākehā world I guess. To a degree I think there was a certain amount of racism too for me growing up . . . because Mum felt it, she always made sure we were dressed right and fed right and all those sorts of things.

The impact of colonisation over generations meant many Māori saw the importance of adapting to the Pākehā world and assimilating policies as supporting the survival of their whānau. As Adele said, “I was brought up white because Mum thought that was the right thing to do.” Such prioritising often resulted in the loss of te reo Māori in the home and community, affecting generations of Māori (Fitzpatrick, 2015).

Having to “get” an English name to benefit the teacher disadvantaged and disconnected Raiha from her tīpuna name, whānau and whenua. Her Nanny lamented on discovering this: “Now no one knows your name . . . the name came from generations, and it’s lived through generations from the area.” Whaea Em also noted that her name was determined by this cultural power: “Even my name, I was given a Pākehā name because my father told me a Māori name would not get me a job.” The mispronunciation of Māori names continues today and reflects the value dominant society places on Māori language.

Being “raised Māori” implicitly suggests being socialised in a more traditional Māori way which may have included being raised by grandparents or other relatives in whāngai

relationships, or being brought up “on the marae”, or living close to whānau. It was also assumed that being raised in such ways provided access to cultural connectedness, Māoritanga and te reo Māori through participation in common traditional cultural practices such as pōwhiri, tangihanga and other marae-based ceremonies or hapū and iwi gatherings. However, in this study, the effects of colonisation on te reo Māori meant being raised with te reo Māori or being able to speak te reo was not guaranteed. Early assimilationist educational policies that prohibited the use of the native language of Māori saw the language extinguished from the classroom and often alienated from the home (Selby, 1999). These policies have affected many Māori, reinforcing negative attitudes to education across generations, as illustrated by this comment from Whaea Em: “They never taught us Māori because he [her father] said it would not help us get employment.”

Though growing up without te reo Māori themselves, the women in this study did not view the ability to kōrero Māori as essential to identifying themselves as Māori. All agreed that the ability to practise Māori values validated Māori identity and authenticity. The practices and values of manaakitanga and whanaungatanga were very much alive and valued by these Māori women—with and without te reo Māori. Māori identity for these women was evidenced by the way they cared for others and the way they lived. Being fluent in the ability to live the principles of whanaungatanga, manaakitanga and tiakitanga was just as valued and important as being fluent in te reo Māori (Fitzpatrick, 2015).

See, I thought I was Māori. I thought I was Māori Māori . . . even without the reo. See, even without the reo I thought—you can’t tell me I’m not Māori just because I don’t know reo. (Raiha)

I’m not fluent in te reo, but I know what my heart is, and my whāngai mum tells me that’s all that’s important. (Whaea Em)

Within Māoridom, the ability to kōrero Māori is viewed by some as a key indicator of Māori identity. To some, te reo Māori is considered central to the survival of the culture, while to others cultural survival can be supported by the practice of tikanga Māori without reo proficiency (O’Carroll, 2013; Pihama, 2001). One of the major casualties of the assimilationist policies in education was te reo Māori, which is central to the survival of Māori culture and identity (Benton, 2015; Waitangi Tribunal, 1986). Efforts in the last 30 years to revitalise te reo Māori include initiatives such as Te Kohanga Reo and Māori-medium education at all levels: kura kaupapa Māori, whare kura, and wānanga. These initiatives have been crucial in de-escalating the threat to the Māori language in Aotearoa; however, the number of fluent Māori speakers continues to decrease in proportion to the increasing Māori population (Benton, 2015).

This situation has implications for Māori students in the education system, as language is a primary aspect of cultural wellbeing. To the women in this study, principles of whanaungatanga, manaakitanga and tiakitanga were essential to Māori identity regardless of access to te reo Māori or cultural activities, or outward physical appearance. The absence of te reo Māori fluency does not prevent Māori women playing vital roles in many aspects of Māori rituals or practices which maintain and support culture, tikanga and mana.

For the majority of Māori in Aotearoa colonisation is an ongoing event that began with the introduction of European ideologies, imperialism, economic expansion, culture, knowledge and language, enforced through policies and laws which continue today. Social factors such as education, religion, politics and language direct and reinforce the norms, practices and values of any culture. Under colonial law, Māori lost their land, language and identity. Grounded in the patriarchal order of Victorian ideology, Māori women were more marginalised by the dominant discourses of colonialism

and gender as they became even more invisible than male Māori. Māori women were further disconnected from their cultural social frameworks and roles within Te Ao Māori as their worldviews and cultural values became silenced and ignored. The effects of colonisation on Māori women included the disregard of tikanga Māori in acknowledging land ownership inherited by birthright and identity, traditional birthing practices of Māori women (Gemmell, 2013), “tapu-based” roles versus the socially constructed Western gender-based roles, and political participation (Mikaere, 1994).

School experiences

For the women in this study, being Māori and going to English-medium schools in a Western education system highlighted cultural dissonance, as two cultures and worldviews collided. Many had experienced punitive and corporal punishment, stereotyping, discrimination and deficit-theorising because they were Māori. For Raiha, her overwhelming emotion as she returned to the education system was:

Fear. Absolute fear. Fear. Fear. All the things that happened to you in your last . . . you know, the dumb. The dumb, the dumb thing. I remember even at primary and intermediate, all the dumb kids, the “dumb Māoris”. The “dumb Māoris” they called us. You know, just that “dumb” coming back in full throttle. And that just hangs around, it just hangs around in the air above you. And so, the first year was more about a struggle of feeling that I actually belong here. It was not so much learning about the stuff that was important. You still felt like, even at your age, you know, I reverted back to what I was like at college. I didn’t want to be seen as dumb. You know, I didn’t want to be seen as dumb at my age versus the young kids. I didn’t want to be seen dumb as a Māori versus a Pākehā. So you carry actually all of that with you in the

first year and even part of its still with me in the second year.

Participants’ expectation of failure at university had resulted from internalising negative experiences within compulsory education:

Primary lost me, intermediate buried me and college was just about hitting 15, playing sports, mates and getting out of there. And so you leave your education, or what you think you know about education, back where you last sort of dealt with it. I fully expected to fail. I fully expected to not pass. I fully expected to not get anywhere. I fully expected someone to tap on my shoulder and go “You don’t belong here.” I was waiting for all of that. (Raiha)

My expectation was only brainy people came to university because through college we were always told you have to make it to 6th form, and then you have to get university entrance if you want to go to university. Well, we gave up in the 4th form you know, 15, finish school cause we’re never going to get there so don’t even try wasting Mum and Dad’s money. And we can help put kai on the table if we get a job. (Kahuirangi)

Discrimination, racism and prejudice in the classroom meant Māori children experienced physical and punitive punishment that psychologically wounded many and affected their self-efficacy and self-esteem.

I don’t know if you had the long wooden rulers in your day? I used to get that slammed on my hands at intermediate . . . We had a teacher in Form 2 and she used to keep us all at the back and the Pākehās at the front and she literally did tell us we were sort of the dummies. (Raiha)

Many of these experiences challenged the women’s ideas of returning to the education domain, and yet, despite reliving the negative

feelings they experienced in education as children, the participants were pursuing higher education and demonstrating their commitment to contribute to the wellbeing of others in their whānau, hapū, iwi and communities.

The new language of tertiary learning

The participants' positive experiences upon entering university as mature Māori women challenged their past experiences, which had shaped the expectations and preconceived ideas of the possibilities of tertiary education. The see-sawing of past fears with the reality of the present meant their first year was not just about the anxieties that come with starting something new. For some of the women, cultural dissonance began with the clash of cultural values. The individualistic approaches of hegemonic ideologies found in the tertiary environment clashed with the collective values of Māori society and whānau structures. As Kahuirangi commented, "I love being Māori. I love who I am. It's just that individuality that I cannot wrap my head around. I think it's because of the way we've been brought up as Māori." A major part of cultural dissonance was academic jargon, which became another language to learn and represented another culture suppressing Māori women's prior knowledge, experience and values. The need to become fluent in this new "language" in order to achieve the desired outcome to contribute to whānau wellbeing helped the women in this study reconcile the dissonance they experienced in the process.

It's like putting me into a size 16. Yes it's do-able, but boy it doesn't look good and it's damn uncomfortable. And it's the way I feel about the words we use here. I don't feel comfortable with them . . . it just seems so ugly. Ugly in my eyes because that's not how I talk, but I have to talk that way for the lecturer so they can say "you understand the content" when I'd really just love to talk, kōrero about

it, rather than put it in words. I struggle with that a lot. It just, it just feels wrong. It almost feels like I am being fraudulent in that sense. (Raiha)

Academic language was perceived as another space to negotiate without compromising existing relationships with whānau who did not speak the same language. Raiha again:

But for me if I'm talking about not fitting right, it's the language you have to learn, that language and that thinking. But then I sort of think, do I want to talk like that? Cause you have to talk like that in this environment . . . I don't want to be talking that language and make any of my whānau or anyone feel like they're less than and that stuff, and I don't want to change me. I like talking to the cuzzie like "hey cuz" and all that sort of thing and I find that that language has been creeping in and I also find, and I have to be quite mindful and careful, that I'm going "Yeah, but if you look at the . . ." and it makes them automatically withdraw and so I don't want to change those relationships, I want to still have fun and everything like that.

Raiha's experience illustrates the conscious awakening that occurs for many Māori as they make sense of colonising impacts and cultural dissonance in their lives. The degree of colonisation in the women's socialisation as Māori children in a Western-dominated society led to the cultural dissonance they had experienced throughout their lives, which threatened the stability of their cultural identity (Fitzpatrick, 2015). Their level of resistance to colonising impacts developed as their awareness grew, and for a few of the women in this study, making sense of their lived reality empowered them to make conscious and informed choices about their learning. As Kahuirangi commented:

At my age, I don't want to change. I don't want to speak how they speak. I want to be a

social worker on the ground with the people, for the people. I don't need big words to speak to my people, or people in need, people that are vulnerable. So therefore it doesn't, in my head, it doesn't match up. I need to know legislation, yes I know. I need to understand the acts, yes I know that. But because I speak basic English, does that make my knowledge any different? No it doesn't. Not to me. Not to the people I'm going to help, or the whānau, or the kids. The language that I speak is not going to make it any better for them.

Despite their negative experiences in compulsory education as children being further compounded by cultural dissonance experienced at university as adults, these Māori women, supported by their own cultural values, created strategies to overcome past fears and present conflicts. The challenges of the cultural dissonance they were experiencing helped them make sense of their new surrounds from their own worldview as Māori women, empowering them to critique and theorise their own experiences and share their knowledge to empower others.

I think if you can get through that first year and you can see how much it's empowered you, how much it's stirred you up inside to start thinking about who you are, what you can do, how you can make a better change for your whānau, things like that. I think about what an impact Western ideology has on our people. You know, globalisation and consumerism, how we buy into it because we don't know any better, and that's where I share my university experience with my whānau so that they will think outside that square that we've all be brought up in. Because if it's not me that's gonna save part of my whānau or some people or make a change, it's going to be a whole lot of us, because to me, Māori scholars are coming. In force. We are. We're gonna be bigger, better, brighter. There's going to be a better future for our kids. (Kahuirangi)

The sharing and empowering responsibilities felt and undertaken by Māori women as students later in life demonstrates their ongoing role of nurturer within the wider context of whānau. As nurturers of their own whānau, these women sought and continued the role of nurturing within the context of their new environment. Seeking to improve the wellbeing of others within their whānau, hapū, iwi and community motivated their decisions to study, despite their fears and anxieties. The transportable nature of cultural values and practices for Māori women meant the principle and action of whanaungatanga primarily used in their homes became an anchor as they navigated their new academic journey. A kaupapa whānau enabled these women to continue cultural practices that supported and nurtured themselves and others along the way.

Conclusion

Exploring experiences in tertiary education through the voices of mature Māori women acknowledges, legitimises and validates the presence of this increasingly successful and large Māori student population (Nikora, Levy, Henry, & Whangapirita, 2002). The cultural dissonance experienced at tertiary level by the women in this study was a strong reflection of their childhood encounters with education and learning in Aotearoa. Whether as a child or mature student, these women experienced the clash of their collectivist cultural values as Māori with the Western individualistic culture that was dominant in all their educational experiences. The internalising impacts of assimilationist policies and deficit theorising in education and society in childhood affected the degree of cultural dissonance experienced by these women when they returned to education later in life. As mature Māori women, age, life experience and the ability to create their own support networks using their established cultural identities and values better positioned

them to be able to make sense, theorise and articulate the cultural dissonance they experienced. Ultimately they were able to challenge and overcome it in order to achieve their educational goals. G. H. Smith (2003) articulates the type of journey the women in this study experienced as “a confrontation with the colonizer and a confrontation with ourselves” (p. 3). Cultural dissonance was evident for all these women; however, it did not prevent them utilising implicit traditional Māori values to survive tertiary educational environments.

The Māori women’s ability to overcome internalised negative experiences and discourses of their childhood and adolescent education demonstrates the resilience of traditional Māori values in helping them to negotiate the often alienating journey into higher learning. Cultural dissonance, once identified, understood and confronted by those who experience it, becomes a catalyst for conscious and subconscious awareness and resistance. Within the English-medium education system in Aotearoa, cultural dissonance will continue to be experienced by Māori until there is a truly bicultural curriculum that is taught in culturally safe educational settings.

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Glossary

Māori-to-English translations have been made in relation to their usage in this study. We acknowledge that there is often more than one translation or meaning associated with te reo Māori words. These translations were sourced through *Te Aka Online Māori Dictionary* (<http://maoridictionary.co.nz/>).

Aotearoa	commonly used Māori word for New Zealand, lit. “land of the long white cloud”
haka	ceremonial war cry or challenge
hui	to meet, gather; a gathering
hapū	tribal relations or grouping of whānau connected by kinship to a common ancestor
iwi	extension of existing whānau groupings of hapū within a geographical area
kai	food or sustenance
kanohi ki te kanohi	face to face, an expression used to describe contact or communication in person
Kaupapa Māori	an approach, topic, practice, agenda, ideology or institution that upholds a Māori worldview
kōrero	to speak, explain or address; an account, discussion or information
kura kaupapa	Māori-medium primary school
Māori	Indigenous person/people of Aotearoa
Māoritanga	Māori way of life (practices and beliefs)
mana	prestige, authority, power or influence of an individual, group, place or object
Mana Wāhine	prestige, authority, power or influence of a woman or women

manaakitanga	generosity, support, hospitality and care of or for others
marae	gathering place, space for formal discussions
Pākehā	New Zealander of European descent
pōwhiri	rituals of encounter, welcome ceremony on a marae, welcome
tangihanga	weeping, crying, funeral, rites for the dead; one of the most important institutions in Māori society with strong cultural imperatives and protocols
tapu	sacred, forbidden, set apart
Te Ao Māori	the Māori world
Te Kohanga Reo	Māori-medium pre-school programme
te reo Māori	the Māori language
te reo Māori me ona tikanga	the Māori language and culture
tiakitanga	guardianship, caring of, protection, upkeep
tikanga	procedure, process, way, custom, practice
tīpuna	ancestor, grandparents
wāhine	female, women
wānanga	learning related to traditional cultural customs and knowledge
whakataukī	proverbs
whānau	to be born, grouping of people by kinships or purpose
whanaungatanga	relationship, sense of connection or belonging resulting from responsibilities towards, and support of, each other
whāngai	raised by others within whānau/hapū ties
whare	house or residence
whare kura	Māori-medium school
whenua	land

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