

中華資優教育學會
資優教育論壇，2014，12卷，1-24頁

Guiding principles for the education of gifted Māori students and their possible relevance to gifted indigenous students in Taiwan

Dr. Jill Bevan-Brown
Massey University, Aotearoa/New Zealand

I began this talk with a traditional Māori greeting in which I identified who I am, my mountain, my river and my tribal affiliation. I have also extended my greetings to the indigenous people of this land, to Wei-Ren Chen and to you all gathered here today.

When Wei-Ren Chen first invited me to speak, I was both flattered and honoured but I did wonder, why me from little old NZ thousands of miles away? He told me that the conference theme was multi-cultural gifted education and thought that my work with gifted Māori students would be of interest especially in respect to educating gifted indigenous students. Only then did the “penny drop” as the saying goes! Taiwan is the home of the Austronesians from which Māori are descended. I know there is some debate about whether the Austronesians originated from Taiwan or whether they came here from the south east coast of China or from other locations but whatever scenario is correct there is an ancestral link between Māori and the indigenous people of Taiwan – so perhaps I will meet some of my distant cousins while I am here!

Today I am going to share with you some of my research findings concerning Māori students with special education needs especially gifted students. Along the way I will be posing questions that may relate to the education of gifted indigenous students in Taiwan. However, from the outset I must emphasise that my talk is based on principles and practices that are relevant to Māori

Key words: Māori learners with special education needs, gifted education, gifted indigenous students

students in Aotearoa/New Zealand. They may or may not apply to the Taiwanese situation – all countries and cultures are different. They have their own unique and complex history, customs, beliefs and circumstances. Hopefully some of the educational principles and practices I describe will be pertinent and useful. However others may be culturally inappropriate and unsuitable for the Taiwanese context. So my message is for you to consider what I have to say and judiciously choose from it any relevant principles and practices that may be of benefit to gifted indigenous students, their parents and families.

You may wonder why I have grouped students with special education needs and gifted students together? This is because, for Māori, gifted students are just one of a range of students who have special education needs. Their special needs relate to the fact that they are outstanding in some field and so require educational considerations that differ from the norm. This is a Māori belief, not a NZ-wide belief, although there are many Pākehā (New Zealanders of Caucasian descent) who also believe this. Whether or not gifted education should come under the auspices of Special Education is a topic on which there is ongoing debate in Aotearoa/New Zealand. What is the situation here in Taiwan – do gifted children come under the special education umbrella?

I am going to start by telling you about my PhD research (Bevan-Brown, 2002). The aim of this research was to find out: how Māori learners with special education needs

could have their needs met in a culturally appropriate, effective way; what challenges existed to achieving this; and how these challenges could they be met. A multi-method approach was used to answer these questions over a six-year period. The first phase involved identifying what constituted culturally appropriate, effective provisions. To find this out I conducted:

- a review of Aotearoa/New Zealand and international literature;
- a written survey to 78 people from 56 special education, Māori and disability organisations;
- interviews with 25 organisation personnel, 42 parents, families and Māori learners with special needs;
- a six-year case study of one learner with special needs; and
- four consultation meetings with parents and staff from six kōhanga reo. (These are Māori-medium early childhood centres).

I asked people what they considered were culturally appropriate, effective special education provisions? Why? and I also asked for examples. The analyses of data from consultation in this first research phase revealed a set of principles that were considered essential to providing culturally appropriate, effective education to Māori learners with special needs.

Guiding Principles for Educating Māori learners with Special Needs

1. Importance, relevance and beneficence

2. Kaupapa Māori (a Māori foundation)
3. Participation
4. Empowerment, tino rangatiratanga (tribal authority) and Māori control
5. High Quality
6. Appropriate personnel
7. Accountability
8. Equality and Accessibility

I will now explain each of these principles particularly in relation to gifted education but first I want to introduce you to a metaphor.

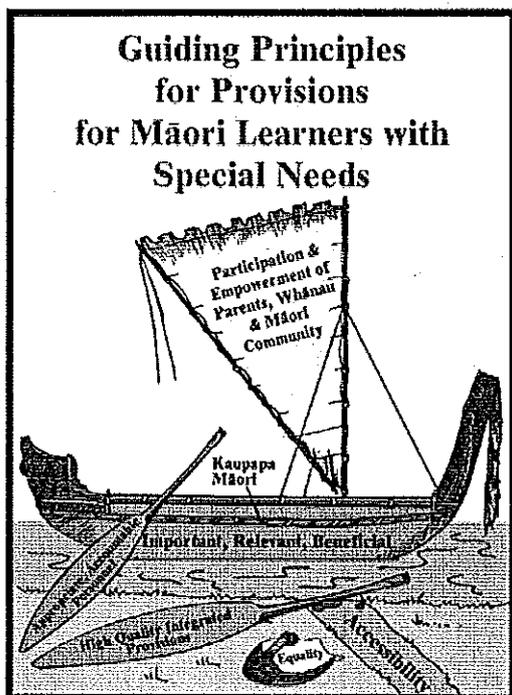


Fig 1: He Waka Tino Whakarawea:
A Well-Equipped Canoe

Bishop and Glynn (1999) maintain that educators develop principles and practices that reflect the imagery and metaphors they hold. In the past, special education in Aotearoa/New

Zealand has been dominated by the medical model metaphor. So we talked about “cases” and “treating” children. Similarly, Māori education has been governed by a deficit model metaphor where Māori children were referred to as “disadvantaged” and “deprived of beneficial educational experiences.” Thankfully, these paradigms are changing. To support this change and facilitate progress for Māori students both with and without special education needs, I have introduced the metaphor of a waka (canoe). Assessments, programmes, services and resources are likened to a waka tino whakarawea – a well-equipped canoe on which students travel at one stage of their life’s journey.

- * What are the guiding principles that underlie the education of indigenous students in Taiwan? If unknown, how can they be identified?
- * What is an appropriate metaphor for the education of indigenous Taiwanese students?

Importance, Relevance and Beneficence

The kaunoti (hull) represents the principles of importance, relevance and beneficence. As the hull provides the foundation of the waka, importance, relevance and beneficence should underlie educational provisions for Māori students with special education needs. These provisions must address needs and aspirations identified by parents, family, the Māori community and the students themselves.

Two areas of potential conflict arise when

putting these principles into practice. The first relates to general disagreements about what is considered important, relevant and beneficial and the second relates to incompatible cultural concepts, expectations, beliefs, procedures, values, norms and practices.

Suggestions for addressing cultural incompatibilities include identifying specific areas where parents' and professionals' beliefs are convergent, divergent and in conflict, and then exploring ways convergent areas can be expanded, divergent areas respected, and areas of conflict dealt with. A second approach involves identifying and validating the differences, frames of reference and shared goals of all concerned, negotiating practices and beliefs and exploring ways to "fuse horizons" to achieve mutually agreeable solutions (Danesco, 1997). Strategies that facilitate positive home-school relationships can also contribute to identifying matters of importance, concern and benefit to students, their parents and families.

How does this principle apply to gifted education? One outstanding NZ example relates to the areas of giftedness provided for in schools. In a Ministry of Education-funded research project which evaluated the nature and scope of gifted education in NZ, we found that although schools espoused a broad concept of giftedness, they gave priority to provisions for students who were academically gifted. Students who were gifted in the performing arts and sports were less well served, those who were gifted in affective

and cultural areas received limited provisions while those who were spiritually gifted were not provided for at all. (Riley et al., 2004a).

Interestingly, another research study (Bevan-Brown, 1993) showed that Māori participants, while recognizing many areas of giftedness, placed highest priority on affective areas eg being gifted in personal qualities such as āwhinatanga (helping and serving others), māia (courage and bravery), manaakitanga (hospitality), aroha (love for, caring and sensitivity to others) and pukumahi (industriousness and determination). The areas of highest importance for Māori (illustrated in Table 1) had a low priority in school programmes for gifted students.

Table 1: Frequency of Mention of Gifted Abilities and Qualities

Area of Giftedness	% of Total Mentions
Outstanding personal qualities and high moral values	24.5
Service to others	20.5
Traditional knowledge and skills	13.5
Language ability	11.5
Intellectual ability	11.0
Leadership ability	7.25
Spiritual ability	6.0
Artistic ability	4.0
Physical ability	1.25
Miscellaneous	0.5

In Aotearoa/New Zealand majority cultural values and priorities determine what areas of giftedness are identified and

provided for while minority cultural values and priorities receive only limited recognition. One reason for this is that identifying and providing for affective and spiritual giftedness, for example, is a much harder task than identifying and providing for academic giftedness. Additionally, some people contend that developing these areas of giftedness is the responsibility of the home not the school. This stance can be countered by the argument that it is the school's responsibility to provide for the needs and aspirations of all their students. The world needs more people like Nelson Mandela, Huang Chih-ming and Mother Theresa so there is a consequent need for schools to identify and nurture students who, through their advanced affective and spiritual qualities and abilities, have potential to make a significant contribution to their fellow men and women.¹

Although people from different cultural groups may identify the same areas of giftedness, it is likely that differing priorities are placed on these areas. All are important not just those that align with majority culture concepts of giftedness or those that can be easily identified and developed.

- * How are matters of importance, concern and benefit to indigenous Taiwanese identified and provided for?
- * Are procedures for resolving disagreements between home and school fair, transparent, widely advertised and culturally appropriate?
- * How are cultural incompatibilities identified and addressed?
- * Do gifted educational provisions include areas of particular importance to indigenous Taiwanese?

Kaupapa Māori

Kaupapa Māori refers to the requirement that all assessments, programmes, services and resources should represent a Māori worldview by incorporating Māori concepts, knowledge, skills, attitudes, language, practices, customs, values and beliefs. This requirement can be likened to the flax lashings that bind the various parts of the canoe together. Just as these lashings provide strength and cohesiveness to the canoe, cultural input in educational provisions achieves the same purpose for Māori students.

Including it shows them that their culture is valued. Not only do they feel affirmed and motivated to learn but their learning is actually facilitated because they are able to relate new information to prior knowledge and experiences. Their self-esteem is raised and their emotional and psychological well-being is nurtured.

¹ An example of a school using inquiry learning to investigate "courage" is available at <http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/Curriculum-stories/Media-gallery/Treaty-of-Waitangi/A-culturally-connected-curriculum>

In respect to gifted education there should be three layers of cultural content: firstly, curriculum-wide cultural content which contributes to creating a culturally responsive environment; secondly, specific content to extend students who are culturally gifted i.e. have exceptional ability in cultural arts, music, history, knowledge, traditions, customs and language; and thirdly, relevant cultural content in programmes to extend students with gifts and talents in other areas such as science, maths, technology and so forth. Including cultural input goes much further than incorporating cultural content and ensuring priority areas are catered for as discussed earlier. It also involves: utilizing culturally preferred ways of learning; incorporating cultural values, attitudes and practices; including culturally appropriate support; and taking into account cultural concepts of giftedness. My research (Bevan-Brown, 1993) indicated that cultural input strengthened Māori students' cultural identity which in turn helped them to reveal their giftedness in all areas, develop their potential and resist negative peer pressure against achieving.

In Aotearoa/New Zealand, there is no set definition of giftedness rather each school is expected to consult with its community to establish a school-based definition. This ensures that when developing a gifted programme, teachers and parents have an agreed understanding of what giftedness is – that “they are on the same waka!” The rationale behind a school-based definition is:

The concept of giftedness and talent is dynamic, sensitive to time, place and culture (McAlpine, 1996; Ministry of Education, 2000). What is valued in one community at a particular point in time and by a specific group of people will vary greatly from another community, time and people. Giftedness and talent is a living, breathing, ever-changing concept, one which has been, and continues to be, according to Borland (1997) socially constructed. Cultural values, beliefs, traditions and attitudes, as well as interpretations, underlie how we define giftedness and talent. (Riley et al., 2004b, p.10)

Given this last statement, schools that have Māori students (which is probably every school in NZ as Māori represent 15% of our population) are expected to have a definition that incorporates a Māori concept of giftedness and a gifted programme that takes this Māori concept into account. But what is this concept and what are some of the implications of taking it into account?

My research (Bevan-Brown, 1993) investigated both traditional and contemporary concepts of giftedness from a Māori perspective. An extensive literature search was undertaken over a period of five years. It involved consideration of:

1. History books;
2. Biographies of famous Māori;
3. The Māori language for relevant terms and proverbs;

4. Oral literature especially traditional songs, poems and legends;
5. Māori writing - fiction and non-fiction;
6. Traditional life-style and educational practices;
7. Arts, crafts and music;
8. Māori values and customs;
9. Māori social structure and organisations;
10. Religious beliefs and practices;
11. Genealogy;
12. Television programmes and videos; and
13. Previous academic writing about Māori and giftedness.

I also conducted interviews with 33 very able Māori participants ranging in age from teenagers to 70+ years. Their gifts and talents included artistic, musical, academic, sporting, organisational, spiritual and cultural expertise.

Data from all sources revealed that while some changes have occurred over time, generally traditional and contemporary concepts of giftedness are very similar. They have eight distinctive components in common. Table 2: Components of a Māori Concept of Giftedness

1. Giftedness is widely distributed in Māori society. It is not bound by social class, economic status, lineage or gender.
2. Giftedness can be exhibited in both individual and group contexts. Also, an individual's gifts and talents can be 'owned' by a group.
3. The recognised areas of giftedness and talent are broad and wide-ranging.

4. Importance is placed on both 'qualities' and 'abilities.'
5. The concept of giftedness is holistic in nature and inextricably intertwined with other Māori concepts.
6. There is an inherent expectation that a person's gifts and talents will be used to benefit others.
7. Māori culture provides a firm foundation on which giftedness is grounded, nurtured, exhibited and developed.
8. Mana (status, prestige) is frequently accorded to gifted people especially in the areas of traditional knowledge and service to others.

This Māori concept of giftedness has a number of implications for educational provisions for gifted Māori students. For example, number 2 – "Giftedness can be exhibited in both individual and group contexts," means that teachers should not only look for gifted individuals, but also gifted groups. This is more difficult than it sounds. Many teachers, on hearing a talented musical group or evaluating a brilliant team science project, are naturally inclined to seek out the individual who is the "most musically talented" or the one who has provided the "spark of genius" to the science project. It may be true that the group performance was greatly influenced by one very able individual, but teachers must also be open to the possibility that it was the group composition, interaction and dynamics that generated the outstanding musical performance or science project. If this is found to be the case, then teachers must

acknowledge that giftedness belongs to the group as a whole, not any particular individual in it and so must be recognised, nurtured and developed in a group context.

Consider, also, number 6 - "There is an inherent expectation that a person's gifts and talents will be used to benefit others." Traditionally it was believed that a person's gifts and talents were given to them from the gods and they were obligated to use them for the benefit of the whole tribe. If they didn't, these gifts could be taken away. Today Māori still believe there is an inherent responsibility to use their gifts to serve others. Consequently, when identifying gifted Māori children teachers should look for those who are "being of service." They will not necessarily be gifted but they could be. Being aware of this and alert to this component of giftedness, the gifted child who may otherwise have been overlooked, may be identified. Also teachers need to provide opportunities where this quality can surface, be nurtured and develop. This could be as simple as gifted musicians giving a performance in a hospital ward and gifted leaders being involved in peer mediation, or as elaborate as Service-Learning projects² or

² Service-Learning involves an approach to teaching and learning that integrates academic study and community service in order to enrich learning, teach civic responsibility and benefit communities. An example is Māori students involvement in a project to improve facilities and the environment at their local marae (traditional meeting place).

participation in the Future Problem Solving Programme.³

The third example of taking Māori perspectives into account relates to the interpretation of various gifts. For example, creativity, spirituality and social giftedness are likely to be interpreted in different ways in different cultures. A case in point is "leadership;" what constitutes "leadership" in one cultural group might be quite different in another. For Māori there is the 'up-front' brand of leadership, and also a quieter, leadership-by-example type, both of which are recognized by the majority culture in NZ. However, a third style of 'behind-the-scenes' leadership also exists. This involves providing emotional support, guidance and inspiration in a quiet, unassuming way as described in this quote from my research:

Daisy Mahaki was a student at college and I remember the qualities that she had, where she was a background worker who was always lifting people up. She was

³ This programme involves a team of students who work together throughout the year to identify a real life problem or concern in their community and then devise and implement a plan to address the problem or concern. They are supported by an adult coach throughout the process and submit a final report of their work for possible inclusion in national and international Future Problem Solving competitions. One example is a project where students investigated ways learning and usage of Māori language could be increased in their school and community. This can be viewed at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPGiJty9XZM&feature=em-share_video_user

a non-descript child to some, she didn't stand out in a crowd in any particular way but was always working in the background, making sure, propping everybody up and I always remember ... that girl's got leadership qualities. We have high hopes for her. (Bevan-Brown, 1993, p. 75)

Such behaviour is not generally associated with leadership in Pākehā culture or provided for in gifted programmes.

These three examples show how important it is to know about and take into account differing cultural concepts of giftedness and not to operate solely from a majority culture perspective. However, two warnings need to be sounded here. Firstly, cultural knowledge, skills, qualities and values must be applied in a 21st century context. As a Māori friend of mine said, "if we just think of our culture in terms of traditional knowledge being applied only in traditional ways, we are on the wrong waka!" Similarly, in a retirement speech (26/6/12), Sir Mason Durie warned that "Māori must learn from the past but not live in the past."

Secondly, we must be wary of cultural stereotyping. People with the same cultural background differ from one another across the entire spectrum of human traits and characteristics including the degree to which they identify with and adhere to cultural beliefs, values and practices. While schools should provide a culturally responsive environment for students from all cultures, the nature and extent of cultural input into provisions for gifted students from

indigenous and other ethnic minority cultures is something that must be decided upon in consultation with parents, family and the students themselves. It is also a decision that should be revisited regularly. As people's life experiences and circumstances change, so often do their beliefs, values and goals. Therefore consultation with parents, family and students should be on-going.

- * Are indigenous concepts of giftedness represented and provided for in schools and early childhood centres in Taiwan?
- * Is cultural giftedness identified and provided for?
- * What cultural input is included in gifted programmes in respect to content, values, delivery, resources and support?

Participation, Empowerment, Tino Rangatiratanga and Māori control

These principles will be considered together as they are closely associated. Traditionally even small waka had sails. These assisted the rowers and hastened progress. In the waka metaphor the participation of parents, families and the Māori community provide the sails. The more empowered they are, the greater the rate of progress made.

Participation involves the consultative, collaborative participation of parents, families, the Māori community and the students themselves in all stages of education to the extent that they choose and feel comfortable with. Participation is a two-way street. Professionals should also be involved in the lives of their students and the Māori

community to a degree that is considered appropriate by all concerned. By interacting with students, parents and families outside of the school context and by becoming involved in the activities of the Māori community, professionals can gain an understanding and appreciation of Māori perspectives and increase their knowledge of factors that influence the lives of the students and families with whom they work.

Involvement in education should result in the empowerment of Māori at multiple levels. It should provide parents, families, students and the Māori community with the skills, knowledge, means, opportunity and authority to act for themselves and to make their own decisions. Inherent in this is the provision of meaningful choices about which decisions can be made. Empowerment requires that those who presently hold power provide space for Māori to participate; opportunities for them to make their own decisions; and resources to enable them to implement these decisions. Empowerment entails shared understandings, mutual respect and valuing of diversity.

The requirement to involve parents has become widely accepted in Aotearoa/New Zealand and teachers are often reminded that “parents know their children best.” However, in respect to gifted education, consulting with parents of gifted Māori children is perceived by some teachers as “doubly threatening.” They feel uncomfortable interacting with parents from a different culture and they hold a stereotyped view of parents of gifted

children as being pushy and over-estimating their children’s ability. While the latter may apply to a small number of parents, research indicates that the opposite is usually true. Robinson, Shore and Enersen (2007) report that parents of gifted children are very accurate in identifying giftedness and that involving them in their child’s education leads to more successful outcomes for the child. Herewini et al’s (2012) work with gifted Māori students also shows that parents, families and the Māori community can be very helpful in making programme suggestions especially in areas teachers find difficult such as providing for giftedness in the affective and spiritual domains.

A further point must be made about parental involvement. Findings from my research (Bevan-Brown, 2002) showed that, generally, schools and early childhood centres decided how, where, when and to what extent parents and families could be involved or “used.” Parental and family choice was often limited to either, “do you agree with this idea we have come up with?” or deciding whether or not to participate. On the contrary, a true partnership involves meaningful decision-making where ideas and effort are pooled for the benefit of all concerned.

In order to encourage home-school interaction, the Ministry of Education commissioned a colleague and I to write a book called *Nurturing Gifted and Talented Children. A Parent-Teacher Partnership* (MoE, 2008a). All early childhood centres

and schools were provided with a copy of this book and they were encouraged to share it with parents. Parents can also access it from <http://gifted.tki.org.nz/For-schools-and-teachers>. No research is available about the effectiveness of this book but I have certainly recommended it to many parents both Māori and non-Māori. They are pleased to have something tangible they can refer to in discussions with their child's teachers. In once instance, these discussions resulted in a Māori parent being co-opted on to the Board of Trustees to help improve the school's cultural responsiveness.

- * How are indigenous Taiwanese involved in gifted programmes and how are teachers involved in the lives of gifted indigenous students, families and communities?
- * How are barriers to indigenous participation identified and addressed?
- * In what ways and at what levels are indigenous Taiwanese parents involved and empowered in decisions that relate to them and their gifted children?

High Quality

This principle constitutes one of the waka's two oars. Education provisions should be of a high quality. As well as being culturally appropriate, they need to be evidence-based; include accurate and on-going assessment; be well planned and coordinated; employ effective teaching strategies; be pitched at the correct ability level; utilize quality equipment

and resources; be positively focused; build on students' strengths; provide for all areas of development; and involve efficient administration and co-ordination of services. In short, educational provisions should incorporate all the components that have been identified as "best practice" in the field.

In respect to gifted education, although all components are important, identification methods and measures have particular significance. The Ministry of Education in Aotearoa/New Zealand emphasise that for identification to be effective, schools should:

- Adopt a school-wide, clearly defined multicategorical concept of giftedness and talent;
- Use multiple methods of identification. Using many methods of identification allows the results to act as parts of the puzzle to understanding the gifted and talented student's abilities and qualities. This better enables educators to design educational programmes that develop and enhance individual gifts and talents;
- Ensure a careful match between identification methods and the many areas of giftedness and talent;
- Base identification upon the special needs of individual gifted and talented students, rather than pragmatic factors such as ease of implementation, resources and teacher expertise;
- Identify gifted and talented students within the context of a culturally

- responsive, supportive environment;
- Ensure professional involvement, including in-service education of all staff in the development and implementation of identification procedures;
- Embed identification processes in the cultural context of the school, ensuring that the methods used are appropriate for identifying students of diversity; and
- Constantly evaluate identification methods and procedures. (Riley et al., 2004b, p. 14)

If schools follow these guidelines not only will their identification procedures be of a high quality but they will also be more likely to identify gifted Māori and other ethnic minority students.

Identification tools and strategies that are appropriate and effective for one cultural group may be completely inappropriate and ineffective for another. Consequently, a multi-method approach lessens the chances of gifted minority students being missed. Cultural appropriateness is pivotal when selecting which identification tools to use. My research has shown that for Māori students a combination of observations, products, processes, portfolios, performances, nominations and tests work well:

- Observations that are guided by checklists or rating scales that reflect the school's definition of giftedness and observers who interpret the

characteristics listed from a Māori cultural perspective;

- Products, processes, portfolios and performances which are discussed with the students so that they can elaborate on their motivation, intention, and deeper meaning. This enables teachers to appreciate facets they may have missed because they were looking through a different cultural lens;
- Nominations by teachers, parents, family, Māori community members, peers and the student themselves although there are some provisos as far as nominations are concerned. Teacher nominations work if the teacher has Māori cultural knowledge and high expectations of Māori students. Parent and self-nomination can be problematic as there is a strong sanction against "skiting" in Māori society. Therefore the person asking for the nomination must be known and trusted so that there is no risk of the nomination being interpreted as being boastful. Nominations from kaumatua (respected elders) are more effective as they have a life-time of experience to draw on and, interestingly, it is more acceptable for grandparents to "skite" about their grandchildren!
- Tests – standardized tests can be problematic because of the potential for cultural bias. Teacher-made tests where the teacher has cultural

knowledge, non-verbal tests such as Raven's Matrices, and dynamic assessment are all more effective approaches.

However, whatever methods are chosen, it is essential that they are used within the context of a cultural responsive environment ie a place where the student's culture is affirmed and developed by teachers who value and support cultural diversity; who offer programmes that incorporate cultural knowledge, experiences and values; and who cater for culturally preferred ways of learning in their teaching and assessment.

In preparing for this talk, apart from reading everything I could find on indigenous Taiwanese, I also read material on research relating to gifted indigenous students. Unfortunately, the latter reading was very limited as only the abstracts and/or descriptors were available in English. Accepting that I may have misinterpreted the material I read, it seems that dynamic assessment has proven successful with gifted indigenous students (Mann-Na Wong, 1997). The research study of Lioa Yung Kun (n.d.) also showed that teacher-rating scales, self-rating scales, peer nomination and GPA scores were effective in identifying gifted indigenous students for a multi-talent search model. Hopefully these methods have widespread use in Taiwanese schools.

- * Are the methods and measures used to identify gifted indigenous students, the programmes provided for them and the resources and equipment used, culturally appropriate and evidence-based?
- * How are the quality and effectiveness of these provisions evaluated?
- * Are indigenous students identified in areas that are highly valued by their culture?
- * Are indigenous parents, families and community members involved in a culturally appropriate way in the identification of gifted indigenous students?
- * Are both gifted performance and gifted potential identified?

Appropriate Personnel and Accountability

Because of the close association between these two principles they will be considered together. Appropriate, accountable personnel represent the second oar of the waka. Along with high quality integrated provisions these components enable the waka to travel smoothly and surely. If one oar is missing, the waka will travel in circles making only limited progress. If both are missing and there is no sail, the waka will not progress at all, or, at the mercy of the current, may founder on the rocks of adversity.

Professionals should have the personal, professional and cultural expertise required to teach Māori students with special needs. They should value and support Māori culture and

the students, parents and families with whom they work. They should also be accountable to them and the Māori community for the cultural and general effectiveness of programmes and services they provide.

Accountability can be achieved through transparent, specific, on-going checks, measures and consequences developed with stakeholder input into their design, implementation and monitoring. Regular jargon-free reporting to parents about their children's progress is a further accountability requirement.

Professional accountability can potentially encounter "muddy waters" in transitions between services and educational levels leading to important student information "falling between the cracks." Accountability rests at both sides of the transition. For example, when gifted students move from primary to secondary school, teachers at the primary level should ensure all relevant information pertaining to the student is passed on to the new school. At secondary level, teachers should seek out information about their new students including any gifted students they will be teaching. In Aotearoa/New Zealand there are many different systems and strategies to facilitate smooth transitions. I am sure this also the case in Taiwan.

In respect to appropriate personnel, participants in my research (Bevan-Brown, 2002) were specific about the personal, professional and cultural skills needed to work effectively with Māori students with special

needs. In addition to being well-trained, confident and competent, professionals should also: possess the skills needed to interact effectively and sensitively with people from diverse backgrounds; have a commitment to their job; be responsible; and have a caring attitude towards students with special education needs, their parents and families. Desirable cultural expertise included: an understanding of the linguistic, cultural and spiritual background of Māori; a respect for and knowledge of cultural values, concepts, beliefs and practices and the implications these have for working with Māori students with special needs; cross-cultural competence; a commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi⁴ and an understanding of the negative effects of colonization.

However, it should be added that a prerequisite to gaining knowledge about other cultures is that professionals have a sound understanding of their own culture, how it influences their beliefs and practices and how these impact on the people they interact with. With increased understanding of their own culture, professionals are in a better position to recognise that many so-called "truths, facts and values" are not "right" or "universally held" but are expressions of their own cultural beliefs.

⁴ The Treaty of Waitangi, signed in 1840, is an agreement between the British Crown and Māori which guaranteed Māori the same rights as British subjects in return for accepting the British monarchy.

All cultures have built-in biases, and there are no right or wrong cultural beliefs: however, there are differences that must be acknowledged. Cultural self-awareness is the bridge to learning about other cultures. It is not possible to be truly sensitive to someone else's culture until you are sensitive to your own culture and the impact that cultural customs, values, beliefs, and behaviours have on practice. (Lynch & Hanson, 1998, p.3)

In respect to cultural expertise, past research data (eg Bevan-Brown, 2002; Massey University, 2002) has shown that in Aotearoa/ New Zealand there was a widespread shortage of culturally appropriate resources, services, programmes and people with the cultural, language and professional expertise necessary to provide for Māori students with special needs including gifted students. Consequently, in recent years there has been a concerted effort to rectify this situation. This includes:

- proactive measures to enable more Māori to enter special education-related occupations eg recruitment focused on attracting Māori professionals and study awards and training incentives to attract Māori into areas where there is a shortage of Māori workers;
- compulsory cultural content in pre-service professional training;
- increased availability of Māori-

relevant and gifted-focused in-service education including courses, conferences, on-the-job coaching, mentoring, modeling, demonstration, school visits and pooling of local expertise and resources;

- Māori cultural on-line resources eg Tataiako: Cultural competencies for teachers of Māori learners (MoE, 2011), Tātai Pou Competency Matrix and Te Hikoitanga (MoE, 2008b) - a framework to assist professionals to understand their own roles in delivering culturally responsive services. Resources such as these are helping to equip professionals to develop and provide Māori-relevant programmes, services, assessment measures and resources.
- on-line resources relating to teaching gifted Māori students eg the tki gifted website (in particular <http://gifted.tki.org.nz/For-schools-and-teachers/Culturalconsiderations/Māori-students>) and "Gifted and talented students. Meeting their needs in New Zealand schools" (MoE, 2012)
- development of joint Māori/Pākehā programmes and services; and
- funding for and support of Māori organisations to develop and provide their own programmes and services.

The mentoring referred to above involves professionals with cultural and gifted expertise mentoring those who are less experienced and

knowledgeable. However, in my background reading for this talk I came across another type of beneficial mentoring. Tsung-Kuang Hu and Emily Tai-Hwa-Lu (2012) reported on a mentorship programme for two gifted indigenous Taiwanese students. The abstract notes:

This study was to explore the interaction between two pairs of mentors and aboriginal gifted students. The findings showed that not only the mentors' professional knowledge had gradual growth but also the students' abilities were improved.

What excellent professional development – a truly win-win situation!

- * In what ways are professionals accountable for the cultural and general effectiveness of their programmes and services to gifted indigenous Taiwanese students?
- * What input do indigenous Taiwanese have in accountability procedures and measures?
- * How is the preparedness of professionals to work with gifted indigenous students gauged and what opportunities are available to increase their cultural competence?
- * What measures are used to attract staff with the personal, professional and cultural expertise and supportive and valuing attitudes needed to teach gifted indigenous students?

Equality and Accessibility

The bailer represents equality. If water enters, it is used to enable the waka to remain balanced and afloat. Finally the path to the waka represents accessibility. If this is blocked, the Māori student will be forced to make the journey on foot. Progress by this means will be much slower and more laborious.

Special education provisions should be readily accessible to Māori students with special education needs, their parents and family. They should have the same rights and privileges as other students and experience equitable access, use and outcomes. Article Three of the Treaty of Waitangi promises Māori the “rights and privileges of British subjects.” This constitutes a guarantee of legal equality between Māori and other New Zealanders. This guarantee has been honoured in that Māori do have legal equality in Aotearoa/New Zealand. However, a significant number of Māori live in rural tribal areas where some medical and educational services are limited. They are also over-represented amongst those in the lowest socio-economic group. Consequently having a legal right to services does not necessarily mean they are able to access them. This is recognized by the Government which acknowledges that implicit in legal equality is the assurance of actual enjoyment of social benefits.

Where serious and persistent imbalances exist between groups, in their actual enjoyment of social benefits such as

health, education and housing, the Government will consider measures to assist in redressing the balance. (Department of Justice, 1989, p.13).

The implication of Article Three is that professionals may need to take proactive measures to ensure their Māori students are able to take full advantage of the programmes and services they offer. Affordable cost, convenient time and location, friendly personnel, barrier-free, safe environments and readily available and understandable advertising information are all important accessibility factors that must be taken into consideration.

Returning to gifted education, there is considerable controversy and debate in the gifted field over a variety of concepts and issues. However, two points that are generally accepted are, firstly, that being gifted means being exceptional in one or more areas compared to others of a similar age and, secondly, that giftedness can be found amongst people from all cultural, ethnic and socio-economic groups. Given this latter point Ford (2010) argues that there should be little or no under-representation of diverse cultures in gifted education, but this is not the case in the United States where Afro-Americans and many ethnic minority groups are under-represented. Similarly, in Aotearoa/New Zealand, Māori are under-represented in gifted education (Riley et al., 2004a). I believe one of the major reasons for this is low teacher expectation. This is illustrated in a colleague's

experience – the principal at one school told her, “you wont find any gifted children here, all our little faces are brown!” This was many years ago and the situation has improved since then, thankfully, but unfortunately lower expectations for Māori students still exists amongst some teachers even today. This has two consequences – firstly, teachers wont identify gifted Māori students if they are not looking for them and, secondly, the pygmalian affect is that students tend to perform up or down according to what is expected of them!

The under-representation of Māori students in gifted education is being addressed in a number of ways. The previously mentioned measures to increase professionals' cultural and gifted expertise have been successful in raising awareness of and knowledge about gifted Māori students. The extent to which this has resulted in an increased identification of gifted Māori students is unknown.

Other important steps have been:

- Māori representation on the National Advisory Committee for Gifted Education;
- the introduction of a requirement for all schools to report annually on their identification and provisions for gifted and talented students;
- the Education Review Office targeting gifted education;
- Ministry of Education funded initiatives such as the Te Toi Tupu Professional Learning and

Development programme with its focus on gifted Māori students and the Ministry's funding of Talent Development Initiatives including a range of projects targeting gifted Māori students.

The Taiwanese research I have read suggests that indigenous students here are under-represented in gifted education. In a study which, amongst other things, investigated the prevalence of indigenous students in gifted programmes, Yung-Kun (n.d.) found that at the time of the study there were 712 indigenous students in gifted programmes. This figure represented approximately 1.75% of the total gifted students in Taiwan. If indigenous people are 2% of the Taiwanese population then this is a shortfall of .25%. This under-representation was confirmed by teachers in gifted classes who considered that, compared to students in general, the prevalence of gifted indigenous students was lower. Yung-Kun also noted that most of the gifted indigenous students were from the A-Mei tribe and were mainly in programmes for gifted athletes. This indicates that factors which may be hindering the identification of giftedness amongst indigenous students need to be remedied and that the search for gifted students needs to be broadened to other tribes and other areas of giftedness. The situation may have changed since Yung-Kun's research was reported but the following questions still need to be asked:

- * Is the % of gifted indigenous students roughly equivalent to the % of indigenous people in the Taiwanese population?
- * If indigenous students are under-represented in gifted programmes, what are the reasons for this and how can the situation be rectified?

Even, if the % of gifted indigenous students matches the % of these groups in Taiwan, for true equality to be achieved, there should be a careful examination of what gifts are being nurtured and how this is being done. If gifted education is at the expense of indigenous students' culture then this is not equitable. They have the same rights as gifted students from the majority group to have their culture affirmed, valued and developed. Not only should they be equipped to participate in mainstream Taiwanese society, but they should also have the opportunity to participate in indigenous society, to belong to indigenous groups and institutions, and importantly to remain indigenous. Culturally appropriate measures must be used for identification, and the delivery, content and context of gifted education must be culturally relevant. Guiding questions to facilitate this are:

- * How are equity of access, use and outcomes measured?
- * If inequalities are identified, what strategies are used to address them?
- * Is indigenous content accorded equal value and status as other curriculum content and is it equally accessible?

Conclusion

In conclusion I would like to re-emphasise that my talk today is based on principles identified as culturally appropriate for Māori students – they won't all be appropriate for indigenous Taiwanese. In particular, I wondered about the emphasis on parental participation. Chinese people in Aotearoa/New Zealand tend to leave education in the hands of teachers more so than New Zealanders who expect to be consulted and involved. Perhaps there is a similar cultural practice in Taiwan amongst indigenous and Chinese Taiwanese? Therefore I must also reiterate the importance of consulting with the parents, families and gifted indigenous students themselves to find out exactly what they want – no assumptions can be made!

Finally, in Aotearoa/New Zealand, while adherence to the principles I have discussed today is going a long way to improve education and outcomes for Māori students, for greater long-term, widespread improvement to be achieved, genuine power sharing and societal-level changes in the ideologies, systems and circumstances that disadvantage Māori are needed. This may also be the case in Taiwan for indigenous people. Improving outcomes for indigenous people world-wide is, as the Māori proverb says, “he waka eke noa” – a canoe for which we all have responsibility.

References

- Bevan-Brown, J. (1993). *Special abilities: A Māori perspective*. Unpublished Master's thesis, Massey University, Palmerston North, NZ.
- Bevan-Brown, J. (2002). *Culturally appropriate, effective provision for Māori learners with special needs: He waka tino whakarawea*. Unpublished doctoral thesis, Massey University, Palmerston North, NZ.
- Bishop R. & Glynn, T. (1999). *Culture counts: Changing power relations in education*. Palmerston North, NZ: Dunmore Press Limited.
- Danescu, E.R. (1997). Parental beliefs on childhood disability: Insights on culture, child development and *intervention*. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 44 (1), 41-51
- Department of Justice. (1989). *Principles for Crown action on the Treaty of Waitangi*. Wellington, NZ: Author.
- Ford, D. Y. (2010). Recruiting and retaining gifted students from diverse ethnic, cultural and language groups. In J. A. Banks, & C. A. McGee Banks (Eds.), *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives* (7 ed., pp. 371-391). Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.
- Herewini, L., Tiakiwai, S.J., & Hawksworth, L. (2012). Gifted and talented. *SET Research Information for teachers*, (2),

- 2012, 41-48
- Hu, Tsung-Kuang & Tai-Hwa-Lu, Emily. (2012) A Mentorship Program for Two Aboriginal Gifted Students. *資優教育季刊*, No.124 (2012/09)
- Lynch E., & Hanson, M. (1998). *Developing cross-cultural competence. A guide for working with young children and their families*. Maryland: Paul H. Brookes.
- Massey University. (2002). *Special Education 2000. Monitoring and evaluation of the policy. Final Report to the Ministry of Education, Wellington, NZ*. Palmerston North, NZ: Massey University, Institute for Professional Development and Educational Research.
- Ministry of Education (2008a). *Nurturing gifted and talented children. A parent-teacher partnership*. Wellington, NZ: Learning Media.
- Ministry of Education (2008b). *Te Hikoitanga. Māori cultural responsiveness*. Retrieved from <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/SpecialEducation/OurWorkProgramme/GettingItRightForMāori/TeHikoitangaMāoriCulturalResponsivity.aspx>
- Ministry of Education (2011) *Tātaiako. Cultural competencies for teachers of Māori learners*. Retrieved from <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/~media/MinEdu/Files/TheMinistry/EducationInitiatives/Tataiako/TataiakoWEB.pdf>
- Ministry of Education (2012). *Gifted and talented students. Meeting their needs in New Zealand schools*. Wellington, NZ: Learning Media. Retrieved from <http://gifted.tki.org.nz/For-schools-and-teachers>
- Riley, T., Bevan-Brown, J., Bicknell, B., Carroll-Lind, J., & Kearney, A. (2004a). *The extent, nature and effectiveness of planned approaches in New Zealand schools for providing for gifted and talented students*. Report to the Ministry of Education. Palmerston North: IPDER, Massey University. Retrieved from <http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/assessment/5451>
- Riley, T., Bevan-Brown, J., Bicknell, B., Carroll-Lind, J., & Kearney, A. (2004b). *Gifted and talented education in New Zealand schools*. Wellington, NZ: Ministry of Education.
- Robinson, A., Shore, B. & Enersen, D. (2007). *Best practices in gifted education: An evidence-based guide*. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.
- Wang, Mann-Na. (1997). *An application of dynamic assessment in evaluating the learning propensity of aboriginal children in Taiwan, R.O.C*. Retrieved from <http://ndltd.ncl.edu.tw/cgibin/gs32/gswweb.cgi?o=dnclcdr&s=id=%22085NTNU3284004%22.&searchmode=>
- Yung-kun, Lioa (n.d.) *The study of the multi-talent searching model for the aboriginal students*.

Appendix – Twenty-Six Questions to Ponder

- ❖ What are the guiding principles that underlie the education of indigenous students in Taiwan? If unknown, how can they be identified?
- ❖ What is an appropriate metaphor for the education of indigenous Taiwanese students?
- ❖ How are matters of importance, concern and benefit to indigenous Taiwanese identified and provided for?
- ❖ Are procedures for resolving disagreements between home and school fair, transparent, widely advertised and culturally appropriate?
- ❖ How are cultural incompatibilities identified and addressed?
- ❖ Do gifted educational provisions include areas of particular importance to indigenous Taiwanese?
- ❖ Are indigenous concepts of giftedness represented and provided for in schools and early childhood centres in Taiwan?
- ❖ Is cultural giftedness identified and provided for?
- ❖ What cultural input is included in gifted programmes in respect to content, values, delivery, resources and support?
- ❖ How are indigenous Taiwanese involved in gifted programmes and how are teachers involved in the lives of gifted indigenous students, families and communities?
- ❖ How are barriers to indigenous participation identified and addressed?
- ❖ In what ways and at what levels are indigenous Taiwanese parents involved and empowered in decisions that relate to them and their gifted children?
- ❖ Are the methods and measures used to identify gifted indigenous students, the programmes provided for them and the resources and equipment used culturally appropriate and evidence-based?
- ❖ How are the quality and effectiveness of these provisions evaluated?
- ❖ Are indigenous students identified in areas that are highly valued by their culture?
- ❖ Are indigenous parents, families and community members involved in a culturally appropriate way in the identification of gifted indigenous students?

- ❖ Are both gifted performance and gifted potential identified?
- ❖ In what ways are professionals accountable for the cultural and general effectiveness of their programmes and services to gifted indigenous Taiwanese students?
- ❖ What input do indigenous Taiwanese have in accountability procedures and measures?
- ❖ How is the preparedness of professionals to work with gifted indigenous students gauged and what opportunities are available to increase their cultural competence?
- ❖ What measures are used to attract staff with the personal, professional and cultural expertise and supportive and valuing attitudes needed to teach gifted indigenous students?
- ❖ Is the % of gifted indigenous students roughly equivalent to the % of indigenous people in the Taiwanese population?
- ❖ If indigenous students are under-represented in gifted programmes, what are the reasons for this and how can the situation be rectified?
- ❖ How are equity of access, use and outcomes measured?
- ❖ If inequalities are identified, what strategies are used to address them?
- ❖ Is indigenous content accorded equal value and status as other curriculum content and is it equally accessible?

Guiding principles for the education of gifted Māori students and their possible relevance to gifted indigenous students in Taiwan

Dr. Jill Bevan-Brown

Massey University, Aotearoa/New Zealand

Abstract

This paper contains the content of a presentation to CAGE's 2014 conference on multicultural gifted education in Taiwan. It introduces a set of guiding principles for educating Māori learners with special education needs, including gifted students. He waka tinō whakarawea: a well-equipped canoe is used as a metaphor to illustrate the purpose of each principle in providing a culturally appropriate, effective education for Māori students. Each principle is described and discussed in relation to its relevance to gifted education. Associated issues are outlined including a Māori concept of giftedness, identification strategies, the under-representation of Māori students in gifted education and the shortage of professionals with the cultural knowledge needed to provide for them. Measures to address these challenges are presented. The applicability of each principle to the education of gifted indigenous students in Taiwan is raised. Questions are posed to guide reflection on present practices and factors that may contribute to more successful identification and provision for gifted indigenous students.

Ko Tararua te maunga

Ko Otaki to awa

Ko Tainui te waka

Ko Hotoroa te tupuna

Ko Ngāti Raukawa te iwi

Ko Jill Bevan-Brown ahau

Ngā mihi nui ki ngā tangata whenua o tenei whenua

Ngā mihi ki te rangatira me te kaiwhakahaere o tenei hui, Wei-Ren Chen

Kia ora ki ngā tāngata katoa e huihui mai nei i tenei ra,
Tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa

Key words: Māori learners with special education needs, gifted education, gifted indigenous students