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Pathways to the past: Effective pedagogies for Māori and Pasifika students in the historical disciplines

Nancy November, Sean Sturm, and ʻEma Wolfgramm-Foliaki

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Summary

Current research into, and definitions of, historical literacy do not adequately acknowledge the cultural backgrounds of indigenous learners across the historical disciplines and levels. Nor do they recognise the vital role of historical literacy in empowering indigenous students. In talanoa (conversations) with Māori and Pasifika students and teachers of a range of ethnicities from across the historical disciplines, we asked: How can we inspire indigenous students to feel at home in the historical disciplines, do well in them, and make them their own? The students and teachers saw historical literacy as predominantly textual in nature, and critical historical literacy as often culturally alien to Māori and Pasifika students. They revealed that what worked to foster critical historical literacy in Māori and Pasifika students was multimodal performance. Accordingly, we argue that pedagogy in the historical disciplines that sustains Māori and Pasifika students culturally enables them to perform their culture through historical literacy—and thus to see history (both history per se and their histories) as open to their knowledge, critique, and ownership.

1. Context and background

> [O]ral traditions exhale past into present, inhale future into past. The common Pacific adage 'We face the future with our backs' indicates that appreciation and knowledge of the past is vital for shaping a future. (Marsh, 1999)

History teaching in the academy is being bent by the winds of change. Recent research suggests that educators in historical disciplines need to rethink how they enable students to become "critical beings": individuals who, in Ron Barnett's (1997, p. 109) words, "exert some unity of critical power over their experiences in relation to knowledge, themselves and the world". But current research into, and definitions of, historical literacy still do not adequately acknowledge the cultural backgrounds of indigenous learners across the historical disciplines and levels, let alone sustain them culturally (Paris, 2012a, 2012b; Paris & Alim, 2014). Nor do they recognise the vital role of historical literacy in empowering indigenous students (Leonard & McLaren, 2002). This is true in mainstream educational institutions at all levels in Aotearoa New Zealand, despite ground-breaking research on critical literacy by Māori educators in particular (see, for example, Cooper, 2008; Edwards, 2010), and a policy environment that advocates cultural competency for teachers of Māori and Pasifika students from early childhood to secondary level (Ministry of Education, 2011, 2018). We ask how, as tertiary educators in Aotearoa New Zealand, we can best teach to foster culturally sustaining historical literacy in Māori and Pasifika students, across the historical disciplines. Our research had five main aims:

1) to understand what historical literacy means in Aotearoa New Zealand, for first-year Māori and Pasifika students
2) to understand how historical literacy should be taught in Aotearoa New Zealand today
3) to implement and assess pedagogies that Māori and Pasifika students find effective for learning historical literacy
4) to provide guidelines for teaching historical literacy at tertiary level, especially in those historical disciplines in which Māori and Pasifika students have achieved less well
5) to enhance the teaching and research capabilities of teachers in the historical disciplines at The University of Auckland and beyond especially regarding the use of indigenous methodologies.

The question of what historical literacy means in Aotearoa New Zealand demands urgent attention. Recent data from The University of Auckland, which has the largest enrolments of Māori and Pasifika students of the universities in Aotearoa New Zealand, demonstrate the challenge we face. Student pass rates in courses across the historical disciplines in the Faculty of Arts for 2012–16 show that first-year Māori and Pasifika students have achieved less well than other ethnic groups,[1] especially in Classics and Ancient History.[2] The same is true

1 For example, in 2014, in History at The University of Auckland, the Māori pass rate was 71.5% and that of Pasifika students was 64.0%, compared with 89.9% for all other ethnic groups.
2 In 2014, in Classics and Ancient History at The University of Auckland, the Pasifika pass rate was 40.8%, which is half that for other ethnic groups, excluding Māori, and 10.7% lower than in 2013.

of student pass rates in courses in the historical disciplines in the Faculty of Creative Arts and Industries; for example, in Music History.[3] Nonetheless, we agree with Māori postcolonial scholars Ranginui Walker (1990) and Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) that historical literacy is vital to the education of indigenous students. It can empower them to see history (history per se and their histories) as open to their knowledge, critique, and ownership—although it must be acknowledged that such critique can be controversial because it may be seen as disrespectful or culturally alien (Fletcher et al., 2009). Historically literate Māori and Pasifika graduates might be expected to:

- understand and articulate their ways of being and knowing, and their position in society; thus
- have a sense of belonging in a larger community of learners
- use knowledge from the past to shape their futures, and
- lead the work for recognition of Māori and Pasifika ways of being and knowing, and social justice.

In short, historical literacy can be culturally sustaining for Māori and Pasifika students because it supports them "in sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities while simultaneously offering access to dominant cultural competence" (Paris, 2012a, p. 95).

In this TRLI project, we asked: When Māori and Pasifika students feel at home and do well in the historical disciplines, why? It could be because of their previous educational experiences; their family background or expectations; or the relevance or appeal of the course content to them. Or, we would argue, it could be that the pedagogies we adopt as teachers in the historical disciplines sustain them culturally, so that they feel able to *perform* their culture through historical literacy. When they do so, it is as if they "become history" (Paris, 2012b), as if they "exhale past into present, inhale future into past" (Marsh, 1999, p. 166).

1.1 Culturally sustaining pedagogies for historical literacy

How can we inspire indigenous students to feel at home in the historical disciplines and do well? The international literature has little to say on the matter. It is largely silent about historical disciplines other than the discipline of history. Furthermore, it does not define historical literacy in a way that adequately acknowledges the cultural backgrounds of indigenous students or recognises the role of historical literacy in empowering them to see history as open to their knowledge, critique, and ownership.

Of course, educators in the historical disciplines at the tertiary level need to rethink how they enable *all* students to become critical beings. Students of such disciplines tend not to see themselves as critical thinkers or know what that role implies for their practice. For instance, second-year Music History students at The University of Auckland surveyed in 2012–14 tended to view music history as established fact, and had great difficulty posing complex critical questions and constructing critical, evidence-based arguments about history. To enable such students to become critical beings, educators might take up one of the existing international models of critical historical literacy. For example, Díaz et al.'s (2011) History Learning project at Indiana University advocates "decoding" the discipline, or learning the steps an expert in the field might take to overcome "bottlenecks" in their understanding (Middendorf & Pace, 2004, p. 12). For history, that involves interpreting sources, maintaining appropriate emotional distance, understanding the limited knowledge of historical actors, identifying appropriately with people of the past, making good arguments, and contextualising events (see Díaz et al., 2008; Middendorf et al., 2007). Or they might take up the model of the Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness's (2014) Historical Thinking project, which identifies the "big six" threshold concepts of critical historical literacy—historical significance, the use of primary source evidence, continuity and change, cause and consequence, the acknowledgement of different historical perspectives (or world views), and the ethical dimension of historical interpretation—and provides teaching strategies for working with these concepts at various levels (see Seixas & Morton, 2012).

3 In Music at The University of Auckland, the number of Māori and Pasifika students who do not complete or withdraw from their core Music History courses and must repeat them is increasing. In addition, the enrolment of Māori and Pasifika students has dropped significantly in recent years in some courses: in 2014–15, no Māori students enrolled in second-year Music History, and in 2015 no Pasifika students did so; in the core first-year Music History course (MUS 140), the percentage of Māori and Pasifika students halved over the period 2012–15 (9%–4.5%).

However, while these international models of historical literacy are useful for educators who wish to awaken critical historical literacy in their students, like most approaches to teaching historical literacy they largely ignore the cultural background of the learners they seek to engage.[4] They offer one-size-fits-all solutions[5] and emerge from a single historical discipline: History.[6] And although they explore *what* we are teaching when we teach historical literacy, for the most part they fail to address *how* we might best teach it. The same is true for the most part of local history academics and practitioners who have given thought to historical literacy, which has mostly been in pre-tertiary education (see, for example, Sheehan, 2013; Sheehan et al., 2013). Philip Roberts (2011, p. 1) has recognised this neglect of pedagogy and calls for a "pedagogy of historical literacy and thinking" that employs multimodal learning activities to enable students to interrogate historical evidence. But his call has yet to be fully heeded by history teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand. Furthermore, both the international models of historical literacy and local practitioners in the historical disciplines at tertiary level have tended to privilege Pākehā/Pālagi (European) notions of what historical literacy is and how it ought to be taught, not to mention Pākehā/Pālagi interpretations of the shared history of Aotearoa New Zealand.[7] Instead, we seek out strategies for teaching historical literacy across the historical disciplines at tertiary level that acknowledge the influence of culture in how we see, make, and do history—especially for the Māori and Pasifika students we teach.[8]

2. Research design and methods

Our study explored the role of culturally sustaining pedagogy in teaching historical literacy in two ways. First, we bridged discipline-specific understandings of historical literacy and pedagogy by generating cross-disciplinary dialogue among the teaching-research partners. Then we problematised received viewpoints of teaching historical literacy by focusing on Māori and Pasifika student perceptions of historical literacy, and drawing on Māori and Pasifika methodologies to investigate these perceptions and translate them into teaching interventions. For the latter, we drew on the findings of three recent local teaching projects that have explored effective pedagogies for Māori and Pasifika students, two of which focus on the discipline of history. The first, *Tātou Tātou: Success for All* (Curtis et al., 2012), successfully used non-lecture teaching to engage Māori and Pasifika students. The second, *Better to Do Than Receive: Learning to Think Historically Through Internally Assessed Course Work* (Sheehan, 2013), which generated the two volumes of *History Matters* (Davison et al., 2014; Harcourt & Sheehan, 2012), found that internal assessment improved critical historical thinking in secondary school students. The third, *Moving Beyond the Threshold: Investigating Digital Literacies and Historical Thinking in New Zealand Universities* (Shep et al., 2015; see also Shep et al., 2017), argued that the slow adoption of digital technologies by history teachers in universities was limiting their ability to foster the critical historical thinking of their students.

The Tātou Tātou project was the most instructive for us. It focused on talking with Māori and Pasifika students about teaching approaches through the use of the Critical Incident Technique (Curtis et al., 2012, pp. 8–9). Critical Incident Technique is a form of narrative inquiry that asks students to reflect on the events that helped or hindered their learning in a particular situation (Brookfield, 2006, pp. 41–54). However, our study differed methodologically from these projects in four key ways:

(1) It did not begin with a single model of historical literacy. Instead, it examined what historical literacy means to Māori and Pasifika students and teachers.

(2) It drew explicitly on Māori and Pasifika methodologies, which can both challenge and inform more conventional ways of gathering data on students' and teachers' perceptions, and which enabled us to understand the "learning histories" of Māori and Pasifika students, in particular.

4 Compare, for example, Brown (2000), in the field of composition studies.
5 For international studies of historical literacy, see Duvenage (1993), Monte-Sano (2011), Nokes (2010; 2012), and Reddy & VanSledright (2010).
6 An exception is studies on "content-area literacy" (historical literacy in particular disciplines); see Broomhead (2005), Damico and Baildon (2011), and Shanahan and Shanahan (2008).
7 For culturally responsive and place-conscious History teaching in an Aotearoa New Zealand context, albeit at secondary level, see Harcourt (2015).
8 We acknowledge the criticism of culture-based approaches (Cooper, 2012), but see them as both an intermediate step to fully indigenous approaches and compatible with teaching in "mainstream" learning spaces.

(3) It did not proceed from a single idea about how students, especially Māori and Pasifika students, can or should be taught. Instead, it explored the teaching approaches that Māori and Pasifika students considered worked best for them.

(4) It did not confine itself to the secondary level, nor did it consider history alone; rather, it addressed historical literacy across the historical disciplines at tertiary level.

To explore how tertiary educators in the historical disciplines can best teach to foster culturally sustaining historical literacy in Māori and Pasifika tertiary students across the historical disciplines, we talked with six Māori students, seven Pasifika students, and 19 teachers of a range of ethnicities from across the historical disciplines at The University of Auckland. The disciplines included Anthropology, Architecture, Classics and Ancient History, Education, English, History, Māori Studies, and Music. We took the "historical disciplines" to be those that saw themselves as engaged with a historical archive, albeit one that was not necessarily textual, but also potentially "multimodal" (Kress, 2010) and "performative" (Butler, 1993). By multimodal, we mean that the archive involves a range of modes—"image, writing, layout, speech, moving images" (Kress, 2010, p. 79); by performative, we mean that it is performance-based, but, more importantly, that it in part produces—enacts, or "performs"—the phenomena it documents (Butler, 1993, p. 13).

To recruit participants we first contacted the coordinators of undergraduate history classes across the disciplines to find out whether we might present on our research in class and ask for volunteers. We simultaneously asked the teachers in those courses whether they would like to volunteer for the teacher *talanoa*. We then scheduled visits to the relevant classes and gave a 5-minute talk describing our project and its aims. The aim here was to engage with students face to face, and start to build up a relationship, before asking for volunteers (via email) to participate in the student *talanoa*. Volunteer students replied directly to the researchers, so that the teachers who were interviewed did not know which students were participating in the study.

We were concerned to preserve our participants' voice and place, to capture what was specific to teaching and studying history in Aotearoa New Zealand in the stories of those with whom we talked. For this reason, we employed a narrative inquiry approach that drew on the Pasifika methodology and method of *talanoa* (Fijian/Samoan/Tongan, "conversation").[9] *Talanoa* replaces social scientific interviews or focus groups with conversations that take place as much as possible in accordance with the participants' cultural practices and in a setting in which the participants feel at home (Fa'avae et al., 2016; Vaioleti, 2006).[10] It focuses on generating feelings of *mālie* (energy) and *māfana* (warmth) that build trust between participants and participant-researchers. At its best, *talanoa* fosters "an open dialogue where people can speak from their hearts and where there are no preconceptions" about what they are discussing (Halapua, 2003). It can thus serve to promote culturally sustaining conversations that lead to shared knowledge through generating a "shared narrative" (Vaioleti, 2013, p. 194).

As a culturally diverse research team, we undertook the *talanoa* in a spirit of learning from each other, while staying alert to the cultural differences and power differentials that can exist in cross-cultural educational interactions (Jones, 2001). The two members of the research team who were new to *talanoa* as a methodology and were not Pasifika explored it under the tutelage of our Pasifika colleague. We learned as we went and adapted *talanoa* to a predominantly Pākehā/Pālagi academic context such that we produced a "hybrid" methodology (Bhabha, 1994). In the *talanoa*, after the participants and participant-researchers introduced their cultural and academic histories, the conversations were allowed to unfold with as few time constraints as possible and with minimal direction from us (Otunuku, 2011). The participants moved more or less easily between *pō talanoa* (everyday talk), *talanoa usu* (intimate talk), and *talanoa faka'eke'eke* (formal interviews) (Vaioleti, 2013) in a way that is not untypical when *talanoa* is used as a research method in the academy (Fa'avae

9 We acknowledge Timoti Vaioleti's (2013, p. 196) argument that *talanoa* can be seen to differ from narrative inquiry because of "the centrality of indigenous spirituality and fonua [place]" to it, but hold that narrative inquiry can be undertaken in a way that puts culture first and is alert to the challenges of bridging cultural difference (see Andrews, 2007). We would note also that the methodological literature on *talanoa* differs as to whether it is seen as a methodology that implies a method (see, for example, Vaioleti, 2006). For an analogous method from the kaupapa Māori tradition, see Hollis-English (2012) on *kōrerorero* ("conversation").

10 *Talanoa* has been employed successfully as a research methodology at secondary and tertiary level; see Reymer (2012), and Henry et al. (2014).

et al., 2016). Since most of the conversations included participant-researchers who were not fluent in Māori or Pasifika languages, the *talanoa* were primarily in English. The *talanoa* were also undertaken singly or in small groups and in individual sessions due to the participants' time constraints. Within each *talanoa*, the number of student participants ranged between one and three. Where there was more than one student involved in a *talanoa*, Māori and Pasifika students participated alongside each other. Table 1 provides further details about how many participants were involved in each *talanoa*.

TABLE 1 **Type and frequency of *talanoa***

***Talanoa* type**	**Number of *talanoa***
Individual	2
Paired	4
Small group	1

Although the *talanoa* unfolded with minimal direction from us, we kept two prompts in mind, related, respectively, to our first two research aims (listed above):

(1) What can we understand by the term "historical literacy" and which concepts, skills, and methods do we consider important to it?

(2) How do we think historical literacy should be taught to enable early undergraduate Māori and Pasifika students to feel at home in the historical disciplines and do well in them?

We assumed no existing definition of historical literacy, nor any "best practices" in its pedagogy. Rather, we allowed the participants' definitions, practices, and reflections on those practices to emerge through conversation. Because students often lack a language to discuss pedagogy, we drew on the Tātou Tātou project's (Curtis et al., 2012) use of Brookfield's (2006, p. 27) Critical Incident Technique, which aims to document "how students are experiencing their learning and perceiving teaching". Focusing on the lived experience of the students with whom we talked enabled them to be specific about what worked for them in learning environments, activities, and outcomes, and helped us to explore and evaluate teaching practice from their perspective. In accordance with the Critical Incident Technique, we sometimes asked students (or teachers) to "recall a time when" they (or their students) were particularly closely engaged in learning a given concept or skill in a course in an historical discipline. Using this prompt allowed the participants to narrate their learning histories in their terms and in accordance with their cultural ways of being.[11]

We approached the analysis of the *talanoa* in a similarly hybrid spirit. Although *talanoa* is usually considered a form of narrative inquiry (Vaioleti, 2013), within the existing literature the conversations are typically analysed thematically and presented in the form of social scientific exposition (see, for example, Teevale & Teu, 2018). Only occasionally are they presented verbatim to allow the participants to speak for themselves as much as possible and preserve the *talanoa* as a performance (Fa'avae et al., 2016; see, for example, Henry et al., 2014). We blended the two approaches in a "restorying" (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002) that involved open coding by listening to the *talanoa* and talking about the learning histories recounted there. We kept in mind the six principles outlined in Bishop and Glynn's (2000) *Kaupapa Māori Messages for the Mainstream*: *tino rangatiratanga* (self-determination); *taonga tuku iho* (cultural aspirations, literally "treasures from the ancestors"); *ako* (reciprocal learning); *kia piki ake i ngā raruraru o te kāinga* (mediation of socioeconomic and home issues); *whānau* (extended family); and *kaupapa* (collective vision). For Bishop and Glynn (2000), these principles imply a narrative pedagogy that is culturally sustaining for Māori students, in which:

1) students take part in decision making about the curriculum and their learning
2) Māori language, knowledge, culture, and values are valued in the learning environment
3) the students and teacher learn from each other

11 For the kaupapa Māori method of *pūrakau* ("storytelling"), which similarly aims to represent stories of teaching and learning, see Lee (2009).

4) students' lives inside and outside the learning institution are brought together
5) learning, and education more generally, relies on relationships and shared responsibility
6) education is based on common goals and principles.

We take these pedagogical practices to apply to the teaching of Pasifika students as well as Māori students (and take practices 2–5 to apply to our research process). These practices describe well what it might be for Māori and Pasifika students to feel at home, or "culturally sustained", in their learning. We set out to learn from the *talanoa* whether this was indeed how and why they feel at home—and, in turn, do well—in the historical disciplines.

An aim of this project was to implement and assess pedagogies that Māori and Pasifika students find effective for learning historical literacy. After the phases described above, the research team met with volunteers from the teachers with whom we had talked in the *talanoa* sessions. Six teachers attended the first hui, prior to the first semester of 2019, and each agreed to try out one or more teaching strategies to do with "performing history". They tested these strategies in semester one, and we held a follow-up hui in June 2019 to hear everyone's stories. We originally intended to gather student data to assess the impact of these teaching interventions. However, this did not occur.

3. Key findings and implications

We found no particular difference of perspective between the Māori and Pasifika students with whom we spoke on the subjects that were discussed. Differences of opinion were more pronounced among the teachers. The distinctive themes that emerged from both the student and staff *talanoa* are discussed below.

3.1 Historical literacy as primarily textual in nature

The Māori and Pasifika students with whom we talked faced numerous challenges in studying at university, in the historical disciplines: isolation, cultural alienation, substantial family commitments, and, not least, their parents' lack of understanding of the historical disciplines and their relevance. But they repeatedly raised one challenge in the conversations: that of reading and responding to written texts, which they saw as central to historical study. First, they had to negotiate not only what was a second language to some, but also language that was often complex and prolix. As Student A observed, "for me, like, the most difficult, like, for my history learning is just the English … just the language". Second, they had to wrestle with discipline-specific concepts and terms. When asked what she found challenging in studying Ancient History, Student B recalled:

> I guess it would be the readings: how much you have to read as well as how you have to read. You know, ancient historians, they don't speak English. They don't say what they mean—they speak in metaphors so you have to pick out what they truly mean—and that was definitely hard. Because it's up to interpretation, and I hated that! I was, like, 'Can you explain to me what he's trying to say here?' and they would say 'Oh, you can read this so many ways', and, I'm like, 'I don't want that. I want to know what it really means.'

She found both the volume of reading and the way she was expected to read demanding. What was foreign to her was the requirement of textual hermeneutics that the critical reader must exercise a certain "suspicion" toward the text's apparent meaning and entertain the possibility that a text might afford multiple readings.

Of course, it is not just Māori and Pasifika students who find the textual literacy required in the historical disciplines at tertiary level challenging, but they must also confront the preconceptions of teachers and peers about their readiness and ability to meet that challenge. A student acknowledged the preconceptions of peers in recounting her experience as a Pasifika Tuakana mentor (peer adviser for Māori and Pasifika students):

> For a lot of us, English is a second language … but … it's almost expected that you won't be as competent in writing. [… I]t's not, like, openly said or anything, but they did some interviews with different students, and they

> just commented on subtle comments made often by other students: 'Oooh, you're doing a history course … Writing essays?' [laughter] Yes.

She accompanied her account with a laughing performance of how her Pasifika peers stereotyped a typical history student. The message was clear: for her peers, to study history means that you are different, a bit of a "nerd"—and perhaps also a cultural outsider.

The teachers with whom we talked across the historical disciplines confirmed a disciplinary bias in favour of textual literacy. Their courses all centred on assignments or exams that assessed essays written as expository or critical responses to readings, with formative written activities or quizzes to prepare students for the essays. Several described using quizzes to motivate students to read and to signal what was significant in the readings; and one, a nineteenth-century English literature specialist, spoke of the struggle to minimise the number of essential readings to make their course more manageable for second-year students. By contrast, the students with whom we talked strongly preferred developing their historical literacy and communicating their historical understanding not through textual literacy, but through oral and/or dramatic performance, which they considered a strength of their culture and its history making. Yet most of the teachers did not consider history to be performative (that is, a remaking of the past [Dening, 1989]) or learnt through performance (for example, by re-enactment [Johnson, 2015]), except insofar as history might accord particular events historical status; for example, individual performances in music. Some did consider that oral history could be used to help develop students' historical understanding, but they were not sure how to go about doing so. Only three of the 19 teachers, who were historians of Education, Classics, and Māori Studies, actively integrated the study of oral histories into their courses. One teacher of Archaeology noted that the word "pre-history" was widely and uncritically used in his discipline to mean "before the written record". On the evidence of the students with whom we spoke, the culturally sustaining teaching of historical literacy must take into account different understandings of history and traditions of history making before students will find it a welcoming home.

3.2 Historical literacy reinterpreted

Contemporary scholars of historical literacy foreground the practical attitudes and skills of the historian (for example, Nokes, 2012). They represent an attempt to understand more clearly what we are doing ideologically and pedagogically when we teach history. And, in that the new thinking about historical literacy is practically oriented, it is potentially helpful in meeting indigenous perspectives on history "half way"—or, at the least, demystifying the teaching of history somewhat. But the "new historical literacy", as it might be termed, still has work to do to accommodate indigenous understandings of history and traditions of history making. In our conversations, we referred to Seixas and Morton's (2012) "big six" threshold concepts of historical literacy—historical significance, evidence, continuity and change, cause and consequence, historical perspectives, and the ethical dimension—for which they provide practical strategies for teaching university students at different levels. But the teachers with whom we talked focused most often on the need to build a foundation of basic textual literacy in their students before working up to more complex historical literacy skills or threshold concepts. One teacher of Classics was inspired to make major structural revisions to her courses after a conversation with an indigenous student who had dropped one of her courses because of its lack of instruction in, and feedback on, basic textual literacy. She noted that she now starts by helping students to understand historical sources and builds slowly to more complex critical skills:

> We really try to move towards … the key fundamental skills that we want people to be … establishing … like how to understand a source; how to evaluate it critically; how to think about its problems, challenges; and then building on that to evaluate the secondary source; how to recognise an argument; even how to find evidence … So, Stage 1 has been very much skills-focused, whereas Stage 2 is stuff that I do. Like, let's take an article or a chapter or something, and kind of break it down and look at the kind of logic around that and consider what you want to discuss … and then have some arguments.

The teachers also noted a more fundamental challenge. If they scaffold their students' learning so that they can come to terms with the "big six", they are implicitly accepting the epistemology that underlies such an index of historical literacy, which does not necessarily fit all teaching contexts—perhaps especially those in which

historians are trying to attract, retain, and support indigenous students through culturally sustaining pedagogy. The new historical literacy is, after all, grounded in critique, which is a culturally relative practice (Chakrabarty, 2008). To open up historical narratives to critical reflection and historical studies to a broader range of voices and stories can empower indigenous students to contribute to historical understanding and make history their own. But to do so in a culturally sustaining way requires that we not take for granted that they know how to critique and feel comfortable doing it, or that there is one way to practise critique. It is implicit in the "big six" model that a student can already read and analyse a text, and take a position on it—and that critique is open to all and consists in "powerful" reading; that is, reading that is alert to "the power to select (and therefore to suppress), the power to shape and present certain aspects of human experience" (Scholes, 1985, p. 20). The students and tutors with whom we spoke questioned whether critique is in fact open to all. A Pasifika tutor suggested that he had to be acculturated to critique:

> But then that's a liberal kind of idea to be open. It doesn't matter whether you're older or an academic or whatever … critique me: you can talk back to me, if you will, back it up with evidence. But we can have that critical dialogue, and I think that was something very difficult for me personally because my cultural background, which I found was very similar to a lot of Pacific Islanders, is … going to … make it difficult to open up.

It was not self-evident to him as a student that he was authorised to adopt a critical stance, and to do so presupposed the skills to argue an alternative position. He observed that students needed to learn that when they felt frustration or anger, it was time to turn to critical thinking because they were on the point of articulating an alternative position. But he saw this level of vulnerability and trust as possible for them because they already had a bond with him based on being close in age and culture. In other circumstances, the same students might have felt confused, challenged, or compromised—and perhaps might even have dropped out (Ellsworth, 1989).

A number of the historians with whom we spoke took the "big six" concepts of critical historical literacy for granted. As one teacher of Ancient History put it, "I think they are implicit to what we do." She associated such skill development with the high school curriculum, where "all that stuff is spelt out in many details". She and a colleague had found that they could at best foreground one or two threshold concepts in any course, the choice of which would be determined by the course content. So, for example, she foregrounded periodisation as important in a course about the Roman Empire in order to explore the temporal boundaries of the topic. In a course on religious conflict, she foregrounded religious difference instead: "We actually move back and forth in time in the middle of that course because we would talk about Judaism and also talk about Islam." By contrast, two teachers of indigenous histories we spoke with, one based in History and the other in Māori Studies, did not consider the "big six" as entirely relevant in their courses and questioned the idea of critique in which the model is grounded. The Māori Studies teacher rejected the model because it represented an historical perspective—the Pākehā/Pālagi perspective—with which students were all too familiar. The History teacher did not reject the model outright, but noted that critique in connection with the Treaty of Waitangi was likely to be ineffectual. According to a couple of the participants, the Treaty and its ramifications are strongly thematised in secondary school History education in New Zealand, such that, as one teacher of New Zealand history put it, "Amongst students, there's a lot of Treaty fatigue, so they think that New Zealand history is just talking about the Treaty."

A number of teachers across the historical disciplines also felt that if we take other than textual primary sources like film, music, games, and so on as legitimate objects of study and critique, then we need to enable students to develop the skills to think critically about these too. The new historical literacy does not tend to address such media in any detail because it focuses mainly on the discipline of History and on teaching history through textual narrative, narrative understanding being a key criterion of historical significance in the "big six" (Seixas & Morton, 2012, p. 12). However, parallel research into "multimodal" historical pedagogy (Prangsma et al., 2008) and technology-enhanced learning in history (Kee & Kee, 2014) has begun to broaden the pedagogical repertoire of history teachers. It is worth nothing that some skills-based indices of historical literacy anticipated this development. For example, Tony Taylor and Carmel Young (2003, p. 29) define the term "historical literacy" as "a systematic process with particular sets of skills, attitudes and conceptual understandings that mediate and develop historical consciousness". They develop an index of historical literacy that comprises 13 categories, which are a mixture of skills, attitudes, and conceptual understandings. These categories include "narratives

of the past", "ICT [Information and Communication Technology] understandings", and "representational expression". "Representational expression", which involves critical responses to media of the past and present, would seem to be a key category for teaching history today, arts-based or otherwise.

The further we moved from History per se in our conversations with teachers, the less they referred to anything like the "big six" thinking skills. This is easy to understand: when teachers teach media artefacts (music, film, poetry, literature) and artists (composers, writers, poets), rather than events and conflicts, it can be difficult for them to see the relevance of the "big six". Indeed, for all the teachers in our study, it was content—texts and their contexts—rather than skills per se that inspired them as teachers.

3.3 Historical literacy and performance

Most of the teachers with whom we spoke were keen to experiment with multimodal performance in their teaching. However, they felt they needed advice on pedagogies that embodied more performative ways of understanding the past, developing historical literacy, and communicating historical understanding. This sentiment was captured by the Classics teacher, who said: "How do I present this? How do I do it?" Therefore, prior to experimenting with integrating multimodal performance into their teaching, the teachers met and talked about the techniques they might try. Some had already carried out experiments with multimodal or performative activities or assessment tasks. For example, a teacher from Ancient History described using Socratic questioning to assess students' understanding of religious texts; a teacher from Theology had students create a YouTube clip to assess their understanding of martyr texts. When contemplating experimentation, they faced the perennial problem of institutional squeeze. This affects content: "How can you teach 'Medieval Music to Mozart', 500–1791 C.E., in one music history course?" a musicologist asked. And it affects mode of delivery: several teachers made comments that lecture theatres are not conducive to the dialogue necessary for ako.

Given such constraints, how can we foster culturally sustaining pedagogies in the historical disciplines? Typically, teachers take a remedial approach to developing critical historical literacy: they design activities and assessment tasks that support students' reading and writing, in particular, so that the students can progress to so-called "higher-level" disciplinary skills. The teacher of Ancient History who used Socratic questions to assess students' understanding of religious texts was aiming to demystify content or rhetorical manoeuvres marked by figurative language: "We start from the basic content. Let's look at the imagery, and then think through what [the author is] trying to do or achieve and … build up an interpretation." Such an approach might work to introduce students, including indigenous students, to the "basic" disciplinary skills of a historical discipline, but it can look like a deficit-based approach, however well meaning it is. It can appear to imply that students are lacking in historical knowledge and skills, and that a Pākehā/Pālagi understanding of history and tradition of history making is the default one. This is an assumption that many eminent indigenous historians have contested (Hau'ofa, 1993; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999; Walker, 1990). We advocate an alternative approach that is strengths-based, one that explores pedagogies that are performative in both senses of the word: they are performance-based, and they enable students to enact *their* understanding of history. Such pedagogies would return to neglected understandings of history and traditions of history making, in particular, non-textual (or multimodal) ones like oral history and cultural history that are closer to those of the indigenous peoples of the Pacific.

Why? A *performative pedagogy* (after Giroux, 2001) can enable teachers to acknowledge students' cultural backgrounds, so that they can find their own "way in" to the material. It can begin with simple gestures of acknowledgement. First, teachers can acknowledge pop culture. For example, one tutor spoke about creating a noisy environment in a tutorial by playing popular music in the background, which allowed students to open up and feel at home because of their shared interest in popular culture. As one former teacher of Classics put it, many students come to university without a good sense of their own culture, although they recognise it when they see it and have certain cultural comfort zones. But what they all share is an understanding of popular culture. The teachers with whom we spoke often use popular culture as a means by which to engage students with otherwise unfamiliar materials. Popular music is a frequent choice: teachers can use rap, for example, to present and engage with ideas, and students can use it to make the history their own in demonstrating their understanding (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Second, and more importantly, teachers can acknowledge indigenous cultures more directly. For example, tutors spoke about learning to introduce themselves in Māori or Pasifika languages, or learning to say their Māori and Pasifika students' names correctly. But a performative pedagogy can also take in more sophisticated gestures of acknowledgement that are more or less explicitly political. For example, some teachers modelled the process of "becom[ing] history" (Paris, 2012b) by performing their culture as they taught. A number of the teachers mentioned how they engaged students by introducing their voice and autobiography into their teaching. They were modelling teaching as performance, but also performing themselves as historians, enjoying doing the things historians do—and even some things they don't. For example, a teacher of Chinese History made a point about using apostrophes appropriately being an academic social protocol through breaking a protocol by turning up to class in her Hello Kitty pyjamas. Although her humour made the point memorable, it also demonstrated to her students her investment in teaching history as performative. Another student, speaking of her Accounting lecturer, endorsed such investment in teaching: "And the way he delivers it! He's always walking around the front, so he's always addressing every single person in the room." A number of other students endorsed the performative practices employed by history teachers. Likewise, a Māori teacher from Māori Studies described his own teaching in similar terms. These teachers explicitly linked such an approach with the tradition, common to cultures of the Pacific, of whaikōrero (speech making) on the marae, a mode of performance "inflected with knowledge of history and tradition" that aims to "create and sustain feelings of identity between people and communities" (Kelly, 2017, p. 194).

3.4 Strategies

Students and teachers offered a number of other performative strategies to enable students to "perform history":

- Choose pedagogies that help students to make connections between their own histories and those they are learning about.
- Design reading prompts to help make it clearer how to "perform" the role of a scholar of history interpreting a text.
- Use modes of assessment that allow students to make historical narratives their own through performance media such as speech making, weaving, carving, song, and dance that echo performance traditions common to cultures of the Pacific.
- Give precedence to evidence of learning other than written documents, such as narratives, oral histories, cartoons, photographs, letters, and music.
- Use performances such as role play that allow students to choose roles suited to their cultural backgrounds and strengths.
- Use popular media as a shared, living, and performance-based culture to give students a "way in" to the historical disciplines.

Such performative strategies offer all students—but Māori and Pasifika students, in particular—access to their "critical being", namely, the capacity to "exert some unity of critical power over their experiences in relation to knowledge, themselves and the world" (Barnett, 1997, p. 109). They do so by enabling students to perform their culture through historical literacy and thus remake history, as it were, in their own image, thereby "becom[ing] history" (Paris, 2012b). They may even enable students to teach each other, in the spirit of ako.

In the spirit of teaching and learning from each other, the teachers involved in this project tried out one or more of the teaching strategies listed above during semester one of 2019. At the end of the semester, all teachers reported improved levels of student engagement, with some providing evidence from end-of-course surveys and attendance data. The teachers subsequently came together for a second hui to reflect on their experiences and share tips. One teacher, who achieved an outstanding level of student engagement during the semester, divulged that—buoyed by the pyjama intervention—he had tried out more or less everything that we had discussed in the previous hui:

> And I was probably overdoing it this semester, but I just wanted to try, you know? … It was just, yeah, there was something about the 'jamas that … You realise there's just no boundaries. There, there was a lot going on. I can't remember all of it, but, um … when I was in that space [massive lecture theatre with over 500 students] … the thing I found myself reaching for was music and songs. And I was … Eh, like the song would start coming out of my mouth and I would be like, 'No, don't do it,' and … I would start to sing a song, because you're talking about … you know, colonisation, like, there's a, there's a whole genre of music called roots reggae that deals with that thing …

4. Conclusion

The concept common to cultures of the Pacific that "we face the future with our backs" points to the past as an important guide for shaping the future (Marsh, 1999).[12] In Māori culture, for example, the individual is "conceptualised as travelling backwards in time to the future, with the present unfolding in front as a continuum into the past", as Ranginui Walker explains (1996, p. 14). The past (*a mua*) is literally in front of us (*i mua*)[13]—and the present is experienced, understood, and enacted through the past (Lo & Houkamau, 2012; compare Rose, 2004). Remaking history, or "restorying" (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002), in its various forms—usually oral (through storytelling, song, or drama), but also performed in other ways (for example, dance, tattoo, weaving, or carving)—breathes life into history in Pasifika cultures (Fresno-Calleja, 2014). By implication, the historical disciplines are culturally sustaining for Māori and Pasifika students when they enable them to *perform* their culture through historical literacy, to "become history" (Paris, 2012b).

The literature on historical literacy presupposes that students are ready to perform, but, in that context, to perform means to critique, to read "powerfully" (Scholes, 1985). The assumption that students are ready for such performance is highly problematic: for many Māori and Pasifika students especially, critique—written critique, in particular—is an unfamiliar skill and culturally alien in its Pākehā/Pālagi form. That said, exploring popular media such as film can allow Māori and Pasifika students access to critical historical literacy, since such students consider such media part of their cultural wherewithal and thus more open to their critique. And, even better, drawing on culturally sustaining performance media such as speech making, weaving, carving, song, and dance could enable them to see history (both history per se and their histories) as open to their knowledge, critique, and ownership. Māori and Pasifika students may even come away from such activities fired to read the relevant secondary literature and write the (probably obligatory) essay. The new approach to pedagogy outlined here thus breathes new life into the teaching of historical literacy: it puts the performance back into history—the way we learn it; the way we teach it. This resonates with what Greg Dening (1989, pp. 137, 138) says about making history that is *in* (not *of*) the Pacific: "history … is not to be learned so much as to be made"—hence his injunction: "Know the past, know yourself personally, culturally. Express your knowledge of the past, present yourself personally, culturally."

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12 For the educational implications of the *whakataukī* ("proverb") *Kia whakatōmuri te haere whakamua* (more literally, "We look to the past so we can move forward"), see Rameka (2016).

13 A similar pun exists in the English word "before", the meanings of which include "in front of" and "earlier than".

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Authors

Nancy November, School of Music, The University of Auckland, n.november@auckland.ac.nz

Sean Sturm, Centre for Learning and Research in Higher Education, The University of Auckland, s.sturm@auckland.ac.nz

'Ema Wolfgramm-Foliaki, Centre for Learning and Research in Higher Education, The University of Auckland, ea.wolfgramm@auckland.ac.nz