Conceptualising SEL in the Cross-Cultural Spaces of Primary Schools in Aotearoa New Zealand

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Abstract

Social and emotional learning (SEL) to support students' wellbeing is even more critical within schools dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. This article establishes why New Zealand primary schools need strategies to support the emotional wellbeing of students and why a prescriptive approach is not appropriate for the bicultural and multicultural classroom context. It draws on Māori, Indigenous, Pasifika, international psychology and decolonialisation views to propose directions for future research in this vital area of education. Seeing SEL from different world views highlights the opportunity and ethical necessity for cultural, social and emotional learning (CSEL) to create transformative spaces that support holistic wellbeing.

Keywords Social and emotional learning · Wellbeing · Bicultural spaces · Empathy (4–6 words)

Introduction: Justifying SEL in Primary Schools in Aotearoa New Zealand

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is a burgeoning area of educational research and its presence within the online or offline classroom is all the more important when considering student wellbeing in the face of COVID-19. Marsay states we need SEL interventions “more than ever” to “learn strategies to deal with adversity” (2020, p. 4). This article explores the key reasons or requirements for SEL within schools in Aotearoa New Zealand, establishing both a need within schools, a call from teachers and a gap in research relating to our unique cultural and emotional context. From there the article draws on Māori, Indigenous, Pasifika, international psychology and decolonialisation authors to begin to conceptualise an appropriate approach for Aotearoa New Zealand primary schools and the directions research could take to aid this.

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Researchers suggest that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there has never been a time when there was such a need for SEL (Gehlbach & Chuter, 2020; Hadar et al., 2020; Katzman & Stanton, 2020; Marsay, 2020). Although teachers have taught forms of SEL for years (albeit with neither a focused curriculum nor the catchy acronym), it is now increasingly recognised as an essential new part of international educational curriculum development and research. Gehlbach and Chuter's (2020) overview of this area of education suggests the need for "conceptualising the core of Social Emotional Learning" (p. 24). An increasing number of models are promoted, including "The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), Transforming Education, The Aspen Institute, European Commission Network of Experts on Social Aspects of Education (NESET), and many others" (Gehlbach & Chuter, 2020, p. 25). CASEL and the predominantly North American authors influencing this field have produced a plethora of empirical research reporting the many benefits of SEL, such as improving classroom environments, academic success, social and emotional skills, as well as reducing disruptive and harmful behaviours (Brackett et al., 2012; Durlak et al., 2011; Hagelskamp et al., 2013; RIVERS et al., 2013a, b).

While SEL models internationally are extensively researched and developed, New Zealand has fewer initiatives in this area. O'Toole et al. (2019) provide an overview of SEL in Aotearoa New Zealand, justifying it as a response to calls from "Macfarlane et al. (2017), the New Zealand Review Office [ERO] (2015) and the New Zealand Council for Education Research [NZCER] (Boyd et al., 2017)", for students' social emotional wellbeing to be addressed in school contexts (2019, p. 91).

Wellbeing is not just a warm, fuzzy recommendation for schools. It is explicitly included within our curriculum documents and required by ERO (2015, 2016a, b) and NZCER (Boyd et al., 2017). Te Whāriki, the Early Childhood Curriculum (MOE, 1996) is renowned for its intentional focus on adopting a more holistic, relational, culturally responsive pedagogy (Arndt, 2012; Jenkins, 2016, 2017; Ritchie, 2012). It incorporates wellbeing/mana atua as a strand of the woven mat (whāriki), stating the goal that "their emotional wellbeing is nurtured" (MOE, 1996, p. 15). In comparison, the primary and secondary curricula (MOE, 2007) includes "wellbeing, conceptualised as hauora" (O'Toole et al., 2019, p. 91). (Hauora is a Māori term encompassing a holistic wellbeing concept that is discussed in the next paragraph.) Soutter et al. (2012) report that this document (MOE, 2007) has a much more narrow, individualistic emphasis than that of the early childhood document (MOE, 1996).

The New Zealand Curriculum for English-medium teaching and learning for years 1–13 (MOE, 2007) also identifies five Key Competencies to be included within school programmes: thinking; relating to others; using language, symbols, and texts; managing self; and, participating and contributing. While these all have some relationship to SEL, it is hard to conceive managing self and relating to others without learning something about emotions and social interaction. Both competencies align with CASEL's model of SEL, which summarises 20 years of SEL research into five competencies: Self Management, Self Awareness, Relationship Skills, Social Awareness, and Responsible Decision-making (CASEL, 2019). With social and emotional competencies to support wellbeing already integrated

across the school curriculum, the framework is set to enable teachers to incorporate these areas of learning into their classroom practices. However, wellbeing and hauora are wide-ranging terms: how might researchers and practitioners conceive translating these broad concepts into pedagogy?

In *Whaiora*, Durie (1998) begins this process of elaborating and exploring the broad terms or directions. His concept of Te Whare Tapa Whā is renowned and well utilised throughout the health sector. Within the section headed “Health and wellbeing,” Durie introduces the Whare (Māori house) with four pillars holding up the roof: Taha Wairua (Spiritual Wellbeing), Taha Hinengaro (the holistic capacity for thinking, feeling and communicating that Durie terms “Mental” Wellbeing), Taha Tinana (Physical Wellbeing) and Taha Whanau (Relational wellbeing) (Durie, 1998, p. 69). As noted above, this model is referenced as underpinning the conception of “Hauora” within the New Zealand Curriculum (ERO, 2016a, b; MOE, 2007). While this is a positive step, isolating the model from the more profound understanding of history, place, culture and context, can create tokenism and hinder progress, as Durie’s entire volume illuminates (1998). He specifically highlights the contradiction of promoting health and wellbeing while denying aspects of culture and identity (Durie, 1998, p. vii). This issue was elucidated 27 years ago in the first edition of *Whaiora* and then in its many subsequent editions. Although seated within a long reaching history of colonising violence, it remains a current issue, generally, and one which must be considered in conceptualising SEL. In the remainder of this article, “*Whaiora*” the title of Durie’s (1998) book will be used to not only represent Te Whare Tapa Whā and Hauora but the links to environment, history, equity/power issues and land, holistically. *Whaiora* means “who has wellbeing” and relates directly to a holistic view of health, according to the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (2000, vii), having consulted with Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori.

Malatest International (2016) through the New Zealand Ministry of Health, produced a report evaluating the national Youth Health Service. It notes the need for Tikanga Māori, (‘ways of doing’ in keeping with Māori values and world-views), stating, “evidence suggests that for some Māori service users it is important to be able to access a service provider who shares their Māori understanding of health and wellbeing” (Malatest, 2016, p. 37). Taking this evidence from the health sector into education, a need is highlighted for researchers, schools and teachers to better understand *Whaiora* and the cultural aspects underlying SEL.

However foundational, Durie’s (1998) *Whaiora* remains a broad concept, and further research and development are needed to embrace all that it offers. SEL grounded on *Whaiora* acknowledges the historical, political and cultural structures within the Aotearoa New Zealand context. It becomes a potential vehicle to create culturally safer spaces and move on an uncharted road towards decolonisation of the curriculum. The *Prime Minister’s Youth Mental Health Project*, launched in 2012 (cited in ERO, 2016a, b), and the subsequent ERO *Wellbeing for success: A resource for schools* (2016a, b) link to culture, wellbeing and academic success with SEL, including references to CASEL. In conjunction with the use of the North American organisations, ERO (2016a, b) chooses to draw

heavily on prominent New Zealand Indigenous researchers to inform implementation, paving the way for SEL research in New Zealand to do the same.

While literature indicates the unequivocal integration of wellbeing and bicultural practices in early childhood education (Arndt, 2012; Jenkins, 2016, 2017; Ritchie, 2012), these are not as apparent within primary or secondary education research and practices (Soutter et al., 2012). This glaring gap integrating holistic wellbeing practices into primary schools was reinforced in *Wellbeing for success: A resource for primary schools* (ERO, 2015):

This report identifies that Years 7 and 8 were particularly important years in terms of wellbeing, due to the greater risks faced as children get older and the cumulative effect of how well their wellbeing needs had been met in previous years (p. 3).

Those ‘wellbeing needs’ are an ethical responsibility of New Zealand teachers, according to their code of ethics that requires teachers to “promote the physical, emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual wellbeing of learners” (New Zealand Teachers’ Council, 2004, cited in ERO, 2015). There is much evidence that this standard and the “desired outcomes for student wellbeing” according to ERO (2015) are not being met (O’Toole et al., 2019; MacFarlane et al., 2017; Taylor et al., 2017). This article explores the beginnings of reconceptualising SEL in Aotearoa’s Treaty of Waitangi and multicultural context to enable primary school teachers to better support the wellbeing of students.

Current Teacher Practice of SEL in Primary Schools in Aotearoa New Zealand

Having established why teachers need to include Cultural, Social and Emotional competencies in a holistic form for student wellbeing in New Zealand schools, it is essential to know whether there is literature clarifying how schools and teachers are currently addressing these requirements. Boyd et al. (2017) wrote a report attempting to outline just that, from the 2016 survey of primary and intermediate schools. They found that there had been an increase in “publications to help schools develop approaches to youth suicide, bullying behaviour, mental health, sexuality education, relationship education, drug education, and physical activity” (Boyd et al. 2017, p. 8), along with specific initiatives in schools relating wellbeing to food, nutrition and physical activity, and behaviour management strategies (specifically Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) and The Incredible Years) (Boyd et al., 2017).

PB4L is reported to have caused “enhancements to school culture; learning outcomes such as student engagement and on-task behaviour; and behavioural outcomes such as decreases in classroom disruption and major behaviour incidents,” (Boyd et al., 2017, p. 9). Boyd, Bonne and Berg note that although PB4L provided systems for fostering positive behaviour “schools’ main unmet need was for mental and emotional wellbeing support” with the need being felt more pressing by 29% of teachers, up from 18% in 2013 (2017, Key findings, p. 3). Furthermore, only 20% of teachers and 34% of principals noted that training in supporting emotional wellbeing

was accessible to teachers. Of significant note is the lack of any recommended initiatives, theories, or practices regarding culturally appropriate SEL in Aotearoa New Zealand. Boyd et al. (2017) concluded that educationalists need to find a balance between fostering student wellbeing, positive behaviour, and learning. While P4BL does well to focus on behaviour management, these key findings point to a need for research to explore ways New Zealand teachers could be supported through SEL reconceptualisation to aid emotional wellbeing, as part of a balanced, holistic approach to education.

Exploring Different Ways of Viewing SEL

Any approach to SEL in Aotearoa New Zealand will need to be premised on our bicultural Treaty of Waitangi foundation. Research into a response that incorporates many different cultural ways of knowing, being and doing to support emotional wellbeing may be appropriate. Similarly, this article and any research conceptualising this topic benefit from the intersection of multiple viewpoints and disciplines.

An International View of SEL

What might we learn about SEL supporting emotional wellbeing from international research and approaches? The most ‘inter-national’ study found was the five-year research project begun in 2018 involving 18 countries (Social and Emotional Learning International Research Network, 2020). The first wave of data collection included Burkina Faso, China, Finland, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Portugal, Romania, Singapore, South Africa, Togo, Turkey, Uganda, and the United States. The first 2 years of findings have highlighted two significant data themes: empathy and career guidance. Still, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has found many countries focusing on the benefits and changes of SEL within this “new normal” for education (Marsay, 2020; SEL-IRN, 2020).

Although termed ‘cross-cultural’ and ‘international’, due to the number of countries involved, much of this work is founded on the North American CASEL Model (2019) and the emotions work coming out of Yale University. Each researcher noted themes that link to CASEL as part of the study (SEL-IRN, 2020). Mayer et al.’s (2016) ‘Ability Model of Emotional Intelligence’ (EI) has become an integral part of legitimising the academising of emotion. Further work out of Yale promotes this model, and educating students toward EI, through the creation of a prescriptive SEL program termed the RULER Approach to SEL (Brackett, Caruso, & Stern, 2006, cited in Nathanson et al., 2016). This SEL approach is now used throughout hundreds of American schools. It uses a Feeling Words Curriculum to build a vocabulary to develop students’ ability to Recognise, Understand, Label, Express and Regulate (RULER) emotions more effectively (Durlak et al., 2011; Brackett et al., 2012). These appear to align directly to Self-Awareness and Social-Awareness competencies (MOE, 2007) and the call from teachers and principals for assistance to support emotional wellbeing (Boyd

et al., 2017). However, alongside many insights gained from this psychology-based research, the one-size-fits-all and empty-vessel theorising view of emotions and communication is not appropriate for Aotearoa New Zealand. Researching approaches that failed to accommodate the holistic, sociocultural constructivist perspective required to address this specific context, led me to caution:

I am concerned that SEL could become another method that determines not only which epistemology is important but reinforces westernised, hierarchical, homogenising power structures, defining which ontological values are ‘correct’. Our emotions are linked by some emotional appraisal theorists to culture, to what we prioritise, what we value, to our very being (Goodman, 2019).

While O’Toole et al. (2019) focus on overviewing SEL in New Zealand, they discuss international recommendations such as North American Carol Ryff’s (1989) Personal Well-Being model. (Refer also Ryff, 2014). The relevance of American research is debatable in the unique bi-cultural setting of New Zealand, but Taylor et al.’s (2017) meta-analysis of 82 schools with school-wide SEL interventions in place (“38 of which were outside of the USA”) is useful in validating the push for SEL (O’Toole et al., 2019, p. 96). The study found fostering SEL skills and positive attitudes provides students with markedly long-term (up to 18 years) improved outcomes in wellbeing and protection against adverse effects (Taylor et al., 2017). O’Toole et al. recommend “experimental research” into the content and processes of SEL in Aotearoa New Zealand as a result (2019, p. 99).

The most widely accessible (and funded) views of SEL tend to be based on a Westernised psychology view, and this disregards Indigenous and multicultural viewpoints. Social and Emotional Learning International Research Network (2020), specifically academics from Asian and African countries, noted a significant difference in the approach to SEL when it is viewed through the lens of an individualist cultural paradigm versus a collective one. However, this article is not proposing that all research out of America fails to consider co-constructed, culturally sensitive SEL. Katzman and Stanton (2020) suggest that the COVID-19 pandemic and increased distance learning require ‘cultural learning’ to be integrated with SEL; or more pointedly, that curricula includes ‘educational indigenisation’ as opposed to the “cultural genocide” reported by various authors (Luke, 2009, Sheer, 2015, Wang & Reeves, 2007, cited in Katzman & Stanton, 2020, p. 1563). Specifically, they use examples in New Mexico to recommend utilising community and cultural input to collaborate on localised curriculum (Katzman & Stanton, 2020). This is a practice already widely recognised and recommended within New Zealand, as consultation and collaboration with whānau, iwi, hapū and community is an essential part of the Treaty of Waitangi principles. SEL has the potential to draw on Indigenous psychology in its conceptualisation rather than discounting them as myth and beliefs, as de Sousa Santos’ Abyssal theory highlights (de Sousa Santos, 2014). In summary, although international research supports the many benefits of SEL, its sometimes homogenising, ‘universal’ literacy approach fails to consider the Indigenous and multicultural contexts of education in Aotearoa New Zealand.

SEL in a Treaty of Waitangi and Bi-cultural Context

The inclusive and respectful way in which the MOE and ERO prioritise well-being inspires an opportunity to research SEL free from universalising views to incorporate Māori's position as Tāngata Whenua (Indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand). The Teaching Council of New Zealand's *Standards for the teaching profession* require that educators:

- Understand and recognise of the unique status of tangata whenua in Aotearoa New Zealand;
- Understand and acknowledge the histories, heritages, languages and cultures of partners to Te Tiriti o Waitangi;
- Practise and develop the use of te reo and tikanga Māori (n.d., p.1).

Therefore, all education in Aotearoa New Zealand needs to include Kaupapa Māori (values, principles and goals) and te ao Māori perspectives (the broad holistic Māori worldview), as well as Tikanga Māori (Andreotti, 2009; Macfarlane et al., 2017). This article proposes that SEL presents a unique, pedagogical opportunity and an ethical responsibility to create culturally safe spaces aligned to tikanga, kaupapa and te ao Māori.

Macfarlane et al. (2007) propose a theoretical framework for creating culturally safe schools for Māori students. Furthermore, Macfarlane et al. (2017) see a means to bring culture into the classroom through SEL. They present an example of an East Coast tribe collaboratively developing a Māori form of SEL to aid wellbeing and learning (Macfarlane et al., 2017). This and several other “models for Māori” will be important to inform details of SEL theory and implementation (Macfarlane et al., 2017). At the conceptual layer, Indigenous research from New Zealand uses references to empathy, emotions, relational connection, communication, manaakitanga (an honouring concept of care discussed further on in the article), warmth, aroha, authenticity, and heart all needing to be in the classroom (Bishop & Berryman, 2009; Habib et al., 2013; Macfarlane, 2010; Macfarlane et al., 2017).

In line with the holistic Māori ontology described earlier, student wellbeing suffers when the academic focus is compartmentalised from emotions. For Māori, thoughts and feelings come from the same place (Durie, 1998). For a classroom to be socially, emotionally and culturally safe for Māori students, a more open, connected environment is essential. Consequently, it is not only about incorporating a holistic, cultural viewpoint but also emotive, empathetic care and understanding into the classroom that is crucial to Māori student wellbeing.

O'Toole et al. (2019) determined that “imbuing SEL approaches with te ao Māori perspectives, inclusive of mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledges), experiences and spirituality, should enhance the authenticity of any SEL intervention programme for both teachers and children/students and their whānau, hapū, iwi and community” (2019, p. 97). Māori authors caution that programmes must not be prescriptive, but deeply collaborative (Kohtahitanga or Taha Tangata), not only between teachers and students but within each whānau, hapū and community (Bishop & Berryman, 2009;

Habib et al., 2013; Macfarlane et al., 2007; Macfarlane et al., 2017). Otherwise, the theoretical and conceptual basis would do the opposite of enhancing authenticity.

Macfarlane et al. (2017) and O'Toole et al. (2019) both suggest that Ka Hikitia (MoE, 2013) sets a challenge for New Zealand education to create a connecting and sensitive approach for Māori student success. O'Toole, Martin, Fickel and Britt briefly note “significant Māori models” cited from Macfarlane et al. (2017): “the Hikairo Rationale (Macfarlane, 1997); Te Whare Tapa Whā (Durie, 1998), Ka Hikitia: Managing for Success (MoE, 2008) Ka Hikitia: Accelerating Success (MoE, 2013) and Whānaukatanga and Whatumanawa within Tomlins-Jahnke and Graham's (2014) ‘tribally-based curriculum’” (cited in O'Toole et al., 2019, p. 94). However, rather than consider the “various components of these various models”, only international models have been noted in their conclusion (O'Toole et al., 2019, p. 99).

An ethical lens needs to be used to research any SEL conceptualisation in New Zealand, as it examines the philosophical, ontological and epistemological layers to derive conceptual foundations. Research is needed that drastically reimagines the colonially embedded ways of doing education and SEL. In my opinion, Macfarlane et al.'s (2017) message about SEL differs from simple support of the alignment of SEL with Māori educationalists' initiatives for student wellbeing and success. Instead, the Māori models Macfarlane et al. (2017) discuss have fundamentally different philosophical approaches: the holistic versus psychology's compartmentalising; the historically, generationally embedded versus psychology's present, observable measures; the individual student versus the collective relational interaction; the ngākau versus the neurology and physiology of emotions; the deep level of ways of knowing, being and doing versus the external, rational, observable cause and effect. While these are exaggerated binaries, the point is to bring awareness to the spectrum between these differing world views. Unless the fundamental approach to SEL is innovative and attempts to address the different ways of knowing and being under emotions, any attempts to design a “research-informed, developmentally appropriate, and culturally- and linguistically- relevant intervention in NZ” (O'Toole et al., 2019, p. 99) will turn into a Western psychology-based SEL model (because it has the most empirical research) with token consultation and *te reo* use. Therefore, reimagining SEL to incorporate Māori (and other minority cultures) ways of knowing and being is a justified and ethically essential focus for research.

There is an additional practical consideration within any reconceptualisation of SEL within the context of today's classrooms. We must consider the current fact that the majority of teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand are non-Māori. Although it can be helpful to read case studies of the best practices of Māori teachers for Māori students (e.g., Macfarlane, 2010; Macfarlane et al., 2017), the call from teachers (and principals) for assistance in supporting students' emotional wellbeing, will most commonly relate to cross-cultural support. Therefore, the incorporating of Māori (and other minority cultures) emotional and social ways of knowing, being and doing means creating spaces where emotions and the unique epistemological and ontological links beneath them are voiced, heard and celebrated cross-culturally. It needs to “challenge the status quo” and be “founded on Māori constructs” but also be a conceptualisation that the many non-Māori teachers of Aotearoa New Zealand

can implement in the collaborative, cross-cultural spaces of our classrooms and communities (Macfarlane et al., 2017, p. 286).

Even the very term SEL does not appear to align with Māori or Pacifica epistemology and ontology. It is effectively compartmentalising Taha Hinengaro, contrary to Durie's holistic view of Hauora. For Māori the metaphorical “heart” or ngākau is where both emotions and thoughts come from, and many Māori emotions' words are linked to parts of the physical body (Durie, 1998; Jones, 2017; Macfarlane et al., 2017). Emotional wellbeing and the teaching and learning regarding it not only relate to thoughts and physical occurrences, but to space, time, relationship to the land, whakapapa (heritage), to values, spiritual beliefs and ways of knowing, being and doing. Durie (1998) states “Understanding occurs less by division ... than by synthesis into wider contextual systems” (p. 70) and that wellbeing is “viewed as an interrelated phenomenon rather than an intra-personal one” (p. 71). There are many reasons SEL does not fit with a holistic view of wellbeing. Therefore, I will refer to Cultural, Social and Emotional Learning (CSEL) for the remainder of this article, to describe a way of beginning to reconceptualise this interrelated, holistic, culturally embedded view of moving toward greater hauora and wellbeing.

A Multicultural View of the CSEL ‘Space’

Along with incorporating a Māori world view, any CSEL approach appropriate for Aotearoa New Zealand primary schools must take into account the increasingly multicultural, multi-lingual context of this country. Intentionally planning educational strategies that encompass cultural difference to produce positive student outcomes is emphasised by Habib et al. (2013). The mono-linguistic and potentially homogenising approaches used in other countries will not meet this brief. Since emotions link to the epistemological and ontological core of who students are, ignoring this could be all the more damaging for students of minority cultural groups. Educational research in Aotearoa New Zealand has an opportunity to utilise an innovative, interdisciplinary approach to operationalise CSEL for our diverse context.

Savaii explores wellbeing from a ‘Pacific youth’ perspective and proposes that “the literature on New Zealand youth wellbeing pays little attention to the Pacific holistic understanding of wellbeing, which reflects a harmony in people's spiritual, social and physical relations” (2017, p. 5). She critiques the deficit-theorising behind current models and highlights that Pacific youth “fared better than their New Zealand European counterparts on the spiritual faith dimension” (2017, p. 6). Savaii concludes that this dimension is “often dismissed as unimportant to policy decisions, with youth status on the economic indicators highlighted and prioritised instead” (2017, p. 6). Taleni et al. (2018) identify the need to explicitly incorporate Pasifika “Cultural values, principles and languages” as a foundation to the learning environment for student success. *The Fale Model for the Pasifika success Talanoa project framework* incorporates “respect, love, service, relationship, spirituality, reciprocity, family, leadership, integrity, belonging and inclusion” as its crucial foundation (Taleni et al., 2018, p. 184). Similarly, the Ministry of Social Development (MOSD) (2012) identified respect, belonging, reciprocity, spiritual centrality and

acknowledgement and identity with Pasifika heritage and languages as key concepts underpinning Pasifika wellbeing. This research demonstrates some of the many concepts linking to Pasifika ways of knowing, being and doing to be included in a reconceptualised, cross-cultural CSEL space that is inclusive and assists in the well-being of the Pasifika students of Aotearoa New Zealand.

For the educational space to be appropriate for Māori, Pasifika and the many other cultures, New Zealand classrooms require CSEL to be framed as cross-cultural communication. Authors outline the many misunderstandings and damage that can occur if this cross-cultural context and differing world views are not acknowledged (Hall, 2002; Metge & Kinloch, 1993; Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005). Devine et al. (2012) challenge the metaphorical bicultural education mat of Te Whāriki, suggesting that in multicultural reality of New Zealand, different *fala* (woven mats) could represent a new connecting, relational education space.

Literature indicating different viewpoints explored thus far combine to illustrate a pressing need within CSEL research to focus on creating a space that allows the ngākau to be heard and culturally diverse voices to speak about emotions, values and ways of knowing and being in an empathetic way.

What Might Research and Practices Within This CSEL Space Focus on in the Future?

Listening and Dialogical Practices

This multicultural space of empathy would need to include listening and dialogue that acknowledge the social, emotional and cultural realities of students. Many culturalists are calling for a move within classrooms to ‘listen to culture’ (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Clark, Smith & Pomare, 1996; Hohepa, 1993; Macfarlane, 2000; Penitito, 1996; cited in Habib et al., 2013, p. 172). Sharon Todd’s *Toward Imperfect Education* (2009) inspires towards the messy, yet healthy, starting place for such a CSEL space, along with many other relevant authors (Andreotti, 2009; Berryman & Eley, 2017; Davies, 1994; de Sousa Santos, 2016; Devine et al., 2012; Jones, 2017; May, 2009).

Considering listening and dialogue in such a space links to Freire’s *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (1970, 2001). He connects social interaction with the ontological and epistemological, noting it is starkly different from the everyday conversation (Freire, 2001, p. 170). This is a dialogical space that teacher and students will step into acknowledging the taonga (precious treasures) each brings to it. Freire’s (2001) dialogue is linked to the historical past and power-differentials and is about entering that conversation and space knowingly and intentionally. The way in which this concept ties into this reconceptualisation of CSEL is summed up by Freire and Macedo in “A dialogue: Culture, language and race”:

In order to understand the meaning of dialogical practice we have to put aside the simplistic understanding of dialogue as a mere technique ... dialogue characterises an epistemological relationship. Thus, in a sense, dia-

logue is a way of knowing and should never be viewed as a mere tactic ... I engage in dialogue because I recognise the social and not merely the individualistic character of the process of knowing. In this sense, dialogue presents itself as an indispensable component of the process of both learning and knowing (1995, p. 379).

In keeping with holistic and genealogically linked models of “SEL for Māori students” (Macfarlane et al., 2017, p. 278), this article proposes that CSEL needs to create a space which invites people to make links between their emotions and thoughts (from the *ngākau*) to cultural ways of knowing, being and doing (listening to culture). The methodologies to explore open dialogue and listening will be crucial to the success of such deep, cross-cultural space. Critical cultural and decolonial theories of difference recommend celebrating difference (as opposed to historical focuses on equality), embracing non-consensus, and thus, moving towards decolonial future conceptions of equity and justice (Andreotti et al., 2018; Davies, 2014; May, 2009; Todd, 2009).

Care, Empathy and Manaakitanga

Authors from many different backgrounds and disciplines point to care, empathy, understanding and manaakitanga as being the way to nurture emotional wellbeing; yet, there is very little clarity on the means teachers might use to achieve this. Davies (2014) explores the knowledge needed to move the primary school students she studied to “look at each other with compassion not driven by social exclusion anxiety, but by a shared sense of social justice” (p. 59). She goes on to ask what teachers could do to help students towards this.

Teaching empathy can be difficult if it is not authentically modelled. Poignant cautions relating to CSEL conceptualisation relate to students losing genuine empathic concern when they are rewarded for compassion (rather than it purely being acknowledged), or when the empathetic actions become about following rules (Noddings, 2010, p. 149). Noddings (2010) emphasises how important authenticity is to modelling within the space, by cautioning “We do not ‘care’ in order to model caring; we model care by caring” (p. 147). Similarly, Macfarlane and other Māori researchers have found that it is “the teacher’s knowing, being and doing of the values and practices” which is impactful for improving wellbeing and ensuring students experience empathy (Macfarlane et al., 2017, p. 278).

Maanakitanga includes the concepts of care and empathy, but it combines a sense of honouring and respect that the other two concepts often do not. Traditionally based on how a visitor would be treated when they entered the marae, it includes upholding ‘mana’ (intrinsic honour) in a reciprocal, hospitable way (Macfarlane, 2010; Macfarlane et al., 2017). Authors see maanakitanga as an essential concept for wellbeing and CSEL in Aotearoa New Zealand (Durie, 1998; ERO, 2016a, b; Macfarlane, 2010; Macfarlane et al., 2017; O’Toole et al., 2019). Therefore, any conception of CSEL would include manaakitanga underlying the dialogical practices within its pedagogical space in the classroom.

Conclusion

Rather than choosing one lens to study SEL, this article seeks to open a theoretical discussion at the intersection of differing viewpoints. It does not seek compromise, or even common ground necessarily, because some work does not stand up to critique when viewed through a different lens, but to seek signs (key research and theories) that direct us to new ways of seeing SEL. The convergence of the various disciplines or fields of knowledge provides different lenses through which to look at the same thing. It is to be hoped, therefore, that the theory emerges more holistic, more balanced and equitable from this point of intersection.

It has been established that Cultural, Social and Emotional Learning is essential for meeting students' wellbeing needs, as required through the curriculum, ERO's (2015, 2016a, b) Wellbeing for Success initiatives, key competencies and by the Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand. Teachers and principals have specifically expressed a need for more guidance on how to support the mental health and emotional wellbeing needs of their students. The behavioural management focus of PB4L does not meet this need, nor do ready-made, prescriptive methods fit Aotearoa's unique, diverse context.

This article concludes that research is needed to reconceptualise SEL into CSEL for Aotearoa New Zealand. It will need not only to acknowledge holistic Māori ways of knowing and being but create a safe cross-cultural space for many different emotions and world views to be heard. While this article acknowledges the international research into SEL, te ao Māori viewpoints have also been championed, much in the way that our educational spaces need to respond to the call of the Treaty and decolonisation. Listening to culture within the SEL space is crucial, more specifically dialogical practices and manaakitanga, which connect to the diverse ways of knowing and being under emotions. Research reconceptualising SEL will also need to acknowledge the effects of the colonial past of Aotearoa and its current effects on the space. The CSEL that has begun to be conceptualised would need to be collaborative, with the teacher, student, whānau, iwi, hapū, multi-lingual and multicultural resources and communities all being a part of the extended classroom. Within the multicultural context of Aotearoa New Zealand, influenced by Te Tiriti o Waitangi, it is essential to ensure that the CSEL model is flexibly co-constructed to celebrate different ways of knowing, being and doing. If research can theorise and conceptualise CSEL on this basis, we may move towards supporting diverse students' emotional needs in revolutionary new ways.

Declarations

Consent for publication Publication will include permission for this article to be included in MPhil Thesis for submission to AUT.

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