A Case Study: Students' Art Works as Indicators of Multiculturalism in Visual Arts Education in New Zealand Secondary Schools

Jill Smith

The University of Auckland, New Zealand

Abstract

Art education provides a unique vehicle through which teachers, via their students, can indicate their pedagogical position/s on multiculturalism. In this paper I use images of students' art works to illustrate findings of a case study conducted in a sample of secondary schools in Auckland, New Zealand. Although this nation has an increasingly multicultural student demographic, it also has a commitment to biculturalism. The research sought answers to how, or whether, art teachers take account of the increasing diversity of students. I contend that students' art works can provide visual evidence of teachers' pedagogical practices and attitudes towards cultural inclusion in visual arts education.

Keywords: visual arts education, students' art works, multiculturalism, biculturalism, cultural inclusion, pedagogical practices

Art works made by students in visual arts programmes convey visible evidence about teaching and learning. When developed and produced within the context of a multicultural society, it also has a commitment to biculturalism. The research sought answers they can show how, or whether teachers' understandings and acknowledgement of the ethnic diversity and cultural differences of their students are reflected in their pedagogical practices. They

can also reveal the extent to which pedagogy has been shaped by personal and professional influences upon the teachers. In this paper, I use evidence from one of the four data collection methods used in my research - documented images of students' art works - to report on a case study conducted with ten art teachers in five representative secondary schools in Auckland, New Zealand (Smith, 2007).

The motivation for this research arose from my role as a New Zealand European teacher educator in visual arts. During my regular contact with secondary school art departments I have noted changes in the student population. In 2006 Statistics, New Zealand reported that Europeans comprised 67.6 percent of the population, one in seven identified as Maori, Asian groups increased by almost 50 percent, Pacific peoples' ethnic groups had the second-largest increase, and 10.4 percent identified with more than one ethnic group. While the overall statistic for non-European may appear low, the multicultural population in secondary schools in my professional location, Auckland, is considerably higher. For example, in 2010, a number of schools have Asian student populations of 66 percent. Given this changing demographic, my aim was to investigate how culture is interpreted and enacted in classrooms in culturally diverse contexts. The research was underpinned by critiques of curriculum policy in New Zealand, interpretations of culture, diversity and difference, pedagogical approaches for culturally inclusive art education, and arguments by multicultural and art education theorists that visual arts education can make a significant contribution towards a democratic society.

CONTEXTUALISING THE RESEARCH

Cultural policy in curriculum

New Zealand teachers accept employment on the understanding that they will deliver a curriculum as laid down by government statute. The New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education (MoE), 2007), which provides official policy relating to teaching, learning and assessment, requires schools

to meet a multicultural requirement responsive to the increasing cultural diversity of the New Zealand population. 'Cultural diversity' is cited among the eight principles that embody beliefs about what is important and desirable in school curriculum. However, cultural policy is expressed in the first instance in terms of the bicultural partnership between European and Maori that is at the core of our nation's founding document, Te Tiriti o Waitangi-the Treaty of Waitangi (1840). The vision is for young people "who will work to create an Aotearoa New Zealand in which Maori and Pakeha (the name given by Maori to European New Zealanders) recognise each other as full treaty partners, and in which all cultures are valued for the contributions they bring" (p. 8).

This vision is reiterated in The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (MoE, 2000), the key policy document for visual arts teachers. Reference is made to "the multicultural nature of our society and its traditions" (p. 7), and to the arts of other countries which "have progressively become part of the New Zealand cultural tapestry" (p. 9). However, the greatest emphasis is upon biculturalism. All students are expected to learn about "the significance, value, and contexts of traditional and contemporary Maori art forms" (p. 71, p. 90). Reference to the cultural diversity of students is presented in the penultimate section of the 109-page document where it is stated that "culturally inclusive programmes in the arts will encourage positive attitudes towards cultural diversity (and) recognise the diversity of individual students within particular cultures… " (p. 104). In this research, I sought to discover whether the emphasis on the bicultural partnership in national policy documents took precedence in visual arts programmes over espoused beliefs about cultural inclusion.

Definitions of multiculturalism

Another feature identified during my critique of documents is that demographic statistics and educational reports define multiculturalism in terms of 'ethnicity'. In its report, Multi-cultural Schools in New Zealand, the Education Review Office (ERO, 2000) describes a multicultural school as one in which students from at least two other ethnic groups together comprise

at least 20 percent of the school's population. Based on this definition, two out of five schools (38 percent) in New Zealand were classified as multicultural, and over 40 percent are in the greater Auckland area. This prompted me to find out whether the art teachers in my research also defined multiculturalism in terms of 'ethnicity'.

In contrast to ERO's definition, the general literature on multiculturalism pointed to a proliferation of ever-expanding interpretations. Some theorists promote multiculturalism as an agency for providing more opportunities for disenfranchised individuals and groups to obtain equity in social, political, and especially educational arenas (see Banks & McGee-Banks, 2004; Grant & Sleeter, 2007). Others call for a more 'critical' multicultural education to foster students who can engage critically with all ethnic and cultural backgrounds, including their own (see Kalantzis & Cope, 1999; May & Sleeter, 2010; Nieto, 2004). Bhabba (1995) draws a distinction between ethnic diversity and cultural difference as political concepts. Each of these interpretations of multiculturalism, as well as Sleeter and Grant's (2003) five approaches to teaching multicultural education - 'teaching the culturally different', the 'human relations' approach, the 'single group studies' approach, 'multicultural education', and the 'social reconstructionist' model - underpin a variety of forms of multiculturalism in visual arts education. In this research I used these interpretations as the basis for discovering the art teachers' ideas on multiculturalism.

Pedagogical practices for culturally inclusive visual arts education

Pedagogical practices, and the theoretical positions underpinning them, which focus on issues of cultural pluralism, cultural diversity, cultural difference and anti-racism, are also articulated in a comprehensive body of literature on multicultural visual arts education. While some theorists promote modernist conceptions, which celebrate pluralism and diversity (see Boughton & Mason, 1999; Chalmers, 1996), others advocate for postmodern conceptions such as social reconstructionist multiculturalism and teaching visual culture (Ballengee-Morris & Stuhr, 2001; Duncum, 2005; Efland,

Freedman & Stuhr, 1996; Freedman & Stuhr, 2004). The latter emphasise difference, rather than celebrating pluralism, and challenge the dominant power and knowledge structures that tend to create socio-cultural inequities. Other authors draw attention to the impact of inter/cross-culturalism, inter/transnationalism, globalisation and hybridisation (see Boughton & Mason, 1999). Many considered that a critical approach to policy and pedagogy in visual arts education, and an ethic that gives priority to equity and democracy as primary social objectives, was a way forward for an active engagement of social responsibility and cultural inclusion. These perspectives provided an important foundation for answers I sought in my research. I wanted to discover art teachers' understandings of pedagogical practices for culturally inclusive visual arts education and whether these impacted on their own practices and, ultimately, upon their students' outcomes.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

My choice of qualitative methodology for this research was based on the need to search for and interpret meanings of culture, diversity, and difference and culturally inclusive visual arts education within the framework of multiculturalism. A case study approach was used to gain through fieldwork a better understanding of my particular case within the context of education policy, curriculum, and pedagogy (Stake, 2005).

The research settings and participants

Qualitative inquiry typically focuses in depth on relatively small samples selected purposively rather than randomly (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). For my research, I selected art departments in five secondary schools in Auckland. Each school (hereafter referred to as Schools A-E) had national curriculum in common and offered visual arts programs at years 9-10 for 13-14 year old students. The choice of settings was based on ERO's (2000) definition of multicultural schools, decile (socio-economic) classification, geographical spread across the region, and inclusion of single-sex, co-educational, state,

integrated-state, and private schools. Three schools exemplified the increasingly multicultural population in secondary schools. Two less culturally diverse schools were deliberately included in response to claims that attention should be given to cultures regardless of whether or not they are represented in a school's population (Kalantzis & Cope, 1999; Sleeter, 2001, 2004).

The ten participants comprised the Head of Art Department (HOD) and an assistant art teacher (AT) in each school to enable a variety of perspectives to be heard. Commensurate with the European-dominated art teacher demographic in Auckland secondary schools (Smith, 2005) all five HODs identified as European, New Zealand, or New Zealand-Pakeha. Three assistant art teachers identified as Samoan, Taiwanese, and Maori-Pakeha and two as New Zealand-Pakeha. My choice of participants was influenced by claims that ethnic diversity, multiplicity of cultures, and variables within the communities of students means that a teaching force comprising the dominant cultural majority can no longer ignore 'others' from having an identity within the educational contexts of school, curriculum and classroom (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Gay, 2000; Grant & Sleeter, 2007; Landsman & Lewis, 2006; Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004; Sleeter & Grant, 2003). My aim was to discover whether the art teachers, no matter what their ethnicity, took account of their students' ethnicities and cultural differences in visual arts programs at years 9-10.

Data collection methods

Consistent with case study research, I sought participants' perspectives through multiple data collection methods which did not privilege one method over another (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Stake, 2005). Each informed the investigation into the link between theory, curriculum and pedagogy. I envisaged that the personal and professional histories of the participants could be an important element in shaping their identities and personas as secondary school art teachers (Chalmers, 2001; Palmer, 1998).

Document analysis was considered valuable for determining what lay behind documents, their embedded meanings, what they purported to say, the

language used, explanations given for processes of programme development, and their depictions of priorities and goals (Hodder, 2003). An interrogation of government policy and curriculum documents and reports preceded my analysis of documentation from the school settings. School Charters, mission statements, strategic plans and art department schemes provided insights into their philosophy, character, and positions taken towards multiculturalism, diversity, and difference.

Classroom observations were informed by Eisner's (1991, p. 195) view that "the richest vein of information is struck through direct observation of school and classroom life". I engaged in the art department settings as a participant-observer in order to experience and seek understanding of them and to "perceive" (not merely "see") and interpret what was happening (Sanger, 1996, p. 3). Three participant observations in each classroom, during 10-week periods, were informed by the document analysis and the complexity of issues articulated in the literature. I was particularly interested in the link between what the teachers claimed to do and the reality of their practice.

My decision to use interviews was influenced by exponents who consider them to be an essential, creative, and highly interactive means of generating data (Eisner, 1991; Fontana & Frey, 2003). Three semi-structured interviews were conducted over several months with each teacher. Questions were informed by the document analysis, review of literature, and fieldwork observations. Data were subsequently used in the triangulation process.

The photographic documentation of examples of year 9 and 10 students' outcomes from their visual arts programmes was influenced by Hodder (2003) who argued that analysis of material traces is important for providing alternative insights into the interpretation of social experience. In Hodder's view, 'artefacts' can be regarded as cultural texts and representations of attitudes and practices in the teaching and learning encounter. In this paper I focus upon this data collection method to report some critical findings from my research.

FINDINGS FROM THE FIELDWORK - THE 'STORIES' THE ART WORKS TELL

A notable feature of the overall findings was the correlation in all five schools between the data collected from the examination of documents, interviews, classroom observations, and documentation of students' art works. The relationship between what the ten teachers purported to do according to their art department schemes, programme planning, and verbal accounts, and what they actually did, was confirmed in almost every respect (Stake, 2005). There were, however, distinct differences in the pedagogical practices of the teachers in the context of 'multiculturalism'. Personal and professional influences, including attitudes towards cultural policy, compliance with national curriculum, understandings of multiculturalism, and beliefs about visual arts education were reflected in their students' art works. Identified by a pseudonym to protect their identity, each teacher was invited to nominate an art unit which represented their planning and teaching. Although every teacher included a Maori art education unit in their year 9-10 programs only one nominated this for photographic documentation. I assumed that my research focus upon 'multiculturalism' influenced that decision. Six examples from the documentation of art works by students, who were also given pseudonyms, are used to discuss critical findings from the research.

Figure 1

Fieldwork snapshot: Catherine, Head of Art Department, School A

'Gaudi Wearable Hats' – year 10 students

Motivation – Antoni Gaudi's architecture

Work by Oko (Japanese) – drawing of school architecture, mosaic media study of school chapel and sketch for 'Gaudi hat' design

Oko (Japanese)   Meike (Dutch/NZ)   Irena (NZ/Kiwi)

Cassie (German/Samoan)   Stella (Australian)   Loren (NZ/European)

Catherine, a European New Zealander, was in her fifth year of teaching. She taught in a high decile integrated-state Catholic girls' school of 950 students, of whom 75 percent were European. This school represented one of two with less culturally diverse populations. Although Catherine believed that its 'religious character' was key to school policy, and social awareness and religious education programmes promoted ideas of tolerance and open mindedness towards other cultures and beliefs, she said that "European dominance, as in wider society, comes through" (cited in Smith, 2007, p. 166). The multicultural directive in national curriculum policy was noticeably absent in the art department scheme. Throughout the multiple data collection, Catherine's stance illustrated Nieto's (2004) research in which teachers said, "We don't need multicultural education here: most of our students are White" (p. 344). Catherine chose not to find out about the ethnicity and cultures of

students in her classes, nor was this a factor in her teaching. She said:

> I prefer not to teach about the art of other cultures because I feel I know little about it and don't 'own' it to be able to teach about it. I do teach Maori and Pacific art units since it is an important part of New Zealand culture (and required by the curriculum) but… if it wasn't 'compulsory' then I would probably avoid teaching it where possible (p. 172).

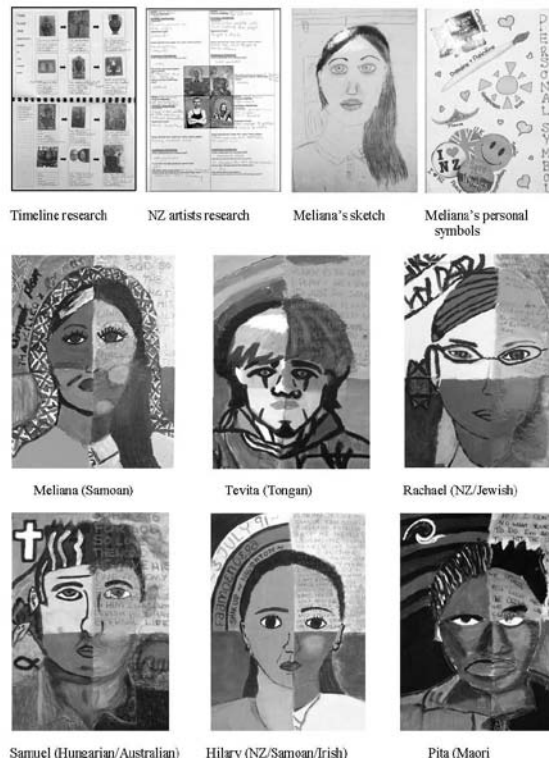Catherine admitted that "Asian or Indian or other students would not have an opportunity to draw on their cultures"… that "the diversity of individual students within particular cultures is not explicitly recognized in our teaching approaches" (p. 169). Rather, her approach was to select subjects that connected with the Catholic 'culture' of the school and with artists' works with which she felt comfortable. In the unit, Catherine nominated for documentation the students studied the architecture of Antoni Gaudi (1852-1926). The aim was for students to construct a "wearable 'Gaudi' hat" influenced by Gaudi's forms and decorative techniques. The artist's ideas, including influence of his Catholic beliefs, were not part of the unit. The theme reflected Catherine's interest in architecture and her preference for Western art. The students' hats were beautifully crafted and constructed in a variety of ways. They fulfilled Catherine's stated desire for a high quality product. The work of Oko, a Japanese student, is indicative of how each student used Gaudi's work and the school architecture as primary sources of motivation. However, there was little evidence that Oko or her peers were encouraged to draw upon their own ethnicities and cultural differences to explore this theme. The work of this class typifies a finding from this research that art teachers' personal and professional preferences take precedence over consideration of the students themselves. Catherine, a teacher from the dominant European culture, chose to ignore 'others' from having an identity. In this assimilationist approach, all students were made the same as those of the dominant sector (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Gay, 2000; Landsman & Lewis, 2006; Sleeter & Grant, 2003).

Figure 2

Fieldwork snapshot: Kaatje, Head of Art Department, School B

'Time, Place and Identity: Self Portraits' – year 9 students

Timeline research	NZ artists research	Meliana's sketch	Meliana's personal symbols
Meliana (Samoan)	Tevita (Tongan)	Rachael (NZ/Jewish)	
Samuel (Hungarian/Australian)	Hilary (NZ/Samoan/Irish)	Pita (Maori)	

Kaatje, in her fourteenth year of teaching, taught in a mid-to-high decile co-educational state school with a roll of 1,800 students, comprising students from over 60 different ethnic groups. Multicultural diversity was celebrated through cultural clubs, activities and festivals that gave students opportunities to celebrate pluralism (Chalmers, 1996) and have their differences affirmed (Nieto, 2004). The art department scheme contained teaching and learning strategies "to make the cultural diversity of the school community a major consideration in the selection of content areas and resources" (cited in Smith, 2007, p. 178). The year 9 program that Kaatje nominated for documentation

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was underpinned by both this philosophy and her preference for traditional art that was part of her Dutch heritage. Kaatje's aim was "to give equal attention to a history of the visual arts and to practical work based on students investigating their cultural identity" (p. 181). Theories about art education were not a feature in planning, "except intuitively" (p. 179), and Kaatje professed to have no knowledge of multicultural pedagogies or theories.

In preparation for their self portraits, students analyzed art works, drawn primarily from Western art, which featured images of people from historical eras or art movements. Study of portraits by four New Zealand artists, to identify conventions of self portraiture and pictorial and expressive properties, was followed by observational drawings and gathering personal, universal and cultural symbols to represent their ethnicities, identities and cultures. In their four-part self-portraits students demonstrated understanding of the styles of each artist, the most interesting responses inspired by Maori artist Robyn Kahukiwa's use of text. Family genealogies, passages from the Bible, sporting interests, and personal statements about themselves offered interesting insights into the individual identities of this ethnically diverse group. This formal program, albeit positioned within the Western aesthetic, was balanced by the students' outcomes. Their paintings illustrated a broader cultural reference than ethnicity. Rachael revealed her fondness for her Jewish father ("I like my dad" is inscribed), and how she wanted to convey that in the Yiddish script. A culture of Christianity, evident in the text and symbols in the paintings of Samuel and Meliana and others, offered a differing cultural perspective from Tevita's declaration that "rugby is the game I play …", or Pita's statement, "… I'm about to hit the streets". The work of this class typifies another critical finding from my research. Although the students' art works exhibited individualistic responses to their own cultural identities, the unit did not allow for students to learn about 'other's' cultures, except by association with peers.

Figure 3

Fieldwork snapshot: Pauline, Head of Art Department, School C

'Personal Identity: Patterns and Symbols' – year 9 students

Abdul (Afgani) – Personal patterns, personal symbols and symbols within shapes.
Preparation for Abdul's 'Personal identity portrait'

Abdul (Afgani) Sierra (Australian) Moana (NZ/Maori)

Virginia (American) Hye-Rim (Chinese) Ervin (Corsovan)

Pauline was in her fourteenth year of teaching art at School C, a mid-decile co-educational state school with a roll of 1,000 students from fifty-seven countries. Nearly 50 percent of the students were originally from overseas. The school's prospectus stated that its "multicultural environment allows students to develop confidence in relating to a wide diversity of students" (cited in Smith, 2007, p. 185).

The vision in the art department scheme stated that staff have a "commitment to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi" and "acknowledge Aotearoa's multi ethnic status and encourage global awareness" (p. 187).

Pauline's pedagogy did not derive from art educational or cultural theory. She said the main thrust was "giving students opportunity to explore lots of cultures because they are from lots of cultures" (p. 189). Because of her commitment to working in a multicultural environment, Pauline, a Pakeha-New Zealander, taught the year 9 global class. This was run on UNESCO principles which included "education for all, the promotion of co-operative partnerships, the free exchange of ideas and knowledge and access to learning which will go on for life" (p. 185). The global class curriculum was interdisciplinary, with students focusing on themes such as 'autobiographical segments on culture and religious experiences' and 'culture and identity'. This approach aligned with the fourth approach to teaching multicultural education identified by Sleeter and Grant (2003) - the 'pluralist multicultural education approach'. There was also a connection with their fifth model, 'social reconstructionist multiculturalism' (see Efland, Freedman & Stuhr, 1996; Stuhr, 1994), whose aim is to prepare students to challenge social structural inequity and to promote the goal of social and cultural diversity.

In the unit nominated for documentation, students drew upon their learning in English and Social Studies. They were introduced to Niuean artist, John Pule's, use of symbols and patterns as a device for telling a personal and cultural narrative. Pauline stressed that she wanted students "to value and appreciate other peoples' cultures and for them to feel good about their own" (p. 192). Emphasis was placed on students making personal choices which reflected themselves. The research process, development of ideas, compositional studies and finished paintings, exemplified by the work of Abdul, an Afgani boy, illustrate personal responses. The works of all the students in this class resembled 'texts', a construction of symbolic signs through which the students represented themselves to themselves and to each other (see Cohen, 1985). School C was the only one in my study that heeded the call for education that breaks down disciplines and creates interdisciplinary knowledge (see Giroux, 1994; Nieto, 2004).

Figure 4

Fieldwork snapshot: Kelly, Assistant art teacher, School C

'Self Portrait Photograms' – year 10 students

Aroha (Maori-Pakeha) – self portrait studies and photograms.
The photogram in centre illustrates her dual heritage.

Lindee (Chinese) – sketches, paper cut-outs, and photogram   Patsy (NZ)

Sukhi (Srilanken) – photograms   Ngahuia (Maori) – photograms

Tevali (Tongan) – sketch of cultural symbols and photograms

Kelly, who identified as a Pakeha-New Zealander, had taught at School C with Pauline for six years. Her philosophy was "to work collaboratively as a group, and in a teacher-student relationship towards guiding their art making" (cited in Smith, 2007, p. 193). Kelly's expertise as a photography teacher influenced the programme that was documented. Her year 10 class, mostly 14 year olds, was ethnically diverse. Students studied photograms by New Zealand artist, Len Lye, and learnt about this photographic process. To develop ideas for their photograms, they experimented with cropping and layering positive/negative shapes, collected personal items and sketched

personal symbols and cultural patterns.

The aim of this unit was for students to explore aspects of their ethnicity or culture within the framework of a profile of their head and hands, the 'uniqueness' of which was emphasised. Images of frangipani, pandanus leaves, pineapples, tapa cloth patterns, turtles, and flags were used by students to represent their Pacific Island ethnicities. Lotus flowers and butterflies featured in the work of students of Asian ethnicity. At a slightly deeper level, Aroha used contrasts of black and white Maori kowhaiwhai patterns to express her dual Maori-Pakeha heritage. During the presentation of their work, students clearly believed they had effectively used symbolic objects and stylised patterns to represent themselves and their cultures. However, the art works, while attractive, said little about the individuality of the students themselves. This unit illustrated another critical finding in the research - the superficial use of national signifiers as an approach to 'multiculturalism'.

Figure 5

Fieldwork snapshot: Brian, Head of Art Department, School E

'Classical Greek Art' – year 10 students

Motivation - Greek vase

Mee-Su (NZ/Chinese/Maori) – Research on Greek vase patterns and motifs and experiments with techniques

Mee-Su (NZ/Chinese) Clark (NZ/European) Sofia (NZ/Samoan) John (NZ/European) Katrina (NZ/European)

Ionic temple, resource Royce (NZ) – research Daniel (NZ) – research Relief sculpture, resource

Jessica (NZ/European) Jefferson (Korean) Daniel (NZ/European) Royce (NZ/European)

Brian had taught at School E for twenty-four years. This mid-decile co-educational state school had a roll of 2,500 students, of whom 43 percent were European, 23 percent Asian, 20 percent Maori, and 14 percent Pacific Islands. The principal described the school as "a rich blend of rural and urban students with a diversity of cultures… a truly comprehensive multicultural school… where each student is regarded as an individual" (cited in Smith, 2007, p. 204). The Art Department scheme did not reflect this multicultural vision. There was some evidence of the assimilationist multicultural approach, 'the human relations approach', identified by Sleeter and Grant (2003)

whereby "units are designed around cultural events such as lamp-making at the time of the Chinese Lantern Festival… but principally Maori, some Pacific and the European history really gets prominence" (p. 206). In all units, emphasis was given to practical skill development, exploration of processes, and preparation for art examinations in the senior school. In all units, prominence was given to practical art making, without any contextual study.

Brian's tertiary experiences in art history shaped his preference for traditional art and a European historical approach. He described his style as "a whole class approach, with strong teacher exemplars and pre-determined outcomes…" (p. 207). His year 10 class reflected the multicultural population of the school but Brian sought to find out about the students' ethnicities or cultures "only in relation to a particular unit" (p. 208). The unit Brian nominated for documentation exemplified his passion for classical art and desire to give students grounding in techniques. For both the Greek vase and Ionic architecture components, students worked from photocopied resource sheets to identify forms, patterns, and composition. Historical context was not considered. The subject matter was simply the vehicle through which students acquired technical competence in the 'scratch-back' technique and in tonal modeling to depict light and form in a monochromatic painting. Brian wanted his students to achieve "the pride of a good finished outcome" (p. 209). Although the students' works were technically competent, there was little room for individuality. Outcomes were distinguished by differing degrees of technical competency rather than by individualistic expression or any sign of the ethnic diversity and cultural differences of these multicultural students. As with Catherine [Figure 1], Brian's personal and professional preferences took precedence over consideration of the students themselves.

Figure 6

Fieldwork snapshot: Anahera, Assistant art teacher, School E

'Kiwiana Chairs' – year 10 students

Kiwiana research sheet   Alison (Korean)   Rozanne (NZ/European) – research on Kiwiana objects and their meanings and materials, and ideas for chairs

'Sheep' chair designed by Alison (Korean) and made by her group

'Kiwifriut' chair   'L & P' chair   'Barbecue' chair   'All Blacks' chair   'Auckland Bungy'

'Maori' chair   'Paua Shell' chair   'Buzzy Bee' chair   'Sheep' chair   'Rural New Zealand'

Anahera, the only Maori-Pakeha teacher among the fieldwork participants, was in her sixth year of teaching with Brian. Whenever possible, she used te reo (Maori language) in class. Her approach was prefaced by the statement in the art room - "Me mahi tahi tatou mo te o range o te katoa… We must all work as one for the well-being of all" (cited in Smith, 2007, p. 210). Anahera's unit with her multicultural year 10 students reflected her preference for collaborative projects. Students worked in ten self-selected groups on 'kiwiana' themes "related to the culture of New Zealand" (p. 210). Students brainstormed ideas on kiwiana objects, cultural clues, and materials.

In each group, they individually designed chairs on their selected theme. The 'best' nominated design was then used to construct the 'kiwiana chair' using discarded art room stools. Anahera stressed the importance of working as a team, problem-solving, and "matching media to message" (p. 211). However, like Kelly's unit [Figure 4], Anahera's focused on superficial cultural identifiers. There was no critical examination of popular forms of visual culture in a socio-cultural context (Duncum, 2005; Freedman & Stuhr, 2004). Anahera believed that while the unit "did not encourage individual representation, culturally some kiwiana icons were seen as 'universal', and an important part of contemporary popular culture that appeals to the young" (p. 211).

CONCLUSION

Prior to the fieldwork, the ten art teachers in the case study were briefed on my research question, in accordance with ethics requirements. I stressed that they were under no obligation to alter, modify or enhance their year 9-10 visual arts programs, or pedagogical practices in the interests of my research. In this respect, the strong correlation between the data collected from the four interconnected methods indicated that the teachers were true to themselves. All stood firmly by their personal and professional beliefs about the nature and requirements of visual arts education. While admitting they held no theoretical knowledge of multicultural pedagogies each teacher believed their art programs and pedagogical practices took students into account.

Findings from the research showed that a continued emphasis in curriculum policy on art forms in relation to the bicultural partnership between Maori and European-Pakeha, the alignment of cultural diversity with 'ethnicity', and a privileging of the values and art forms of the Western aesthetic and the dominant European culture, were major influences on pedagogy. These findings were reflected in the students' art works. As visible outcomes of the learning and teaching encounter, they suggest that a critical examination of visual arts education in this country is necessary. In most cases, the art works produced did not correlate with the pursuit and

achievement of a visual arts education which takes sufficient account of the individual differences within the cultures of students in New Zealand secondary schools. Nor did they suggest student experiences of 'other' cultures beyond their own. While some art works indicated that students were able to express their ethnicity, this was manifested primarily through symbolic representation which drew upon cultural stereotypes associated with particular ethnic groups. There was little evidence in the art works of opportunities to study the forms of visual culture that resonate with the lives of young people in a contemporary multicultural society and global world. It is also apparent in the art works that the potent influences of the teachers' Europeanised artistic and cultural inheritances over-powered their understandings of diversity and difference. In combination, these factors produced a form of visual arts education whose curriculum policy, content, and pedagogical practices remained rooted in a predominantly monocultural ethos.

Any change would require a shift from pluralist multiculturalism, via the medium of modernist progressivist pedagogy, to critical (postmodern) pedagogies which specify inclusion and access and which affirm diversity and acknowledge difference as a dynamic conception of culture (McCarthy et al., 2003; Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004). Education, as advocated by such as Giroux (1994) and Bhabba (1995) and others, is seen as a vital agency for informing people of the realities of ethnic diversity and cultural difference and the necessity for equity of achievement rather than mere equity of opportunity (Grant & Sleeter, 2007). In this context, many art theorists argue that the very visibility of art, as well as its function as a metaphor of culture, can play a significant educational role in this respect. A shift from the prevailing dominance of élitist fine arts, the modernist aesthetic, and the Western art canon to include the material and visual culture of the everyday world in which students live would be needed. This does not imply tacit acceptance of all aspects of the forms of what is being called 'art' in contemporary society. Rather, it focuses upon an equivalent critical enquiry that has traditionally been evident in the world of 'fine arts'.

The question remains as to how, and in what degree, an enhanced understanding of the theoretical arguments would improve a visual arts

education which is truly responsive to the ethnic diversity and cultural differences of students today. The provision of such understanding would require recognition in both the pre-service and the continuing education of art teachers. It would require visual arts teachers to gain understanding of the importance of a transformative pedagogy and curriculum that challenges the hegemonic knowledge that perpetuates the power of the dominant culture and which operates in the socio-political context of students' lives. In these terms visual arts education would be expected to address issues regarding group differences and how power relations function to structure racial and ethnic identities. It would challenge teachers to make a space for different student voices. Given that art teachers comply with national curriculum, policy makers in New Zealand have an obligation to design curricula and pedagogies that align with their stated vision of "valuing all cultures for the contributions they bring" (MoE, 2007, p. 8).

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Jill Smith is Principal Lecturer in the School of Arts, Languages and Literacies at The University of Auckland-Faculty of Education, New Zealand. Her teaching and research focus upon the relationship between bicultural (Maori/European) policy and visual arts education practice, issues of culture, diversity and difference in pedagogical practices, and the connection (A/R/T) between art practice, teaching and research. Her current research is on the experiences New Zealand of students of Asian ethnicity in differing visual arts education contexts in. In 2002, Jill was awarded a Tertiary Teaching Excellence award by the New Zealand Government.

E-mail: j.smith@auckland.ac.nz
Telephone: (0064-9) 6238899 ext 48713
Postal Address: The University of Auckland-Faculty of Education, Private Bag 92601, Symonds Street, Auckland 1150, New Zealand