

# Teaching colonisation to Pakeha without provoking backlash

**Breaking through guilt, doubt and resistance.**

**ME . . .**

We will . . .

\* explore underpinnings of white fragility in the adult classroom, among Pākehā when facing the realities of colonisation in Aotearoa and the racist society and governance structures this process has bequeathed modern New Zealand; both within the apparatus of state and in less formalized social strata

We will . . .

\* cover strategies successfully used by the author, as tauwiwi, and a colleague who is tangata whenua, when we collaborated to teach a class on the subject as Ti Tiriti partners

\* report on interviews with students who evidence their learning and growth in the classroom, applied beyond the classroom as well

# Presenting . . .

\* findings that are applicable to a range of educational contexts as we attempt to address Aotearoa's past honestly - as a means of creating better futures for Māori, Pākehā and all tauwiwi

# What Pakeha knew . . .

- \* 'Very little'
- \* 'Nothing'
- \* 'Nothing pre-colonisation . . . Maori signed TOW'
- \* 'Nothing about the Maori wars'
- \* 'Remember learning legends of Maui in Primary School'
- \* 'Learned my history from Braveheart'
- \* 'Didn't understand what all the fuss was about . . . I'm not Maori so what's it got to do with me?'

# Teaching . . .

- *Teach over 2 days*
- *Co-teach as Tiriti partners*
- *Identify/position ourselves*

# Positioning ourselves . . .

Where we are from . . .

- \* Own privilege
  - complexities
- \* Discuss what “white privilege is” and why its hard to see
- \* Explain stories of Pakeha tupuna in Aotearoa
  - complexities



# Teaching colonisation . . .

- Day 1 . . . focus on broader historical context
- Hx of Human interactions/conflict/causes
  - Effects of changes in technology
- Hx of conquest/colonisation
  - Holy land
  - Britain

# Teaching colonisation . . .

- Day 1 . . . . Students then break into groups to research a country that has been colonised in modern times and report back to class
- USA, Australia, Samoa, Hawaii, Philippines, India, Ireland, Scotland, South Africa, New Zealand, Canada
  - Who colonised
  - What means were used
  - What inequalities exist for the indigenous peoples

# Day 1 . . . Conclusion

- *Speak to common impacts*
  - for colonised peoples
  - and colonising peoples
  - for resource control
- *Ongoing*
  - neo colonialism

# Teaching colonisation . . .

- Day 2 . . . European technology advancement
  - with weaponry
  - establishment of nation states
  - growing desire for wealth – ‘age of exploration’
- Arrival of Europeans in Aotearoa
  - who came
  - what they brought (eg: Kororakea)
  - what this changed

# Teaching colonisation . . .

- Day 2 . . . Declaration of independence
  - why
  - how
  - whom
- Treaty of Waitangi
  - why
  - how
  - whom

# Teaching colonisation . . .

Day 2 . . . Laws that undermine the spirit of the  
'Treaty of Waitangi'

- Students then break into groups to research a NZ law that breached the 3 principles, and then report back to class

# Day 2 . . . Conclusion

- *Speak to ongoing impacts*
  - for colonised peoples
  - and colonising peoples
  - for resource control
- *Ongoing*
  - 'drive to honour the treaty'
  - identifying our unique opportunity

# What Pakeha felt . . .

- \* 'Shocked' . . . 'Shame at the injustices'
- \* 'Ashamed . . . my history'
- \* 'Felt it was my fault'
- \* 'Embarrassed . . . my grandparents did this'
- \* 'Blamed' . . . 'Victimised' . . . 'Felt bashed at times'
- \* 'Unsafe' . . . 'Like anything I said would be wrong'
- \* 'Defensive . . . all this focus on the negative'



# Responses . . . what worked?

- 'Having 2 lecturers' – 'having treaty partners teaching'
- 'Lecturer's sharing'
  - \* 'Your I statements helped'
  - \* 'I don't feel ashamed'
  - \* 'Helped me understand how privileged I am'
  - \* 'Feel enlightened about our history'
  - \* 'Made it feel safe . . . only learn if we feel safe'
  - \* 'Still feel I can't win . . . daren't say what I think'

# Responses . . . what worked?

- 'Larger context . . .'
- \* 'Made it easier'
- \* 'Took away the defensive feeling'
- \* 'I felt my shoulders relax... a little bit'
- \* 'Felt it helped remove the blame'
- \* 'Made it feel safer'
- \* 'So helpful'

# Responses . . . what now?

- \* 'Want to know more . . . want to share'
- \* 'Want to be more culturally aware'
- \* 'Feel I've been given an opportunity'
- \* 'Realise it's important to understand our history'
- \* 'Need to take ownership of my part in the transition'
- \* 'Want a bigger understanding'
- \* 'One of the most valuable parts of the course'

Many thanks to my Arnia Tamihana-Sumich  
(My Tiriti partner in crime)

“Teaching *colonisation to Pakeha* without  
*provoking backlash . . .*”