LEADERSHIP THROUGH LEARNING

Normalising Māori and Pacific leadership and learning success in a tertiary environment

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Abstract

Leadership Through Learning is a 12-week (i.e., one-semester) programme for Māori and Pacific tertiary students run by Te Fale Pouāwhina, a Māori and Pacific student learning service at the University of Auckland in Aotearoa New Zealand. The programme is designed to help students lead, empower and transform through normalising their leadership and learning success. As a strategy, normalising success counters negative stereotypes, micro-aggressions, and the everyday colonialism and racism these students encounter. By normalising success, positive stereotypes are created that challenge the deficit framing faced by Māori and Pacific students. This article describes research exploring the Leadership Through Learning programme, its focus on "students as leaders", the relationships that develop between students on the programme as they engage with the curriculum, and the impact of innovative teaching and learning praxis. Kaupapa Māori and Pacific research methodologies, particularly talanoa, are employed to highlight the student leaders' voices, aspirations and growth as leaders. Student leaders' engagements and relationships strengthen their identity and self-efficacy, and provide opportunities that have created positive stereotypes, especially in the programme's three critical areas: leadership, empowerment and transformation.

Introduction

How do Māori and Pacific students learn to lead, empower and transform in a tertiary setting, when their aspirations are rarely normalised, and they experience negative stereotypes, micro-aggressions, and everyday colonialism and racism? One way is through Leadership Through Learning, a transformational programme run by Te Fale Pouāwhina, a Māori and Pacific student learning service at the University of Auckland in Aotearoa New Zealand. The programme takes small cohorts (10–12 students) on a transformative journey to build self-efficacy, promote their unique identity, and reinforce positive stereotypes. During one 12-week semester, academic literacy skills, leadership, personal growth and professional development provide a curriculum backdrop for students to understand their academic context. This context includes the self in relationship with the whānau/aiga, broader communities, the institute and tertiary study, and explores why all of this matters to them. Normalising Māori and Pacific leadership and learning success is at the heart of Leadership Through Learning. The programme

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provides broad and unique strategies for Māori and Pacific success and is designed to empower and transform Māori and Pacific "students as leaders". Purposefully emphasising the "students as leaders" concept helps to foreground Indigenous knowledges and leadership. Furthermore, this prominence creates a counternarrative to the usual deficit framing of Māori and Pacific sensibilities (Le Grice, 2017). To develop this counternarrative further, I refer to those who participate in the Leadership Through Learning programme as "student leaders" throughout this article.

Significantly, success and a range of performance indicators for Māori and Pacific students in tertiary institutes remain a priority for the Tertiary Education Commission (Chauvel, 2014). However, success is still narrowly defined in degree-level studies, despite influential studies of Māori and Pacific students' success being published a decade ago. Airini et al.'s (2010) report *Success for All: Improving Māori and Pasifika Student Success in Degree-level Studies* made the key point that "success" encompasses many factors not easily measured through quantifiable data. Drawing from these studies and using examples from the Leadership Through Learning programme, this article asserts that Airini et al.'s (2010) findings are still relevant 10 years later. Whilst earlier studies identified a need for a holistic approach to success, I contend that Māori and Pacific student success in the tertiary context must also be normalised.

Secondly, this article argues for developing a countercultural lens and a counternarrative to dominant and hegemonic discourses. It is intended that while on the Leadership Through Learning programme, student leaders learn skills which empower them to better navigate degree-level studies and enjoy greater academic success. As Bamberg (2004) observes, "Countering the dominant and hegemonic narratives is the flip side of being complicit" (p. 351). The alternative for student leaders is to assimilate, leaving their cultural values at the gates of the institute, a point frequently made by the student leaders who participated in this research (see below).

Leadership Through Learning is designed to help participating student leaders understand the degree-level context. The programme's strategies provide them with a decolonising countercultural lens and a counternarrative that enables them to critique their postcolonial study environment at university. Learning countercultural affirmative language helps student leaders explain and frame their experiences. Student leaders learn to explore their context with a critical eye and develop analysis tools to help navigate their academic journeys more successfully.

Over the five years Leadership Through Learning has been running, each cohort of student leaders has demonstrated a strengthening of self-efficacy and promoted a strong cultural identity within the university and study context. In this way, student leaders learn new academic competencies in addition to the content-specific literacies learned in their courses. Within the programme, these approaches create positive stereotypes and challenge the prevalent and ongoing deficit framing Māori and Pacific students face.

Māori and Pacific student leaders come from cultural traditions where oratory and storytelling is used to pass down knowledge, history and culture. Furthermore, student leaders' knowledge, discussion and storytelling are associated with mana (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Hau'ofa, 1993) and make an important contribution to how they learn and grow. Patterson (2012), a Pacific scholar, argues that when students' voices are emphasised, their "knowledge and lived experience is valued and legitimized" (p. 3). Having witnessed these changes in the student leaders on the Leadership Through Learning programme, I sought to explore the following research question:

> What teaching and learning innovations in the Leadership Through Learning programme impacted the student leaders' leadership, empowerment and transformation?

Talanoa research methods were used to garner student leaders' attitudes and experiences of the programme and to explore whether it was beneficial to their studies and leadership development. It was within this context that student leaders discussed the micro-aggressions and everyday colonialism and racism they experienced in the spaces they traversed, and thus the importance of having access to a programme with a countercultural and counternarrative approach.

The opportunity to feature the voices of Leadership Through Learning's students came as a result of the author being awarded a University of Auckland Centre for Learning and Research in Higher Education (CLeaR) fellowship in 2018. The CLeaR fellowship theme that year was "He Vaka Moana: Navigating Māori and Pasifika Student Success". The Leadership Through Learning programme objectives were a good match for the fellowship's theme. Fellows were encouraged to work within a collaborative framework derived from the Tongan saying "pikipiki hama kae vaevae

manava", which describes the practice of binding vaka/waka together on long-distance journeys in order to share ideas, knowledge and resources before they are separated so that they can navigate independently again. Metaphorically, the saying supports the Māori and Pacific methodological approaches taken in this research, such as working with the other fellows' reciprocating ideas, knowledge and resources, which parallels what student leaders do in Leadership Through Learning. It was a pleasurable experience to work collaboratively with Māori, Pacific and Pākehā fellows, navigating independently and lashing our waka together to reclaim, re-view and re-story our journeys and aspirations for better outcomes for Māori and Pacific staff and students.

Theoretical background: Culture, self-efficacy and identity

This article draws largely on two key ideas about normalising Māori and Pacific leadership and learning success. The first is that psychological constructs, such as self-efficacy and other self-concepts (self-esteem, self-confidence, self-mastery), are important factors in the success of Māori and Pacific students. Self-efficacy relates to an individual's belief that he or she is capable of completing a duty (Bandura, 1982), and within Leadership Through Learning it relates to student leaders' capability to lead, empower and transform. Strengthening self-concepts through acknowledging a Māori and/or Pacific identity is important because it connects student leaders and facilitators through genealogy, land/islands and the Pacific Ocean. Bishop (2003) argues that "we need to create contexts where to be Māori is to be normal; where Māori cultural identities are valued, valid and legitimate . . . [and] Māori language, knowledge, culture and values are normal" (p. 226). These are important factors that guide classroom exchanges (Bishop, 2003); indeed, they are analogous to Māori and Pacific cultural identities, languages, knowledges, cultures and values. Having these factors embedded in Leadership Through Learning helps normalise success.

Studies in Aotearoa have brought together culture, self-efficacy and identity, which helps to explain why these concepts are significant factors in Leadership Through Learning. Webber (2012) has conducted important racial-ethnic identity work about Māori and Pacific school students in collaboration with McKinley and Hattie (Webber et al., 2013). Although their age groups are different, my findings from student leaders at degree-level are similar. For instance, Webber (2012) concludes that for Māori adolescents having a positive racial-ethnic identity is important "because when they develop healthy, positive and strong racial-ethnic identities they are able to repel negative stereotypes and accommodate other positive attributes, such as academic achievement, into their Māori identity" (p. 26). Houkamau and Sibley (2011), meanwhile, found a positive correlation "between ethnic identity and various psychological constructs including self-esteem, self-efficacy, personal mastery and an internal locus of control" (p. 380). In alignment with this finding, when student leaders in the Leadership Through Learning programme strengthened their ethnic and cultural identity, self-efficacy and positive self-concepts, they started to normalise their success. In this way, wider transformation occurred, and their ability to provide a countercultural approach and counternarrative to everyday colonialism and racism, micro-aggressions and negative stereotyping was strengthened.

The second idea about normalising Māori and Pacific leadership and learning success that this article draws on is the concept of a strengths-based approach. Deficit-based approaches put the responsibility of low achievement on the students, a perspective that is indirectly maintained through "acceptance of the assumptions held of Pasifika [and Māori] students by the education system", according to Nakhid (2003, p. 299). Bertrand Jones et al. (2016) recommend a strength-based or assets approach in leadership programmes and classrooms. These authors, building on the work of Ladson-Billings (2014), trialled the strength-based approach at an American university and "transformed teacher education by calling on teachers to adopt an assets approach to teaching culturally diverse students" (Bertrand Jones et al., 2016, p. 10). The strength-based approach adopted in the Leadership Through Learning programme has transformed the experience of Māori and Pacific student leaders and normalised their leadership and learning success.

Agency, self-efficacy, and Māori and Pacific students

Personal agency and self-efficacy are important components in Māori and Pacific students' leadership and learning success. Social-cognitive theorist Bandura (2000) asserts that human agency encompasses collective agency. Bandura (2000, 2006) observes that self-efficacy is fundamental to human agency and notes that it is an intentional activity. Self-efficacy is not always reliant on the individual producing experiences or shaping events.

A study of Pacific tertiary-level students found high self-efficacy and agency amongst the group because success was considered a collective pursuit (Marat et al., 2009). Thus, responsibility was taken on personally by the Pacific student(s) for and with the extended family, as a simultaneous agentic force in their success. Self-determination is a Māori collective aspiration (Bishop, 1996). Additionally, "Māori cultural aspirations, preferences and practices will facilitate agency (self-determination)" (Bishop & Glynn, 1999, p. 177). For Māori and Pacific students, collective agency is a familiar cultural notion, where shared capacities and knowledge achieve success for, by and with the collective.

Māori and Pacific students having either more or less self-efficacy is influenced by a host of factors. For instance, the benefits of reclaiming culture, values and language are well documented locally in Aotearoa (see Bishop & Glynn, 1999; G. H. Smith, 1997; R. Walker, 1990). Houkamau and Sibley (2011) draw from international literature sources to argue that viewing one's Indigenous culture positively is good for one's self-concept and wellbeing. Bandura (1982) sees self-efficacy from a psychological perspective, where it pertains to one's insight, innate ability, behaviour, mindset and emotional capability to manage challenging circumstances and to implement essential actions that deal with those circumstances. Stajkovic and Luthans (1998), meanwhile, see self-efficacy as relevant to performance and the ability to face challenges for a sustained period. Therefore, self-efficacy is necessary for Māori and Pacific students' success. Self-efficacy leads to better and longer-term maintenance of performance to help student leaders achieve their degree goals.

Success for all: Defining and facilitating Māori and Pacific success

The title of Arini et al.'s (2010) report, *Success for All*, stimulated my imagination because it encompasses the idea that what is good for Māori and Pacific students' success has wide-ranging benefits. Positive exchanges between Māori students and teachers who developed a "culturally responsive pedagogy of relations" (Bishop et al., 2009, p. 736) impacted their achievement. Building on this, Airini et al. (2010) found success was linked with "notions of potential, effort, and achievement over time" (p. 4). They described this as holistic progress, with students accomplishing important individual goals that were linked to their whānau and communities. Furthermore, students viewed the teachers that helped them achieve a pass grade

or higher as the most valuable to their educational journeys. Whilst this is the case, institutes that tend to have narrow success markers, mostly in the form of pass rates, will perhaps inhibit the aspirations of Māori and Pacific students, and therefore minimise the enjoyment of the broader aspects of their definition of success.

In terms of what might facilitate success, the student leaders in the Leadership Through Learning programme enjoyed being part of a collective and engaging in supportive relationships. Curtis et al. (2012) argue that feeling comfortable in the university environment is an important factor in Māori and Pacific students' success, as is supporting their academic and pastoral care. Providing culturally specific practices and content in the classroom, and promoting positive relationships between learners, their peers and the staff (Airini et al., 2010; Bishop, 1991; Bishop et al., 2009; Curtis et al., 2012) correlate with Māori and Pacific students' success. These activities move the learner from the position of an outsider when they arrive to that of an insider, where they find belongingness and flourish (Airini et al., 2010). For Māori and Pacific student leaders in the programme, fostering relational trust helps with their adaption to the university environment and bridges the gap between the institute and the students.

Factors that influence and challenge success

Leadership Through Learning student leaders believed forms of colonialism, racism and micro-aggression were major challenges to their success. Essed's (1991) work on racism towards ethnic minority groups in contemporary society found that racist acts were pervasive yet subtle, and provided a persistent backdrop for people of colour from the ethnic groups. Essed (1991) coined the phrase "everyday racism" to acknowledge the often unconscious acts that are not intended to be offensive. Based on the same ideas, and in recognition of Māori students' historical and continued connections with colonisation, a similar term, "everyday colonialism", was coined by Mayeda et al. (2014, p. 174). These scholars differentiated Pacific students' experiences of colonisation from those of Māori students. They argued that Pacific students' experiences were more in line with everyday racism and fine tuned the phrase into "everyday colonialism and racism".

Micro-aggressions, on the other hand, have a similar underpinning to everyday colonialism and racism. Micro-aggressions have been defined as "subtle verbal and non-verbal insults directed

toward non-White students, often done automatically or unconsciously" (Solorzano et al., 2002, p. 17). According to a comparative study looking at the United States and Aotearoa, white privilege brings "social advantages, benefits, and courtesies afforded to members of the dominant culture in every society" (Santamaria et al., 2014, p. 6). The authors refer to research by L. T. Smith (2012) and Delgado and Stefancic (2011) evaluating white privilege in Aotearoa, where Pākehā educators failed to recognise the difference between their Māori and Pacific students. Accordingly, this leads to forms of acting out both conscious and unconscious micro-aggressive, discriminatory and prejudice behaviours (Santamaria et al., 2014). Bishop et al. (2009) have argued that in order "to serve the interests of a mono-cultural elite", the education system has been dominated by Eurocentric agendas and deficit theorising that must be challenged with "agentic positioning promoted by teachers" (p. 738).

On the other hand, attributing low achievement to student deficits and student-blaming rhetoric denies the existence of structural racism and oppositional cultural systems. Curtis et al. (2012) note that structural power lies with the institute and argue for "the development of interventions aimed at changing the institution (rather than the learner) . . . to produce meaningful improvements for Māori and Pasifika student success" (p. 599). One of the barriers to leadership and learning success is when students do not feel comfortable with or know how to navigate the university system. Leadership Through Learning provides a platform for informal sharing of information between facilitators and students to bridge knowledge gaps.

Methodology

The best fit for an exploration of normalising Māori and Pacific leadership and learning success was found to be a dual approach: Kaupapa Māori (G. H. Smith, 1997; L. T. Smith, 1999) and Pacific research methodologies (Health Research Council of New Zealand, 2004). Kaupapa Māori is an established methodology and theory drawing from Māori principles to advance Māori aspirations (Bishop, 1996; Pihama et al., 2002; G. H. Smith, 1997; S. Walker et al., 2006). Bishop (1996) fought to have Kaupapa Māori research recognised in the academy and challenged the mainstream to increase power sharing and self-determination. Utilising cultural values and practices from both Māori and Pacific perspectives, Airini et al. (2010) took the approach of including Māori and Pacific

input at every stage of the research. Adopting this approach and following the 2018 CLeaR fellowship theme of He Vaka Moana, the fellows provided each other with input throughout the various stages.

Pacific research acknowledges and privileges Pacific peoples' knowledge, values and principles. Talanoa is a Pacific research methodology that has found wide acceptance with researchers across Pacific nations (Faʻavae et al., 2016; Farrelly & Nabobo-Baba, 2014; Halapua, 2013; Prescott, 2008; Suaalii-Sauni & Fulu-Aiolupotea, 2014; Vaioleti, 2016). Aspects that bring Kaupapa Māori and talanoa methodologies together are mana, tapu and noa (Tecun et al., 2018). These are important underpinning principles for this research project and the Leadership Through Learning programme itself. For instance, respecting the research participants' time and value acknowledges their mana and aspirations for self-determination. Furthermore, starting talanoa with karakia and whanaungatanga builds relationships and acknowledges tapu. The tapu is made noa with the provision of food and hospitality. Having two methodological lenses recognised that the Leadership Through Learning student leaders are Māori and/or Pacific.

I am a Kaupapa Māori researcher, and so to ensure Pacific representation I employed Rachel Cocker-Hopkins, who is of Tongan and Native American descent, as my research assistant. She brought the expertise of an Indigenous doctoral researcher with experience using talanoa. Talanoa provides "a cultural synthesis of the information, stories, emotions and theorising" (Vaioleti, 2016, p. 21), and is "a co-production of knowledge through relationally mindful critical dialogue" (Tecun et al., 2018, p. 157) and building relationships (Faʻavae et al., 2016). For the interviews and focus group, Rachel was given the research questions as a guide. She was also aware of the project aims and objectives, and therefore was able to assess how to best talanoa with the participants for the co-production of knowledge.

Utilising Kaupapa Māori transformative praxis and talanoa methods, this study recruited eight student leaders enrolled in semester one of 2018 and four alumni student leaders from various Leadership Through Learning cohorts. Five student leaders took part in a focus group, with one student leader also participating in a one-on-one talanoa. All together eight (four alumni and four enrolled) student leaders had one-on-one talanoa. Utilised as part of the Leadership Through Learning programme, talanoa provided a familiar

way to gather data from the student leaders as research participants and enabled them to delve deeply into the issues concerning their success. Talanoa helped cross cultural boundaries through story sharing, empowerment and empathetic communication.

Findings and discussion

This section presents the findings from the talanoa and discusses the key themes identified by participants relating to countering deficit framing, negative stereotypes and micro-aggressions. The counternarratives work to normalise Māori and Pacific student leaders' success and produce a form of positive stereotyping. What Māori and Pacific student leaders say to, and about, each other is powerful and relevant for understanding what is meant by normalising leadership and learning success. The Leadership Through Learning programme also encourages peer support and accountability, which in practice normalises success for student leaders. This section considers the student voice, their participation and growth in the programme, and how those aspects shape normalising success to provide a countercultural perspective on degree-level studies.

Normalising Māori and Pacific success for some of the student leaders started in the Leadership Through Learning programme. Student leaders from stage one through to doctoral candidates have joined the programme, and sometimes it is the first time that their value is acknowledged. As one student leader expressed, "Yeah, it's about you realising your potential and knowing that you do have a lot to offer." This awareness helped the student leaders to recognise and value their worth, which in turn developed their self-efficacy. For instance, from the first day of the programme, they are called leaders, and they eventually grow into the role by the end of the semester. One of the leaders exclaimed: "You don't get told you're a leader when you go to some random class. You don't go to Sociology 100 and they're like, 'You're awesome, you're a leader!'"

Changing negative self-talk is one of the objectives many of the student leaders choose to address during the programme. One student leader suggested that negative self-talk is sometimes generated in the social environment and around the university. Coming to the programme helped her recognise this:

> There is a lack of prior knowledge and understanding of Māori and Pacific things at university. Like you don't have a compulsory Te Ao Māori 130 paper where you learn about what Indigenous people have gone through in New Zealand and the Pacific. And so there's still a lot of racism. . . . It's an unhealthy environment for Māori and Pacific to be in. You're constantly fighting or working against a system that's working against you. It's hard!

The programme helps student leaders to critique and evaluate their struggles, and to transform them into successes. One student leader commented, "It has made me more culturally aware and more culturally sensitive as a person. Because I think what a lot of people perceive our people to be, is really negative. Like more negative than positive." Being in the Leadership Through Learning programme has helped some student leaders recognise that the negative perspectives and stereotypes people hold do not accurately represent them or their peers in the programme.

A seminal study on negative stereotypes found some fundamental differences about the way Pākehā New Zealanders, Māori and Pacific people are stereotyped. For instance, Sibley et al. (2011) found that Pākehā are stereotyped as highly warm (in an approachable way) and highly competent. The authors also found that Pacific people were also stereotyped as highly warm but low in competence, and that Māori were stereotyped as low to medium in both areas. They conclude that "socio-structural characteristics of ethnic group relations (competition and status) foster fundamentally different forms of legitimizing ideology, prejudice and discriminatory behaviour toward different ethnic groups in the New Zealand context" (Sibley et al., 2011, p. 25). Therefore, negative stereotypes have implications for how Māori and Pacific students are viewed and treated on campus, and how they see themselves.

Pākehā hegemony is a risk for Māori and Pacific students in a large institution because it subsumes them under the dominant group's norms and ideas. Hohepa (2000) recognises the dangers of hegemony, and Hoskins (2010) notes that hegemony is the cultivation of common sense that becomes instituted. G. H. Smith (2004) insists that Pākehā hegemony must be undone through decolonising. Pihama et al. (2004) argue that hegemony must be challenged, questioned and critiqued to maintain aspirations of success. Student leaders not understanding their own context risks the penetration of negative beliefs into their psyche.

One student leader in the talanoa touched on negative beliefs and stereotypes about his Pacific people, before discussing how Leadership Through Learning had changed his outlook:

In my experience, not to stereotype, but I haven't met many [ambitious friends]. That's just me maybe; I choose the wrong friends. Some that are not really succeeding. Like they don't look long-term. But a lot of people here have shared stuff like their ambitions and big goals. So being around that, and people that have experienced lots in life, kind of makes you open up.

He started to feel unsure of which group he belonged to: Was he more like his friends or like the other student leaders? This example demonstrates that student leaders have influence over each other and can build self-efficacy in the programme, in a reciprocal manner. When Māori and Pacific student leaders see others like themselves achieving, it helps motivate them to do the same.

One student leader reflected on a stereotype about Māori and Pacific students not going to classes, and insisted it was because they did not feel comfortable or supported like they do in Leadership Through Learning. She examined the difference in her desire to show up to the programme:

> You're not just another number, not just another brown face that doesn't go to class because you felt uncomfortable. But it's a space where you do feel comfortable, and you really do want to be there. It's just really positive and everyone's supporting each other. And that's leadership, yeah!

Another student leader critiqued the negative perceptions that people outside of the programme had about him and other Māori and Pacific students. He felt pressure to succumb to the negative stereotypes in his actions but rejected the idea because other student leaders in Leadership Through Learning did not reflect those stereotypes. He was able to voice these contradictions to the group:

> I feel like I'm being myself more than I was before. Yeah, that's a big thing for me personally, that kind of "you don't care" attitude. I feel like I was suppressing it. You know, like you've got to act a certain way. But for me, I feel like that's something I'm going to carry; embracing individual uniqueness.

Another Pacific student leader considered the influence of the wider university's culture on the perception she held of herself culturally. After being in the programme, she concluded that having to leave cultural values at home was not the way she would succeed:

When we were in the programme it would challenge my ideas of like how much do I know? I was raised with values and so looking back on those values and having to reassess where I'd put them and how I'd pushed them aside, and then having to implant them back into my life was a big impact for me!

Over time this student and others developed a countercultural lens and narrative. She started to speak up in her lectures rather than take the content of her lectures at face value and as fact. She was able to reflect on her grandparents' teachings and ponder a cultural perspective not being taught in the lecture theatres. It made her think about how much of what she was learning was knowledge based and how much of it was based on unconscious bias. She questioned how much she adopted from a mainstream perspective about who she was culturally. Reclaiming her Pacific cultural values and consciously living them in the university space set this student on a pathway of building a strong scholarly trajectory based on her cultural identity. Being able to reflect on her upbringing and the respect she held for her grandparents helped this student leader to reconnect with her cultural roots. She was able to take the influence of those cultural values on her life and reframe herself anew. She realised she did not have to leave important parts of herself behind at the university gates. The impact caused her to make a 180-degree turn and develop a desire to serve her community:

> From the past to the present, and I guess to the future as well, because even career-wise I would have never considered anything in a Pacific sort of field. I wouldn't have considered it. I don't know if I will end up in that sort of career or anything, but it wasn't one I would consider before.

Asserting agency over one's cultural identity for both individual and collective success is a positive outcome of the programme. It develops from being with other proud Māori and Pacific people in the programme. One student leader was able to shed the stereotypes and see herself as part of a collective of like-minded individuals, comfortable with their cultural identity:

> For me, it is tapping into working with Māori and Pacific people and working in a way that benefits them, but also hopefully bringing that into the Western, mainstream world. So, working collectively rather than individually is where I'm at. What I see is that people can thrive when they work together, and that is how collective societies work.

Experiencing the value of working collectively in the programme and reclaiming the value of a collective identity had pushed this student and others in Leadership Through Learning to reclaim their cultural identity. In the degree-level setting reclaiming cultural identity as a notion should not be a conscious decision that Māori and Pacific students need to make because it is a right and a responsibility for their institute to support. When cultural identity is strong, self-efficacy improves.

Developing self-efficacy can be challenging when Māori and Pacific students start degree-level study. Success is a factor that helps improve self-efficacy while perceived failure lowers it (Bandura, 1982, 1997; Bandura et al., 1980). When one alumni student came to the programme, he had a strong critique of the university. He understood conceptually about structural racism and colonising agendas yet did not understand it at a personal level. He noted how negative stereotypes had pushed him towards an unhealthy habit of perfectionism. The toll of his perceived identity was heavy, but Leadership Through Learning helped empower him:

> It got rid of perfection, and it shifted my thinking to think more proactively and got me to acknowledge that a) I'm not a perfect person, b) I will always probably be carrying something, emotionally, or mentally, or spiritually or physically. But it's like I now feel that I shouldn't beat myself up about it.

He developed self-efficacy through learning more about himself, which changed his outlook and career pathway:

> You do end up becoming more kind to yourself (in the present tense). And in that manner—I think that it does make your future look brighter by about 20 to 50 per cent—which means so much; especially in this place!

Quite often student leaders strengthened self-efficacy because of the relationships and trust they developed in the programme. A praxis that creates power sharing and relationship building in the classroom helps students to participate actively (Bishop, 2003) and therefore engage at a deeper level with each other. Māori and Pacific student leaders identify with this approach as it reflects cultural pedagogies like ako and tuakana–teina, which are practised in the programme. One student leader recalled:

> What makes it different is the groups are a lot smaller and you're surrounded by people who are similar to you. Just seeing the same people helped me keep going with the programme and developing my journey alongside my peers, which was really inspiring.

Leadership Through Learning is a programme that by definition is countercultural for Māori and Pacific student leaders, and is an attempt to remedy a history of inequities. One student leader, for example, said that some people think these kinds of programmes are "unfair" because "they lack the understanding of colonisation, of inequities in Aotearoa". These kinds of statements constitute everyday colonialism and racism. This student leader and many others over the course of the programme shared similar stories about the burden of everyday colonialism and racism, microaggressions and negative stereotyping. Carrying these burdens through degree-level study has made them question their place in the university, their ability to succeed, and their ability to empower, lead and transform.

Conclusion

This article has discussed normalising Māori and Pacific leadership and learning success. The Leadership Through Learning programme has been used to illustrate examples of success and to showcase knowledge about some of the challenges Māori and Pacific students face in degree-level study. These challenges affect their identity, studies and ability to succeed. Student leaders' voices and their understandings of those experiences have been highlighted to stimulate reflection, especially for those working with or intending to work with Māori and Pacific degree-level students. These students look to staff in academic, frontline, administrative and leadership roles to create opportunities to engage with them on an authentic level and not through a lens of stereotypes. It is in these relationships, the worthwhile exchanges created with staff members and other students, that stereotypes can be broken down.

Normalising leadership and learning success for Māori and Pacific "students as leaders" changes the students and everyone around them. Positive stereotyping through actively reframing negative beliefs held and assumptions made about Māori and Pacific students is one way to help them lead, empower and transform. In turn, this strengthens their self-efficacy and identifies them as successful leaders and learners in their own families and communities. I suggest educators working at degree

level think about ways in which they can create positive stereotypes for Māori and Pacific students and negate diminishing ones. A countercultural and counternarrative approach not only reduces negative stereotypes and micro-aggressions for Māori and Pacific students; it sets the scene for other students to follow an alternative "normal"— one without everyday colonialism and racism.

Teaching and learning environments vary across institutions, faculties and departments, and this article has focused on the ways educators try to normalise Māori and Pacific students' leadership and learning success at the University of Auckland. Māori and Pacific students have graduated with degrees despite the challenges of an uneven playing field. Recognising that this unevenness persists, as this study has demonstrated, raises the question: What more can *you* do to normalise and empower Māori and Pacific students' leadership and learning success?

Acknowledgements

Glossary

Māori

ako	to teach and to learn
Aotearoa	New Zealand
aroha	kindness, affection, love, compassion
karakia	prayers
Kaupapa Māori	research methodology based within a Māori worldview
mana	power and authority
Māori	Indigenous people of Aotearoa
noa	non-sacred
Pākehā	New Zealanders of European descent
tapu	sacred
Te Ao Māori	the Māori world
tuakana–teina	older sibling–younger sibling, mentor–mentee relationship
waka	ocean-voyaging canoes
whānau	extended family
whanaungatanga	relationship building

Tongan

aiga	extended family
talanoa	discussion, conversation; research methodology based within a Pacific worldview
vaka	ocean-voyaging canoes

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