Indigenisation of Social Work Education and Practice – Initiative of TWOA

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Te Wānanga o Aotearoa

Social work education and practice has primarily been dominated by Western theories and models rendering privilege to these bodies of knowledge. There has been a growing realisation and demand by indigenous people to use their own values and principles in social work practice and education. Te Wānanga o Aotearoa (TWoA), an indigenous Māori tertiary organisation and New Zealand’s biggest Social Work training establishment, responded to this call. In 2005, TWoA introduced a Social Work degree that incorporated both Māori and other indigenous bodies of knowledge emphasising holistic wellbeing along with the mainstream bodies of knowledge. This degree was revised in 2015 to broaden the scope of indigenous and non-indigenous frameworks. This innovative and bold initiative of TWOA accords equal privilege to indigenous knowledge and to western theories and frameworks. This ‘bicultural’ degree argues that indigenous models and approaches to social work education and practice are not in competition or antithesis to western frameworks but are complimentary to each other.

The presentation provides findings of reflections of four kaiako (lecturers) teaching practices and how they are using their indigenous worldviews and knowledge to contextualise the contents of this Bachelor of Bicultural Social Work (BBSW) programme of TWoA. In particular, the presentation focuses on a) important indigenous frameworks and theories; b) Ngā Takepū, Māori applied principles; c) indigenous rangahau (research methodology); and, d) the application of ‘bricolage’ or rigorous multi-methods that are culturally responsive. The four reflections will be positioned within the framework of Kaupapa Māori methodology with special emphasis on Kaupapa Wānanga and Kaupapa Rangahau framework of BBSW. The data of reflections have been recorded in personal journals, observational journals, and the written and oral feedback from tauira (students).

The rangahau (indigenous research) being presented in this kauhau (presentation) contributes to the advancement of indigenisation of social work curriculum in a number of ways. Firstly the indigenous spiritual model of practice ‘tawaf’ (circumambulation) will provide a perspective on how Islamic framework can be used for critical reflection to deconstruct or decolonise the mind-set of social workers or whanau and reconstruct them. Secondly, the process of contextualisation to create bicultural contents within the framework of Māori bodies of knowledge will show a way to create bicultural contents to indigenise social work. The application of takepū principles koha (contribution), kaitiakitanga (guardianship) and ahurutanga (safe space) will contribute specific skills around tiaki, pupuri and tuku through the application of hui, kōrero and
wānanga – a pedagogy of BBSW. Lastly the rangahau methodology ‘bricolage’ will provide a way to combine various indigenous and non indigenous perspectives for creating a space of all indigenous knowledge to be contextualised under one umbrella.

Key words:

Biography of presenting author/s

Lina Rudolph
Emi Emi Te Maungā
Te Awaroa Te Awa
Whangaroa Te Moana
Tahawai te Marae
Nga Puhi Tonu
Ko wai au Lolina Rudolph.

Lina Rudolph
Lina Rudolph is a kiaako (lecturer) in the programme ‘Bachelor of Bi-cultural Social Work’ at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa. Her research interests focus on who she is and her inner being. She works alongside leaders who are determined and committed in Research. She calls it Rangahau. Rangahau resonates throughout her culture. She breaths it, She sees it within her whanau, hapū and iwi.

Elias Martis
Elias Martis is a Kaiako (Lecturer) of Bachelor of Bicultural Social Work degree at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, Tamaki Makaurau Campus in Auckland. He holds a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree in Social Work and Social Policy from Curtin University, Western Australia and holds Masters degrees in Social Work and Law. He has over 30 years of combined experience in social work, social work education, supervision, and management. He is a member of Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers, Australian and New Zealand Social Work and Welfare Education and Research, and also a Registered Social Worker under New Zealand’s Social Workers Registration Board and holds a current practice certificate.

Selina Akhter
Selina Akhter is a Muslim and was born and raised in Bangladesh which is surrounded mainly by India, the center of mountains of life, the Himalayas. Her mother tongue is Bangla derived from Sanskrit, an old Indian language. She is a kiaako (lecturer) of the programme ‘Bachelor of Bi-cultural Social Work’ at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa. She received my PhD from Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia and taught Social Work overseas for a decade. Selina’s research interests focus on Bi-culturalism, Takepū (Maori principles) and Islamic spiritual principles, autonomy, social responsibility and cross cultural issues.
Norma-Rosales Anderson

Norma Rosales-Anderson is Argentinean living in Aotearoa New Zealand for the last three decades. She has a background in management within the fields of health, education and social work. Presently, Norma is a Senior Lecturer for the Bachelor of Bicultural Social Studies in Te Wānanga o Aotearoa (Māori Tertiary Education Organisation). Her research interest is in navigating contentious spaces between indigenous and neoliberal within tertiary education. Norma’s PhD thesis is a tripartite border-crossing investigation of academic renaissance within tertiary contexts for Māori (Aotearoa), Mapuche (Chile) and Mocoví (Argentina). Norma continues her work on interculturality in collaboration with Maori and South American colleagues.