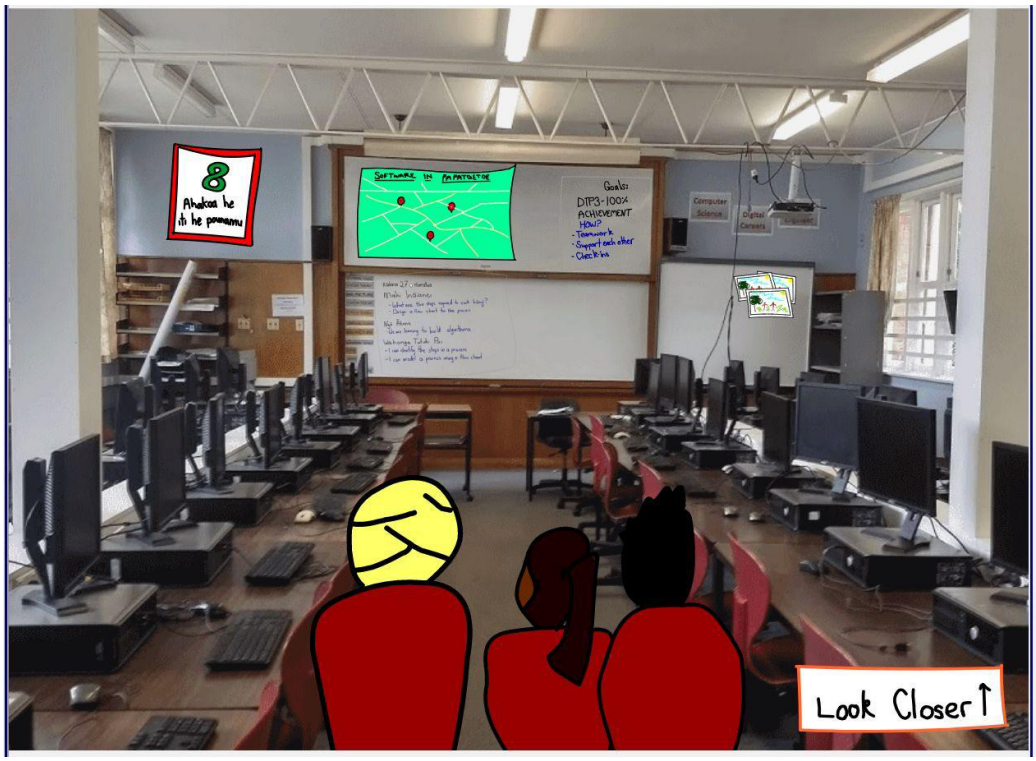
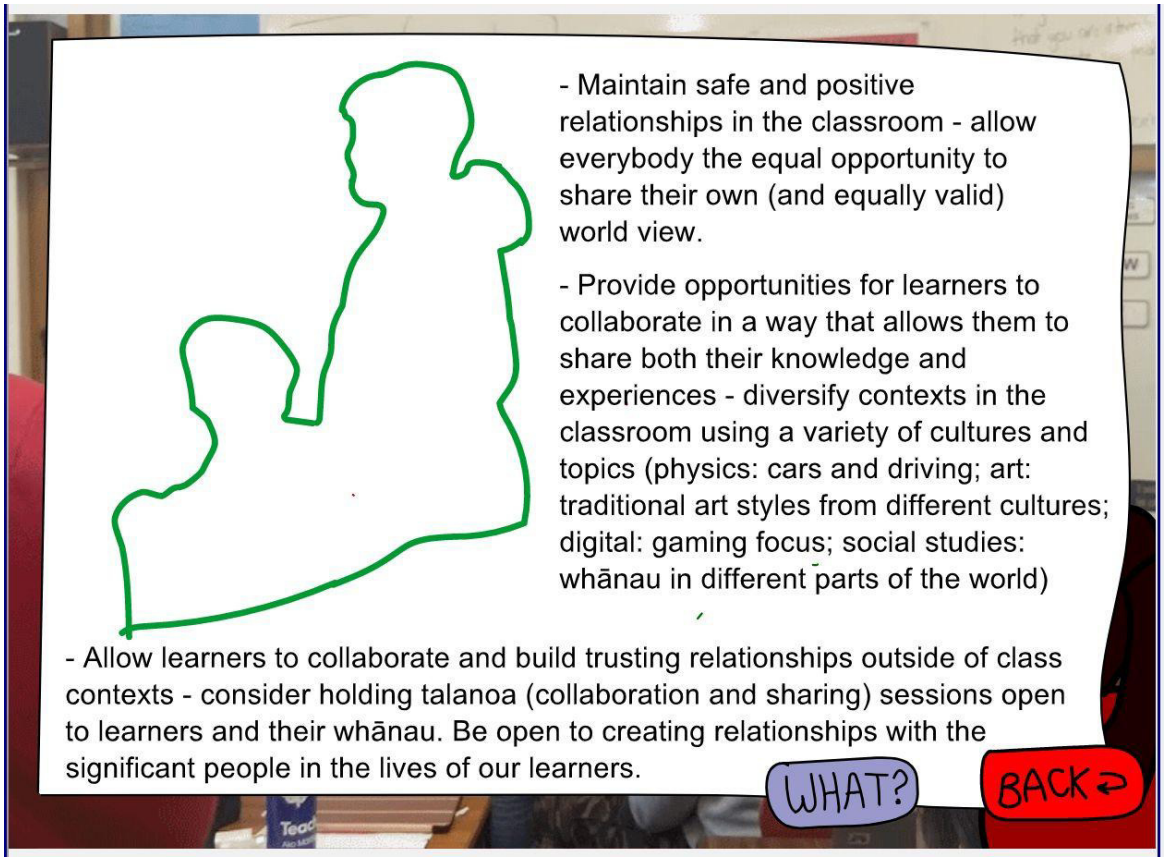


MTEL 8003 4.0 Artefact

MTEL 8003 | 1503729 | Jessica Petersen

Link: http://jesspeterseen.net/projects/CulturallyResponsiveClassroom.html

We, as teachers, are constantly on a journey to improve our practice, and cultural responsiveness is a focus for many of us. Something that I have personally found challenging so far in my teaching journey, is making cultural responsiveness visible in my classroom, and it's an area that I am consistently working on improving. (Would you benefit from additional resources around what cultural responsiveness/"culture counts" looks like in your classroom?)



After analysing the results of my observations over the year, I noticed that my biggest challenge by far is reaching the "Culture Counts" criteria in our school-wide pedagogy reflection tool. The "Culture Counts" section consists of the following goals:

- tikanga and te reo Māori is authentically linked to learning
- culturally responsive learning contexts promote reciprocal learning and value diverse perspectives
- cultural identity is authentically valued and integral to learning
- Classroom environment authentically reflects cultural diversity and is integrated with the learning. (Hamlin, 2018)

I started investigating into the issue: why was I finding it so difficult to integrate cultural responsiveness into the classroom? It's not like I DIDN'T value my learners and their identities. After collaborating with my in-school mentor, head of learning area, and other teachers at my school and in the teach first program, I discovered that the biggest challenge for me was not actually completing these tasks, but completing them in a way that is visible to my learners and others around them

To put it simply, I didn't know what "culturally responsive pedagogy" actually looked like.

Once I discovered that that was my issue, I decided to look into my theory. When asked, 89.7% of Papatoetoe High School teachers stated that they would benefit from additional resources around what cultural responsiveness looks like in the classroom. In addition to that, I received multiple comments from teachers highlighting their own lack of understanding around integrating tikanga and te reo Māori in an authentic way, with a particular focus on their own subject areas (Petersen, 2018).

My next step was to look at possible solutions to the problem - what could I achieve (in a timely fashion) that would most benefit these teachers - and myself - in our journey to culturally responsive pedagogy?

I considered writing an example unit that included Māori contexts, but that wouldn't necessarily help teachers of other subjects. I eventually settled on the below project, "Culturally Responsive Classroom".

I tried to make it as accessible as possible by creating it in HTML5 canvas, but I will struggle to engage teachers, like many at my school, who do not enjoy engaging in a digital way. In contrast though, I will be able to reach a much greater audience than just my school by creating it online.

It is incredibly important to me, as a significant adult in the lives of my learners, that I embody these values and express that I value the diverse perspectives and individuals that I have in my classroom. Everybody deserves to have their culture and identity acknowledged and valued, and through "Culturally Responsive Classroom" I aim to support teachers around the world in their journey to create visibly responsive environments.

REFERENCES

Would you benefit from additional resources around what cultural responsiveness/"culture counts" looks like in your classroom? [E-mail to B. Claxton]. (2018, May 14).

Hamlin, R. (2018, May 7). Papatoetoe High School pedagogy reflection tool 2018 [DOCX]. Auckland: Papatoetoe High School.

Petersen, J. (2018). Making Culture Count [Google form]. Retrieved 1 July, 2018, from https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1H7dWKc56PGJuOCci85_uIPxINmqTOqYvSiOffApKRi8/edit#responses