

Developing critical consciousness

A suggestion for implementing the strategy
'Developing cultural capability' from the
Guide: [Supporting ākonga Māori](#)

Includes:

Taking action

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Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Supporting ākonga Māori](#)

Strategy: [Developing cultural capability](#)

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Date

29 June 2026

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inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/supporting-akonga-maori/developing-critical-consciousness

Taking action

Consider this quote for your own context:

Conscientisation is becoming aware of the part I play in keeping things the same. How I support the status quo, how I perpetrate that. And becoming very conscious of how and why I am doing that and what are the implications of my actions.

... Conscientisation may make me aware but if I'm not going to do anything with that thinking, I'm of very little help to Māori students. Resistance is the "doing" following the disruption to my practice on account of the conscientisation.

Source:

[Poutama Pounamu](#)

<https://poutamapounamu.org.nz/assets/resources/site/Critical-theories-PP.pdf>

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What is critical consciousness?

Critical consciousness involves:

- reflecting critically on the imbalance of power and resources in society
- taking critical action in the pursuit of equity
- disrupting the status quo to address oppression and strengthen equity.

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A personal journey

To teach others, we first need to take our own journey.

I always ask those who tell me they don't have any or many Māori students in their classrooms,

“Who do you think should learn most about white privilege? Your Māori children or your Pākehā children?”

Dr Ann Milne

Source:

[New Zealand Association for the Teaching of English](#)

<https://nzate.org.nz/>

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Decolonising education

Engage in a critically conscious curriculum both for yourself and for your students.



Video hosted on Youtube http://youtu.be/3_ZBvyXFzJI

Closed Captions

Source:

[TeachForAll \(YouTube\)](#)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3_ZBvyXFzJI

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Reflective questions

Critical questioning opens up our thinking. It helps us make the invisible visible, things like power, control, and privilege.

Consider the following questions. Discuss your responses as a team.

Unteach Racism aims to support kaiako, in a staged approach, to identify, confront and dismantle racism in education.

What have I been doing unconsciously that I need to unlearn or that I need to undo, so that I can be sure that I am supporting Māori students to succeed as Māori?

What are the things that I need to do differently?

What can I do in order to disrupt the status quo?

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Useful resources



Lessons from a Recovering Racist | Andrew Judd | TEDxRuakura

Andrew Judd takes us on his personal journey of questioning his long-held beliefs and the attitudes that surround him. Serving on the District Council for New Plymouth, and eventually as Mayor, Andrew was finally put in a position to act as a bridge between the indigenous Māori constituents of his district and the white European majority. But the work he embarked upon had to start with himself and his own attitudes and prejudices.

Publisher: TED Conferences

[Visit website](#)



Land of the Long White Cloud | Episode 4 – Pākehā Paralysis | RNZ

Alex Hotere-Barnes reflects on how white New Zealanders overcome feelings of guilt, in order to take positive action against racism in Aotearoa.

Publisher: Radio New Zealand

[Visit website](#)



Poutama Pounamu: Drawing from critical theories

Read time: 2 min

An introduction to critical consciousness and conscientisation.

Publisher: Poutama Pounamu

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