

**Indigeneity and Higher Education: A Maori perspective and experiences developing kaupapa Maori education initiatives within the Academy.**

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Kia ora koutou katoa. Warm greeting to you all from Aotearoa New Zealand. I want to begin by thanking the University of Lapland for the honour of being with you today, and to Janette Peltokorpi for the invitation. Many thanks Pegga for the introduction. I'd also like to acknowledge the Sami people, your ancestors, your elders, your lands, rivers and mountains. I bring greetings from my elders and the lands, waterways and mountains of Aotearoa. And a special thankyou to all of you for taking the time to link into this virtual presentation.

I affiliate to several tribes in Aotearoa but grew up among my fathers people in the Hawkes Bay on the East Coast, the Ngati Kahungunu. My mountain is Kahuranaki, my marae is Hougarea. My husband Robert is an artist who teaches at the university and our daughter Shelley, who is an art curator, is currently living in Italy teaching English.

My presentation focusses on a unique relationship between Massey University – a western institution and Te Rūnanga Nui o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori, the governing body for kura kaupapa Maori education. Let me introduce you to them and to other members of the team. This slide was taken at the 2018 Massey University Research and Teaching Awards, where Dr Kathy Dewes and Rawiri Wright were presented with the Community Award in recognition of their partnership with Massey in delivering kaupapa Māori Initial Teacher Education (teacher training) programmes in line with the aspirations of Māori speaking communities throughout the country. Both Kathy and Rawiri are pioneers of the alternative system of education called kura Kaupapa Maori which I'll explain later, where they are principals of schools but also Adjunct Faculty at Massey. Mari Ropata Te Hei is also a past principal of a kura kaupapa/school but is a Massey faculty member in my team. All of our staff are qualified teachers, who have taught/or are currently teaching in kura kaupapa, they are parents of kura graduates or in the case of Hona Black – a graduate of kura. So the teaching team consists of university based staff, and Principals and lead teachers in kura.

I want to begin with a brief history of Māori education within the colonial/neo-colonial context in order to understand the significance of what we've achieved in developing an alternative model of indigenous teacher education which is the focus of my presentation. Indigenous programmes located in the academy are very rare. Invariably they are subject to the wider politics to do with hierarchies of knowledge – what counts as valid knowledge? Whose knowledge counts? Who decides and on what basis? And central to the academy as Foucault argues relates to what discourses can be said, and thought about knowledge, who can speak, when can they speak and with what authority?

We deliver our two teacher training programmes from the School of Maori Studies at Massey. Our centre Toi Kura is unique in that we are the only teacher training programme

outside a college of education in the country. This situation is purposeful and political. Experience has taught us that to maintain the integrity of our programmes and to ensure the safety of our staff we need to be located where the Maori language, our culture, our values and ways of being are taken for granted norms. We also need to control how the programme is provided to our communities within the boundaries of state legislation and university regulations.

We were colonized by the British during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. In 1840 some 500 chiefs signed a founding covenant, the Treaty of Waitangi, with the British Crown that gave permission for British citizens to enter and settle in New Zealand, to establish governance, guarantee tribes would maintain sovereignty over our lands and resources while also receiving the benefits of British Citizenship. Needless to say the Treaty was never honoured by the Crown, and this has been a bone of contention ever since the signing.

From the early 19<sup>th</sup> century the first system of schooling were the mission schools set up by christian missionaries who were the advanced guard of colonisation. The missionary schools flourished as Māori ardently sought opportunities the new world offered. In customary society knowledge acquisition was highly valued. There was a stratified system of learning where higher forms of knowledge were only accessible to selected authorities through specialised schools of higher learning called wānanga. The success of mission education was due in large measure, to Māori as the language of instruction which minimized cultural dislocation – in terms of the realities of Māori lifeways and what they were learning in these schools They were able to make sense of the scriptures from a Māori perspectives.

However as far as the Missionaries were concerned education was simply a mechanism for civilising the ‘natives’ which aligned with international thinking and colonial practice aimed at assimilating indigenous peoples to a ‘civilised’ way of life. By the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Maori language had been banned from the school precincts something my parents experienced, Maori knowledge was outlawed as a result of the 1908 Tohunga Suppression Act and the school curriculum imported from England paved the way for intergenerational Maori underachievement that has persisted. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century Government interventions were mainly unsuccessful because they were solutions based on Eurocentric values, attitudes and standards, and a deficit orientation towards Maori learners that still holds today. The result is the successful reproduction of poor outcomes for Maori learners due in large part to the disjuncture between Maori realities and the school habitus (the curriculum the structure, systems and Eurocentricity of New Zealand schooling).

In 1981 and in response to the urgent need for Māori language survival, Māori leaders proposed a revolution by establishing early childhood Māori language immersion centres called Te Kōhanga Reo. Within a year Māori participation in early childhood soared as Kōhanga were established throughout the country by Māori communities outside of the State system. The government refused to acknowledge Māori aspirations and provide state funding for a separate Māori system of education, despite Māori adults contributing to state taxes. But the State was powerless to stem the revolution and the proliferation of kohanga reo throughout the country. Two years later, Māori educationalists unanimously passed a remit declaring the existing elementary and secondary schooling system to be failing Māori learners and urged Māori people to withdraw and establish an alternative schooling model

called Kura Kaupapa Māori based on the principles underlying Te Kōhanga Reo (Smith and Smith, 1990). That is a system for Maori by Maori with the family or whānau at the centre.

The remit was confirmed by the Waitangi Tribunal in 1985 who found that, not only had educational policy seriously harmed the Māori language, but that the combined effects of these policies on Māori children rendered them "*uneducated by normal standards*". The tribunal ruled that the education system "*...is being operated in breach of the Treaty*" and recommended an urgent inquiry into the education of Māori children (Tribunal, 1986). The damning outcomes of the Tribunal's report led to the Government finally agreeing to fund the alternative Kura Kaupapa Maori system of schooling although with significantly less resources than is provided for mainstream English medium schools.

(The Waitangi Tribunal is a permanent commission of inquiry established by an Act of Parliament in 1975. The Tribunal investigates and makes recommendations on claims brought by Māori regarding actions or omissions of the Crown since 1840, that breach the promises made in the Treaty of Waitangi.)

In the intervening 30 years, this alternative system remains a contested space. State resourcing of kura kaupapa remains low in comparison to mainstream schools, and tensions about what counts in the education of Māori children in terms of the New Zealand curriculum remain. But the outcomes speak for themselves. Many Māori parents have opted to send their children to Kura Kaupapa Māori for their entire compulsory schooling. Unfortunately only 12% of all Māori children are enrolled in Kura Kaupapa Māori. The majority are located in English medium schools.

The degree to which the Kura Kaupapa Māori system offers autonomy in terms of decisions around what counts in the education of Māori learners, has led to high levels of educational achievement and success in gaining relevant qualifications to enter higher education. Graduates of Kura Kaupapa are a new generation of high achieving 'native' speakers of te reo Māori (Māori language) who are confident, secure in their identity as Māori and accomplished in two worlds. Despite their entire education being delivered through the medium of the Māori language, many Kura Kaupapa graduates go on to higher education including at ivy league universities in Great Britain, Canada and the USA studying diverse disciplines such as law, medicine, fine arts, political studies and indigenous development for example. Recent studies have found that graduates of Kura Kaupapa Māori are more likely to complete tertiary qualifications than their peers educated in English medium/mainstream schools (Flockton & Crooks, 1999). Furthermore, characteristics that underpin Māori underachievement in mainstream schooling such as high suspension, truancy and dropout rates simply do not exist in Kura Kaupapa Māori.

In New Zealand, the preparation of graduate teachers for Kura Kaupapa requires an alternative model to the standard Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes offered by tertiary providers. In partnership with the Te Rūnanganui, our programmes at Massey are the only university based total immersion Māori ITE programmes in New Zealand that prepare graduate teachers to teach in the Kura Kaupapa Māori system.

As Distinguished Professor Graham Hingangaroa Smith says, and I quote "we cannot have a sustainable socio-economic revolution within Maori communities without a prior or simultaneous education revolution. Such a revolution must build on our own models of

transformation that appropriately respond to our aspirations to engage with the whole world while simultaneously growing our cultural and iwi citizenship responsibilities.”

The Māori medium system of education, which gave rise to Kohanga Reo (kindergarten), Kura Kaupapa Māori (primary) and Wharekura (secondary), has been in existence for thirty years compared with over 150 years of the mainstream education system in New Zealand. Over this time staffing and resource capacity at all levels of the Māori medium sector is a constant challenge. There is a small pool of expert practitioners leading the field many of whom are Principals and/or teachers and their associates working in Kura across the country. Access to this level of expertise including their network of experts, has been achieved through our professional partnership and collaboration with Te Rūnanganui. From the outset these experts have worked collaboratively with us in conceptualising, planning, co-constructing and implementing the programmes.

This collaborative partnership and our combined experiences in the delivery of Māori immersion ITE programmes has been integral to developing the conceptual design of the curriculum, the selection processes for entry and contributing to teaching in mixed mode. That is online, distance learning and face to face via wānanga. This has been achieved through strengthening our deep relationships with participating Kura Kaupapa, their learners and wider community including tribal networks. We have also capitalised on the unique learning management systems and structures we have developed specifically for Māori medium ITE within the university. So rather than accept university systems set up for western approaches, we have sought changes to accommodate our preferred approach based on Maori language and cultural values.

The community partnership approach to delivering Māori medium ITE programmes within the academy, is a pragmatic and positive solution to Māori development in the preparation of graduate teachers for the Kura Kaupapa sector. And because the programmes are aligned with Government policy and university teaching qualifications, the graduates are qualified to teach in either system – Māori medium or English medium. Each year we report back to the sector at a national conference where it’s an opportunity for the sector to hold us and the institution to account.

Te Rūnanganui is a council of experts most of whom are principals or leading teachers, some are the original architects and pioneers of the Kura Kaupapa system. They engage with government and the Ministry of Education to advocate on behalf of the kura sector, on all matters to do with state education policy, procedures and practice. In contrast to the Eurocentricity of English medium education and schooling, Māori language, culture, knowledge and values are taken for granted norms in Kura Kaupapa Māori. Therefore teacher training programmes must also take into account these norms and the nature of Kura Kaupapa Māori which calls for an alternative model. Historically all ITE programmes, including Māori medium programmes, were constructed around what counts as initial teacher education for English medium classrooms. Recently Government ITE policies and procedures have allowed for the development of Māori Medium ITE and the alternative kaupapa Māori model we have developed.

Since the 1980’s the provision of Māori medium ITE at Massey evolved as part of the national growth of Māori teacher education. Our programmes, as I’ve previously pointed out,

are purposively situated within the multidisciplinary research and teaching environment of Māori Studies.

The Indigenous model we have developed is, as far as we know, the only one of its kind in the world situated within a western university. Underpinning this model are at least seven key principles that characterise the strength of the programmes which contribute to student success but also in transforming the lives of the graduates, their families and their communities.

The principle of partnership as manifest between the institution and Te Rūnanganui is key. This relationship is paramount to the authenticity of the programme, and the acceptability by the kura community of a university based programme. There remains deep distrust of Maori centred programmes such as ours that are located within a western institution, particularly the assimilatory agenda such institutions support and the power and control they wield over what knowledge counts, and the Eurocentric systems they support and perpetuate.

An important factor for the Runanganui supporting the university is the strong relationship that has been built up over many years. Paradoxically many of the members and their families are alumni of institutions such as Massey University. Most local kura kaupapa are staffed by graduates of our programmes. Members of the Runanganui are well known experts who have ‘walked the talk’ in the kura kaupapa Maori movement since its inception in the 1980’s. They have fought to establish kohanga reo, kura and wharekura within their regions at great personal cost. And they remain actively involved as principals, teachers and politically active champions of kura kaupapa Maori and the survival of the Maori language.

The principle of te reo Māori/the Māori language. The language of instruction in every course is te reo Māori/Māori language. Therefore, there is a correlation between pedagogy and practice relevant to kura kaupapa Māori in the preparation of teachers for the sector. Extending Māori language proficiency is a major emphasis. The assumption is that te reo Māori/Māori language is the most relevant medium through which core values are best communicated and the curriculum, based on Māori knowledge and culture, are understood. The programmes provide intensive Māori language learning grounded in Māori values and perspectives, as expressed through the philosophy of Te Aho Matua. Preparation of graduate teachers includes kaupapa Māori pedagogical practices that also take account of tribal variances in dialect, customs and traditions that are practiced within the various Kura Kaupapa Māori. Over the duration of their study, students are exposed to a range of Māori language experts, teaching professionals and linguists.

Te Aho Matua is the philosophical foundation of the Kura Kaupapa Māori system and is the only philosophy of education to emerge from New Zealand. Te Aho Matua is legislated and all kura kaupapa must subscribe to this philosophy. It’s what differentiates kura from any other schooling type. Te Aho Matua is embedded within our curriculum in order to orient students in their development as graduate teachers and in their preparation for teaching in Kura Kaupapa Māori settings. An underlying assumption of Te Aho Matua is that quality teaching occurs when teachers are culturally competent within the Māori world, are self-aware and critically reflective of their practice and role within the kura/school, with the learners, their families (whānau), subtribe (hapū), tribes (iwi) and within global contexts. Thus curriculum planning, design and co-construction of the courses that constitute the ITE programmes reflect Te Aho Matua.

The principle of access and participation. The programmes are delivered in mixed modality; that is online with face to face contact courses (or what we refer to as wānanga) based at the university. The strength of mixed mode delivery is that it offers access for Māori students located anywhere in New Zealand which allows greater participation without the need to relocate to the university, but to remain within the supportive environment of their families. Graduates of Kura Kaupapa Māori are accustomed to the close comfort of whānau (family) centred schooling. However, while some are able to survive the challenges of university, many high achieving kura graduates do not. Many find the university environment impersonal and alienating, some choose to leave unable to cope with overwhelming feelings of isolation. Thus the distance learning option offers an optimum opportunity for students to complete their degree. However there's also a risk in undermining the cultural preference and value of kanohi ki te kanohi or face to face contact and communication. For this reason we have a student advisor embedded in the programme to assist students with the online mode.

With strong community links through the Rūnanganui there are also opportunities for the university to include Principals and other experts located in Kura Kaupapa to join the university as adjunct faculty. The distance learning option means collaborative teaching relationships with these experts are achieved through a combination of wānanga and distance delivery options via the university's learning management system to which adjunct faculty have access.

The programmes are field-based and at the point of selection into a programme, students are assigned a Kura Kaupapa as their kura hāpai (host school). Kura hāpai volunteer to host students for the duration of their studies thereby providing the benefits of a professional and whānau/family centred environment. Some students are rural based often with limited or no access to internet, so in these instances kura hāpai provide students with access to computer and video conferencing facilities. Kura hāpai teaching staff also offer them professional support. This arrangement is a key facet of the field-based delivery which serves to ensure the retention of students studying at a distance. We have found that strong support for students from their kura hāpai contributes to their retention and to successfully completing their programme of study.

Besides the regular university systems for quality assurance and excellence, a Board of Studies called Te Pae Aho was established with a critical role of overseeing quality assurance and excellence in terms of kaupapa Māori ITE, Māori language proficiency and the governance of the programme in accordance with Māori customs and values. It was also a strategy to protect the programmes from institutional interference. The Board comprises a group of renowned high profile expert elders who are not only cognisant of Māori immersion education because they are also pioneers of Kura Kaupapa; but they are experienced in the vagaries of mainstream education, and the pervasive and oppressive institutional systems and structures that have served to undermine the production of indigenous knowledge within the academy.

The implementation of Māori centred ITE programmes has been complex and challenging. The programmes require specialist expertise that in our case is a combination of university academic faculty who are fluent speakers of Māori language with experience as past Principals and/or lead teachers of Kura Kaupapa, and Adjunct Faculty who are community led experts from the Rūnanganui. Within the university, the programmes are purposively

located in the School of Māori Studies rather than the Institute of Education where the mainstream programmes are based. This can be problematic for an institution where perceived duplication may be present, and where there is often little understanding of the differences between western English medium ITE versus indigenous Maori medium ITE.

The combined effects of the mixed mode delivery of distance ITE courses in the Māori language aimed at the preparation of graduate teachers for the Kura Kaupapa Māori system of education from within a western research led university, ultimately results in various levels of contestation in terms of complying with, and adapting to, university structures and processes some of which are often in opposition to kaupapa Māori practices (Tomlins-Jahnke, 2019). These challenges have led to the development of unique structures (for example the programme design) and processes (such as student selection) specifically tailored for Kura Kaupapa Māori ITE. This outcome has been achieved through being independent of Eurocentric imperatives in the provision of ITE.

Our overall vision for the future of Maori education ultimately lies with positive outcomes for Maori families. Families who are self managing, they are Maori speaking especially within the home, they live healthy lifestyles and participate fully within society. Our families will confidently participate in the Maori world and within wider global contexts. They will be economically secure as cohesive, resilient and nurturing family units.

The demographic projections to 2050 indicate a browning of the New Zealand nation, where the populations of Māori and Pacifica peoples are predicted to grow at a faster rate than the European population. This changing demographic is not only a reason why current Māori underachievement in the mainstream system of education is not to be tolerated but such change has serious implications for the future of Aotearoa, New Zealand. Some answers, I believe lie in the principles that underpin the Kura Kaupapa Māori System where Māori achievement and success are more likely to be realised. Such principles underpin what counts as education for, with and by Māori, where Māori language is normalized, and Māori knowledge, culture and values are central to the curriculum. The preparation of teachers for Kura Kaupapa is critical for the future sustainability of this alternative system of education. Among the strategic goals Professor Sir Mason Durie has identified for the general direction of Māori education in the future is ensuring the fulfillment of Māori potential by accepting student interests and aspirations as central to learning and how educational systems are constructed (Durie, 2003). And when Māori potential is realized as we are finding in the Kura Kaupapa Māori system, we can expect all Māori students to be successful, to be equipped for a changing environment they can contribute to and from which they gain benefits. This means they will be skilled in understanding, negotiating and shaping a changing world. They will be well prepared to live and work successfully in a high-tech society. They will be “passionate about learning, excited by discovery and undaunted by change” (Futures, 2005).

Like the graduates of the Kura Kaupapa system, Māori students will want to be Māori, they will want to engage in the Māori world, to speak Māori language and utilize cultural references throughout their learning. Māori success will be the norm and there will be zero tolerance for students not reaching their potential.

Thankyou very much.

Tena koutou katoa.