

## MĀORI PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND HEALTH IN THE TERTIARY CONTEXT: APPROACHES FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO, SCHOOL OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION, SPORT AND EXERCISE SCIENCES

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### TE KORONGA

Te Koronga is a programme of Māori research excellence within the University of Otago, School of Physical Education, Sport and Exercise Sciences (PESES). Spearheaded by Dr Anne-Marie Jackson and Dr Hauiti Hakopa, Te Koronga offers specialised Māori physical education and health papers at the undergraduate (100, 300, 400 level) and postgraduate levels (500 level), as well as teaching into other papers offered within the PESES for the Bachelor of Physical Education and across the University of Otago. Te Koronga was created in 2013 primarily as a graduate research programme and has now grown to incorporate a university and tribal research theme (Te Koronga: Indigenous Science), as well as student-led initiatives such as Te Koronga Korikori Tinana or Whānau Fit, Te Koronga tutorials for first-year students, and community initiatives and wānanga (intensive research meetings).

Te Koronga borrows its name from the opening stanza of an ancient karakia (incantation) used to induct students into whare wānanga (higher schools of learning). The logo represented in Figure 1 was designed by Keanu Townsend. Keanu describes the logo as follows:

This design embodies kaitiakitanga (ethic of guardianship), Matariki (constellation Pleiades), knowledge of the sky, astronomy and navigation. The mountaintops signify striving for success and reaching the summit, which also represent the three baskets of knowledge. The manaia (stylised figure) represents guardianship of the elements for next generations. The fish scales represent the ocean. The harakeke (flax) represents the land and the unity of different iwi (tribes). Pūhoro (symbol) represent the flow of life and connects all of the elements together (Keanu Townsend, personal communication, October 2016).



## Te Koronga

Figure 1. Te Koronga logo design by Mr Keanu Townsend (Ngāti Whātua, Ngāti Kahu o Whangaroa, Ngāphui, Ngāti Wai, Te Roroa)

### **The Māori physical education and health curriculum at the University of Otago, School of physical education, sport, and exercise sciences**

Māori physical education and health results from the application of the Māori worldview. Māori physical education and health is based on three components: the Māori worldview; te Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi); and the theory and praxis of kaupapa Māori (Māori principles). A more comprehensive description of the undergraduate and postgraduate offerings within Te Koronga is offered elsewhere (Jackson et al., 2015).

A strong grounding in the Māori worldview is critical for any graduate working in a New Zealand, Māori and indigenous context. We will discuss some of the underlying philosophies of the Māori worldview that guide Māori curriculum development through tauira (examples). These are: relating the learning process to Māori philosophy; creation narratives and storytelling; and values. In this context, we will utilise the 300-level Māori physical education and health paper, which focuses on an introduction to Māori understandings of physical education and health. The course comprises four components: Māori worldview; Treaty of Waitangi; kaupapa Māori; and applications.

### **The Māori worldview**

In the creation of a Māori curriculum within PESES, an obvious starting point was Māori philosophy and the Māori worldview. Samantha Jackson (one of the co-authors of this article) is a Māori philosopher. Anne-Marie Jackson was able to draw on Samantha's expertise in Māori philosophy in the context of curriculum development. Royal (1998) highlights the challenges involved in exploring mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) and the worldview that goes

with it:

Let me explain. Mātauranga Māori itself is not new: it has been created and maintained for centuries in this country. What is new is to see it in contrast to other disciplines of knowledge. Perhaps the best way to illustrate this is by telling you about a question I asked of Rev. Takiwairua Marsden of Te Tai Tokerau [Northland, New Zealand]. His father was raised in a deeply Māori context having been a graduate of the *whare wānanga* and later became an Anglican minister under a deeply Māori rationale. I asked Taki that if I was to ask his father what Mātauranga Māori was, would he know? Taki replied by saying that he was sure his father wouldn't have a clue what mātauranga Māori was. Taki went further; 'To ask my father what mātauranga Māori is, would be like asking a fish what water is. It remains invisible to them' (Royal, 1998, pp. 11-12).

Royal's (1998) reflections parallel the difficulties and tensions inherent in understanding the Māori worldview and Māori philosophy. For this reason, in this paper we will provide examples that we hope will be useful to others intending to create Māori curricula within their respective contexts. Marsden (2003b) describes worldview as "the central systematisation of conceptions of reality to which members of its culture assent and from which stems their value system. The worldview lies at the heart of the culture, touching, interacting with and strongly influencing every aspect of the culture" (Marsden, 2003b, p. 56).

Essential to a Māori worldview are Māori creation narratives. Māori creation and cosmogonic narratives encode central cultural beliefs and values and "form the central system on which their [Māori] holistic view of the universe is based" (Marsden, 2003b, p. 56). While there is diversity among *iwi* and *hapū* (sub-tribal) groups in relation to these creation narratives, there are key aspects which remain in common: the material world proceeds from the spiritual; the spiritual interpenetrates the physical world; and the *marae* (tribal meeting place) is the physical representation of the Māori worldview.

Māori oral narratives such as *mōteatea* (tribal chants), *karakia* (incantations), *tauparapara* (genealogical chants), *whakapapa* (genealogies) and *kōrero pūrākau* (stories) were used to instill Māori notions of the world into learners and to pass that knowledge forward to each successive generation. Embedded in these oral narratives were notions of place, which informed their concept of a cultural landscape – a landscape informed by narratives and the geography of those narratives.

Storytelling is a simple and timeless tool used widely around the world to engage and interact with all age groups within the community. Stories are used to describe the way we see and interact with the world; they are used to inform, to entertain, to inspire and to instruct. They are one of the best tools for the intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge. Indigenous peoples, including Māori, "are traditionally oral based cultures wherein their knowledge base was maintained and passed on using oral narratives such as songs, genealogies, chants, theatre and storytelling" (Hakopa, 2011, p. ii).

The body of traditional narratives formed the corpus of extant archival and living (and growing) repositories that Māori drew upon to make sense of the world and to inform the ways in which they interacted with their environment. Stories are one of the primary ways that we as Māori describe our world, our worldview and our *tikanga* (customs).

One example of how we understand and teach our worldview is through the "three worldview" system described by Marsden (2003a), which includes the story of Rangiūi (Sky Father) and Papatūānuku (Earth Mother), our primeval parents and their progeny. The separation of these esoteric parents is the story of the organisation of the world we live in, known by Maori as the world of light. Their progeny (for example, the various deities who have authority over different realms, such as the ocean and the forests) were given responsibility over specific domains in the world of light; they were also responsible for the creation of humankind. Māori refer to the progeny of Rangiūi and Papatūānuku as gods. For example, Tāne is the god of the forest, Tāwhirimātea the god of the wind, and Tangaroa the god of the oceans and the fish therein.

In the beginning dwelt Io, alongside the seed bed of creation. There existed the starting points for all that we know and understand and for that which exists within the world that we currently roam. This is called Te Korekore (the world of potential being). Through the creation process, driven by mauri (essential life force, elemental energy), this world begins to change and enter into the second epoch of creation called Te Pō (the world of becoming). Within Te Pō exist the primeval parents, the deities Ranginui and Papatūānuku.

Like the ebb and flow of the tidal waters, with each tide there is an expansion of time and space, from great, to wide, to far-reaching, intense, and enveloping, for example. The children (each atua, gods of their domain) sprung forth were named as Tāne (god of forests, birds), Tangaroa (god of the sea and sea creatures), Rongo (god of vegetation), Tū-mata-uenga (god of man and war), Haumia-tiketike (god of uncultivated food), Ru-au-moko (god of earthquakes) and Tāwhiri-mā-tea (god of the elements). There are also many other gods. While all of the gods still lived within the firm embrace of their parents, there was discord amongst the siblings. This perhaps marks the emergence of the first wānanga (great discussion) (S. Jackson, 2013). Some of the siblings wanted to separate the parents, while others did not. In the tribal narratives of Te Taitokerau, Tāne was successful in separating their parents through thrusting his father away by placing his back on his mother and his legs on his father's shoulder and then casting his father heavenward.

During this process, however, one of the younger siblings, Tūmatauenga, stood up to his older siblings, Tangaroa, Tāne, Rongo and Haumia-tike-tike. In so doing, Tūmatauenga removed the tapu (restrictedness) from their offspring, meaning that man can now eat fish (children of Tangaroa), birds (children of Tāne), cultivated foods (children of Rongo) and uncultivated foods (children of Haumia-tike-tike). This highlights the important dynamic that operates between tuakana (elder sibling) and teina (younger sibling).

To return once again to the creation narrative, amid the 'chaos' it was Tāne who separated the parents and, following their separation, light burst into the world, Te Ao Mārama (the world of becoming). This is the world in which we now reside.

This is an abridged version, offering a Northern perspective on the traditional creation narrative, and told specifically for the purpose of drawing lessons in a tertiary curriculum context. In the following sections, we will highlight tauria (examples) drawn from these creation stories that can be applied to the tertiary curriculum in the following ways: relating the learning process to Māori philosophy; structuring teaching courses on Māori philosophy; storytelling; and values.

### **HETAUIRA: Relating the learning process to Māori philosophy**

In our genealogical traditions, Te Korekore (the world of potential being) can be likened to a student's first explorations of a new topic, idea or subject. The seed bed of creation and the potential for learning already exist within the student prior to acquiring knowledge. Our role as educators is to nurture the growth of student learning. As the learner begins to grasp this knowledge and their experiences and learnings become deeper, the student enters into Te Pō (the world of becoming). The student may be growing their understanding, but still remain confused; at times there are moments of clarity, but at others their understanding still appears illogical and 'messy'. The student may have diverse and even conflicting views. This situation can be likened to when the children of Ranginui and Papatūānuku sought to separate their parents. The various gods presented their different approaches to the question of separating their parents, not always agreeing with one another. As the student begins to make sense of their learning and as their understanding moves from chaos into clarity, he or she enters into Te Ao Mārama (the world of being and understanding). The student may have an 'ahha' or 'Eureka' moment, where they understand and grasp the material in question. This is similar to the 'Eureka' moment at the separation of Ranginui and Papatūānuku, where at once light (mārama) and understanding (mārama) burst forth into the world.

## HE TAUIRA: Structuring the course on Māori philosophy

Anne-Marie Jackson has structured her 300-level paper into three parts. The first part is Te Korekore, and the focus is on philosophically grounding learning within the context of the Māori worldview. This involves understanding values, the ancestral landscape and building on students' foundational knowledge of Durie's (1985) model of health – Te Whare Tapa Whā or hauora – which utilises the symbolism of a whareniui (tribal meeting house) to represent positive health. The four walls or the whareniui correspond to four key components of health: te taha whānau (relationships and family health); te taha wairua (spiritual health); te taha hinengaro (mental health); and te taha tinana (physical health). This model of health forms an underlying template in the Health and Physical Education secondary school curriculum, and students are familiar with the concepts involved.

The second part of Jackson's course is Te Pō, the world of becoming. This corresponds with the notion of 'chaos,' whereby the students will be challenged in their ways of thinking – they become overloaded with information and knowledge. Furthermore, they will have started to engage with each other in the classroom and in their groups as well, and will be beginning to form relationships with each other in this way as well as through wānanga. Jackson also encourages the students to "trust in the process," meaning that it is acceptable for them to not fully grasp the learnings. This corresponds to the content-laden second part of the course which focuses on Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi), the impact of colonisation and kaupapa Māori theory and methodology.

The final section is Te Ao Mārama, the world of becoming. In this part of the course the focus is primarily on applications. Jackson encourages the students to start to think about how they can create solutions and initiatives related to their specific concerns in the area of Māori physical education and health. Students are encouraged to seek those 'ahha' moments, those moments of clarity or 'mārama' of understanding. Jackson also organises the noho marae (stay at a traditional Māori meeting house) during this section of the course. The core kaupapa (focus) of the noho marae is "the application of Māori physical education and health." As already noted, marae are the physical representation of the Māori worldview.

## HE TAUIRA: Creation narratives and storytelling

Storytelling is a very effective tool for engaging both teachers and students, and draws both groups into the same learning space so that both groups can contribute and both groups learn from each other. Furthermore, storytelling allows teachers to connect with students (and vice versa) in a unique way and add their personal touches to the story in a way that maintains and builds the mana (integrity) of both student and teacher. One example is the story of Māui and his fish. The story of Māui and his fishing expedition with his brothers is well known throughout the length and breadth of Aotearoa (New Zealand) including Te Waipounamu (the South Island). If we re-imagine the elements of this story, we discover that this is a tale of endurance, of collegiality and collaboration, of innovation and inspiration to achieve a specific goal, of overcoming obstacles. It is also a story of vision.

To begin with, Maui's brothers did not want his presence on this fishing expedition – yet he came up with a scheme to be a part of the trip. All Maui had in his possession was the magical jawbone of his ancestor Murirangawhenua, from which he fashioned a fishing hook. When his brothers refused to give him any bait, he smashed his nose and used his own blood as bait. He recited incantations, then threw the jawbone-hook, smothered with his sacred blood, into the water. He let the line down out deep into the ocean and allowed the magic of the jawbone to do its work. Once it latched onto its prey, Māui tugged at the line and then began pulling his catch to the surface. But things weren't that simple. At first, his brothers sought to discourage him because the fish began to drag the waka (canoe) down and they feared for their lives; but Māui did not let go. Eventually he persuaded his brothers to help him secure the fish, so they helped him wear the fish out and finally brought it to the surface. It proved to be the largest fish ever known to mankind.

So what do we tell our children – or indeed our students – about the story of Māui and his fish? We tell them that it was no ordinary fish, that he recruited the ancient wisdom of Murirangawhenua to find that particular fish, and that it literally rose out of the water to meet him. But more than that, Maui fixed his mind on his vision and he never let go, despite the obstacles he faced, until he had secured his fish and taken his place in our storybooks.

### **HETAUIRA: Values**

The pedagogies of this curriculum are kaupapa Māori. The pedagogical approach is underpinned by the Ngāpuhi creation whakapapa already described. The constructs and values that underpin our classroom practices are derived from Māori creation narratives. The values that are specifically utilised in this context are: ako (teaching and learning); wairuatanga (nurturing our spiritual aspects); rangatiratanga (self-determination, ability to unite people together for a common purpose); manaakitanga (uplifting of mana); whanaungatanga (family and positive relationships); and kaitiakitanga (spiritual guardianship).

We also draw on te Tiriti o Waitangi texts, in particular the concepts of kāwanatanga (governorship), rangatiratanga and tikanga (customs and protocols). These courses are wānanga-based, whereby students are encouraged to actively participate in the classes through discussion. There is also opportunity for noho marae (an overnight stay at a traditional Māori meeting house), which can be viewed as a uniquely Māori pedagogy. In fact, the noho marae is the aspect of the course that pulls it all together; something on which I will focus in more detail in another paper. We also utilise assessments that reflect a kaupapa Māori approach, in particular through the use of group work and the opportunity for oral assessments.

### **CONCLUSION**

In our curriculum, we focus on the strengths that the student, their whānau (family, a core platform of Māori social structure) and their communities bring to an educational environment. As we have seen, many of our Māori stories describe our greatness as Māori, whether as educators, navigators, leaders, healers, negotiators or researchers, for example. We draw heavily on the Māori worldview through relating the learning process to Māori philosophy, structuring the course on Māori philosophy, exploring creation narratives and storytelling, and explicitly using values as pedagogies. One of the aims of the Māori curriculum at PESES is to produce graduates who can work competently with Māori communities. The benefits of this approach for our students are fourfold: being taught appropriate content; being provided with the context for Māori physical education and health; developing research and critical thinking skills; and applying their knowledge and skills to support Māori community needs.

**Samantha Jackson** is from Ngāti Whātua, Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Wai and Ngāti Kahu o Whangaroa. She is a Māori researcher who has examined Māori philosophy, Māori health and strengths based Māori community initiatives. She is currently a 4th year medical student at the University of Otago.

**Anne-Marie Jackson** (Ngāti Whātua, Ngāti Kahu o Whangaroa, Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Wai, Te Roroa) is a lecturer in Māori physical education and health at the School of Physical Education, Sport and Exercise Sciences at Otago

University. After obtaining her Bachelor of Physical Education (Hons) and Master of Physical Education at Otago, she completed a doctorate in Māori studies and physical education which examined rangatiratanga and Māori health and wellbeing within a customary fisheries context. Anne-Marie is part of Te Koronga, a Māori research group that aims to strengthen Māori communities. One of Te Koronga's many strands is Te Koronga Korikori Tinana, better known as Whānau Fit.

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