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He Vaka Moana—Navigating Māori student and
Pasifika student success in the tertiary sector

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Special Issue: **He Vaka Moana—Navigating Māori student and Pasifika student success in the tertiary sector**

Guest Editors: **Hinekura Smith and 'Ema Wolfgramm-Foliaki**

ARTICLES

FOREWORD

*Damon Salesa**
Cynthia Kiro†

I ruia mai ngā kakano ō Raiatea
We are scattered from the seeds of Raiatea

Exploring the sacred Polynesian va'a across the Pacific and encompassing the Māori and Pacific peoples' of Oceania/Pasifika/Moana provides a framework for sharing and protecting spaces of mutual learning. Māori and Pacific peoples share in common the importance of the moana, which connects us, joins our histories and interwoven stories of migration and development, and provides a cohesive platform for theorising our future development. We have traversed the largest ocean in the world, finding islands across the vastness of space and time, and developed many practices and languages in common but also with variations on our shared histories and experiences. Like all families, we do not always have to get along, but we care and have a stake in what happens to our members.

'Ema Wolfgramm-Foliaki and Hinekura Smith, as kaitiaki for the He Vaka Moana programme at the University of Auckland and editors of this special issue of *MAI Journal*, are our navigators. The articles within provide an invaluable contribution to our understanding of how we can improve our teaching and learning in tertiary settings, thereby contributing to our kete mātauranga. The authors argue for a new theorisation and momentum of a continually emerging collaboration between Māori as tangata whenua and the many peoples of the Pacific and wider Oceania. They refer to this as Moana methodology and theorisation, which is based upon the intrinsically linked space and time, material and spiritual worlds, and history and development that link Moana-Nui-a-Kiwa.

The editors' metaphor of lashed-together canoes to share provisions, expertise, information and society, and the ability to then unlash and head off on differing routes is a powerful symbol for how we can work together as Māori and Pasifika peoples to refine and contribute our voices to academia whilst maintaining our rangatiratanga.

This is an apt alignment with both the work published here and the collaborative work from which it stems. In the Moana—the Pacific—canoes are not only life support systems and vehicles of discovery; they are collaborations of knowledge. In the masterful ocean-going canoes of the Pacific we see a coalescing of diverse expertise: design and construction, of course, but also less visible masteries of weaving, food preservation, navigational knowledge and leadership. At stake in the combination of these diverse ontologies is a journey of discovery and a testing of the efficacy of practice and knowledge.

The mission here is clear: to promote and advance the success of Māori and Pasifika students and to discover and refine the knowledge and techniques to enable this. This work comes as fruit of the University of Auckland's commitment to improving the success and experience of Māori and Pacific students at the University of Auckland. While imperfect, it has led to the learning that underpins this special edition. As educators we must be prepared to critically interrogate this commitment, scrutinising it in a way that is both in keeping with the work of critical Indigenous scholarship and capable of further improvement.

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Motivating this work is the intention to contribute to the critical work of reclaiming Indigenous knowledge systems and values. As with much of the innovative and seminal work in education and transformation, these pieces aim to transform practice and leadership, not only to broaden horizons. Much recent Indigenous research work has emphasised the reciprocal values that are central to Indigenous research programmes and projects, which means the embodied and engaged dimensions of research remain critical. The authors here all demonstrate what Smith and Wolfgramm-Foliaki describe as "a conscious and active lashing together of theory and practice". Perhaps this is an exploration of a new praxis, as postulated by Paolo Friere?

Within universities Māori and Pasifika academics have catalysed or led many transformative intellectual and research developments, but they remain too few in number and in many cases are isolated. Collaborative activity serves a double purpose then: to bring about a revivification of Indigenous relationships of exchange and connection, and to support and develop researchers and teachers by creating communities of Indigenous scholarship, fashioning archipelagos that stretch across institutional space. In the He Vaka Moana programme this collaborative work was activated by recruiting and bringing together a diverse group of nine fellows to meet, to korero and talanoa, to exchange and test ideas, and to find sustenance in each other. It is a reminder that cultural, social, intellectual and research work can effectively support researchers, and that it can be harnessed to benefit student achievement.

This issue of *MAI Journal* is released at an unprecedented moment when schools and universities have turned to online learning and engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic. In doing so we turn to a new ocean, where so many of our online waters remain largely unknown. In these times both the inequalities with which we wrestle and the values with which we confront them are heightened. Innovative work that can offer insight at times like this becomes of special value.

Also required is the kind of intellectual innovation and courage displayed here. At challenging times such as these, it is tempting to simply try to weather stormy waters. But one of the lessons of the Tongan proverb "pikipiki hama kae vaevae manava" is that these are also times where communal strengths can form a secure and powerful basis for ongoing voyaging and discovery. Knowledge and courage, anchored in cultural knowledge, can be utilised so that we do more than merely ride out storms, and use their powerful forces to propel voyages further and faster, not merely to survive, but to thrive.

HE VAKA MOANA

Navigating Māori and Pasifika student success through a collaborative research fellowship

'Ema Wolfgramm-Foliaki*
Hinekura Smith†

Abstract

This article introduces He Vaka Moana, which has been tested and evaluated at international and local levels. He Vaka Moana is a strength-based model of academic fellowship that is framed by Oceanic principles and methodologies. The authors base this model on what connects and sustains us as Māori and Pasifika people—that is, Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa. We draw from our shared ancestral history of navigating the vast Pacific Ocean on purposefully built vessels using Indigenous methods and *ways of being* to successfully reach our destinations.

Our fellowship draws on the rich knowledge and imagery of a Tongan saying "pikipiki hama kae vave manava", which refers to lashing canoes together to exchange people and resources when a fleet is out on the ocean battling the swells and weather. This evocative Oceanic metaphor guides how, in He Vaka Moana, champions of teaching and learning across faculties purposefully come together to work collaboratively to examine existing practice and develop innovative ways for addressing issues of strategic priority to the institution: Māori and Pasifika students' success. In He Vaka Moana, we look specifically and politically at ways to advance the success of Māori and Pasifika students in higher education, exploring what works; how success is defined and by whom; how, as a university, we listen (or fail to listen) to Indigenous stories; and the difference Oceanic-based research makes for our teaching and learning. Our agenda is revitalising Indigenous methodologies and knowledges to transform higher educational institutions' ways of responding to our Indigenous learners. Employing our own Indigenous methodologies has emphasised our cultural ways of being, thinking, speaking and behaving. We wish to demonstrate how our ways of being and knowledge allow us to reclaim who we are and, more importantly, to chart our collective and desired future as citizens of Oceania.

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Introduction

In Aotearoa New Zealand, the educational outcomes for our Māori students and Pasifika students have continued to make positive gains over recent years (Tertiary Education Commission, 2017). However, Māori and Pasifika remain "priority learning groups" across the education sectors, including tertiary institutions, which often measure success in quantifiable factors such as grade point averages and timely course completion. While strategic policy documents at national and institutional levels express an aspiration to make a difference for Māori and Pasifika learners, what is required to gain parity and bring these policy directions into action to create transforming change remains elusive.

Prioritising both groups of learners is critical given the prediction that by 2038, 30% of the Aotearoa population will be of Māori and/or Pasifika descent (Stats NZ, 2013). Despite repeated calls to increase participation, engagement and completion rates, research on Māori student and Pasifika student success remain ad hoc and often disconnected. At a national level, the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education Commission, Te Puni Kōkiri (the Ministry of Māori Development) and the Ministry of Pacific Peoples have articulated in high-level strategic documents such as the *Pasifika Operational Strategy 2017–2020* (Tertiary Education Commission, 2017) and *Tertiary Education Strategy 2020–2025* (Tertiary Education Commission, 2019) their aspirations and recommendations for what is required to raise the success of both groups. Within our institution, *The University of Auckland Strategic Plan 2013–2020* articulates the institution's commitment to both Māori and Pasifika communities in Objectives 11 and 12 respectively (University of Auckland, 2012). However, we suggest that our education system continues to underserve both groups.

In this article we introduce He Vaka Moana, a strength-based collaborative research fellowship framed by Oceanic principles and methodologies. It is conceptualised by drawing on the Tongan metaphor "pikipiki hama kae vaevae manava". Literally, the saying refers to how canoes on ocean voyages lash together in order to share food and resources and perhaps even to swap crew members if required. Metaphorically, He Vaka Moana within a higher education context provides a model for how we, as Māori and Pasifika, can work together to share resources and draw on what connects us in order to address the educational achievement of our students.

He Vaka Moana provides the opportunity for academic and professional staff to come together in purposeful and deliberate ways to research teaching, and thus share practices that promote Māori students' and Pasifika students' success in higher education. Importantly, He Vaka Moana is inspired by Oceanic principles defined by the work of Epeli Hau'ofa. In his seminal work, Hau'ofa (2008) lays down the foundation for Indigenous scholars and researchers in Oceania to reclaim Indigenous knowledge systems and viewpoints as the basis of alternative views to institutions grounded in Western paradigms. Here we seek to occupy a discourse we have come to understand as historically dominated by Western voices. He Vaka Moana as a model interrogates Western knowledge systems and engages in continuous decolonisation, seeking to enact and engage in what Swadener and Mutua (2008) describe as a constant state of being alert and attentive to how research can centre Indigenous voice. As a research model, He Vaka Moana offers an alternative way of working together to articulate our story in this Western context. Meanwhile, the research here focuses on realising Māori and Pasifika success. Our revitalising metaphor signals our collective action in order to disrupt current approaches that have not worked for us (Battiste, 2013). Further, we reiterate, embody and enact the words of Kovach (2009): "for cultural knowledge to thrive, it must live in many sites including Western education and research" (p. 12).

He Vaka Moana as a research fellowship comprises nine research fellows understood as wayfinders. In 2017, expressions of interest were received from potential fellows in each faculty with the endorsement of their dean to commit to a one-year fellowship. Each fellow received a .2 time release and some also applied for a small support grant of $5,000 to support their project, for example, to fund hosting of events, research assistance (RA), resource development and data gathering. Both the time release and SEED funding were one-year commitments hosted at the Centre for Learning and Research in Higher Education (CLeaR). Alongside the support of the institution, Ako Aotearoa also provided funding for the fellows to continue their projects and to be able to evaluate their work over two years. The initial intention of the project was to work across two institutions over two years. However, because of a number of challenges, involving the second institution was not possible.

All He Vaka Moana projects centre around Māori student and Pasifika student success, with each project emerging from a specific faculty focus

or need. Each project is independent. However, they share a common aim, that is, to purposefully examine, improve and evaluate multiple interventions that develop and advance Māori and Pasifika learners' success across the institution. The two navigators (authors) who provided leadership for the fellowship are both of Indigenous descent and are academics and researchers within CLeaR.

At an institutional level, high workload remains an issue for all staff but more so for both Māori and Pasifika academics and professional staff, who perform multiple roles that include pastoral care for our students. Hence, they often struggle to find time to meet, discuss and share knowledge about their work. Similarly, those academics who are interested in Māori students' and Pasifika students' success do not talk to one another enough; they too often struggle to find the space and time to come together, to share knowledge and engage in meaningful conversations that promote transformational change.

While there is not one prescribed model or answer to address Māori and Pasifika success, the current landscape gives us the impetus to engage in what Archibald and colleagues (2019) refer to as a process of going in deeper into our own knowledge systems to look for our own solutions. In doing so, we are also engaging in a self-determining exercise in which we take control of our own destinations and guide our journeys, navigating with Indigenous knowledges and values.

This is timely. While we want to avoid a deficit-based approach, we are in a crisis. The current system has continually marginalised and failed our students (Airini et al., 2009; Bishop & Glynn, 2003; Curtis et al., 2012; Curtis et al., 2015; Kalavite, 2010, 2012; Samu, 2006; Wolfgramm-Foliaki & Santamaria, 2018). At many levels, research on Māori and Pasifika student success is still limited. This necessitates a quest for innovative and culturally relevant ways of working together to transform higher educational systems to be more accountable and responsive to our Māori and Pasifika learners. The growing amount of work in this area (Archibald et al., 2019; Ingersoll, 2016, Kapā'anaokālaokeola et al., 2016), together with inequitable achievement of our students, tells us there is a need to develop our own research methodologies and processes. He Vaka Moana offers an alternative way of centring Indigenous knowledges and methodologies in our approach on Māori and Pasifika student success. As an Indigenous approach, it could be taken up and used in other contexts and not just in higher education.

Citizens of Oceania

> Oceania is vast, Oceania is expanding. Oceania is hospitable and generous, Oceania is humanity rising from the depths of brine and regions of fire still, Oceania is us. We are the sea, we are the ocean, we must wake up to this ancient truth and together use it to overturn all hegemonic views that aim ultimately to confine us again, physically and psychologically, in the tiny spaces which we have resisted accepting as a sole appointed place, and from which we have recently liberated ourselves. We must not allow anyone to belittle us again, and take away our freedom. (Hau'ofa, 2008, p. 39)

We argue that it is timely for Māori and Pasifika peoples to come together in this space, to harness the strength of being citizens of Oceania, and to acknowledge that the vast Pacific Ocean that encompasses all Pacific nations, including Aotearoa and Australia. Because we are of Māori descent and of Pasifika descent, we are both citizens of Oceania. Māori is used to describe those who are tangata whenua (Drewery & Bird, 2004). The term Pasifika is used widely in Aotearoa to refer to people who are descendants from the Pacific Islands (Mafile'o & Walsh-Tapiata, 2007). We use the term Pasifika because it aligns with our collective and inclusive agenda, a view shared by Naepi (2019), who explains that her use of the term Pasifika is "not about homogeneity but about bringing our people together to better serve our own interests in a globalised world" (p. 221). We position ourselves within our shared history and culture, a space noted by Teaiwa and Mallon (2005) as "an anchoring point or productive site" (p. 225) that we can use for advancing Māori student and Pasifika student success.

In his selected works of essays, "Our Sea of Islands", Hau'ofa (2008) describes the peoples of Oceania as "kakai mei tahi" or people from the sea (p. 153) as opposed to people from the outer islands, emphasising that although Pacific nations differ, they are united by the ocean that makes home to all peoples in the region. More importantly, Oceania is vast, and is not confined to what has previously been used to describe people of the Pacific as based on small scattered islands, but rather seeing them as belonging to a much larger Oceania. The land-based view confines us to "tiny spaces" and fails to recognise the significance and relevance of our history, myths and legends, as well as our cosmic history, in which the people of the Pacific see themselves as not confined only to land, but rather as rightful inhabitants and navigators of both the land and the vast ocean (Hau'ofa, 1994,

2008). People of Oceania have for generations traversed the vast ocean with confidence using the constellation and calling on their Gods to guide their journeys. In a nutshell, the ocean was a place to explore, conquer and populate.

As both Māori and Pasifika, we (authors) are descendants of strong and successful navigators who did not hold such a narrow view of their existence. We are embarking on what Archibald et al. (2019) describes as a meaning-making journey that involves "using the heart (emotions), body (physical actions), and spirit (spirituality), while recognising the importance of how we relate and interact with family, community including the environment" (p. 4). Alfred Taiake (1999, as cited in Archibald et al., 2019) asserts that Indigenous research is about reaching the community and that one cannot understand the researcher as a single entity without their community. In this space, we endeavour to bring together our history, Indigenous knowledges and ways of being and political positioning in ways that promote self-governance, and transform how higher education responds to Indigenous learners. It is important to note that endorsing Indigenous approaches does not mean totally rejecting Western paradigms but rather drawing on existing work while at the same time upholding our own values (L. T. Smith, 1999). L. T. Smith (1999, 2012) asserts that decolonising does not mean and has not meant a total rejection of all theory or research of Western knowledge. Rather, it is about centring our own concerns and world views and then coming to know and understand theory and research from our own purposes (L. T. Smith, 2012, p. 39).

The work of Ingersoll (2016) asserts the importance of Oceanic knowledge and how it privileges an "alternative political and ethical relationship with the surrounding physical and spiritual world" (p. 5). As citizens of Oceania we draw on what Ingersoll has coined as seascape epistemology or an approach to knowledge of the sea. Together with Hau'ofa (1994, 2008), Ingersoll (2016) points to the ocean as a space that connects rather than separates us; it is an "approach [to] life and knowing through the movements of the world. It is an approach to knowing through a visual, spiritual, intellectual, and embodied literacy of the 'āina (land) and kai (sea)" (p. 6). As citizens of Oceania, we draw on this strength-based Oceanic knowledge and history to re-create (and de-create) how we approach Māori students' and Pasifika students' success in higher education.

Conceptualising He Vaka Moana

Based on an internationally proven model (University College Dublin, n.d.), He Vaka Moana seeks to develop a sustainable fellowship of inter-disciplinary academic and professional staff in teaching, learning, assessment and research in a research-intensive institution. Through using robust processes that test, evaluate and reflect on Māori and Pasifika students' success, our fellows construct innovative pedagogical projects to advance students' success, while the pikipiki hama kae vaevae manava methodology ensures that significant, positive and enduring changes occur institutionally.

The term He Vaka has been utilised in a number of useful ways in education. Here we conceptualise He Vaka Moana as a collaborative research fellowship by drawing on the shared success of our tūpuna who for hundreds of years navigated the vast Pacific Ocean in deliberate and purposeful ways. Successful Oceanic journeys were enabled through the development of large ocean-going vaka moana, waka moana or va'a, drawing on deeply methodological Indigenous knowledge of the ocean, its tides, celestial navigation and weather conditions. These epic voyages could not be undertaken in isolation. While on the ocean and often far from land, vaka moana would routinely come alongside each other and lash together to share resources and provisions, learn from each other's experiences, share stories of their journey and sometimes even swap crew members. At other times, vaka moana lashed together to ride out a storm, because one larger unified vessel is stronger and more resistant to the conditions than many smaller ones, before unlashing and heading off on their journeys.

Many hundreds of years later, the descendants of these methodological and strategic navigators continue to navigate and come together in deliberate and purposeful ways—now, instead of criss-crossing the Pacific Ocean, our voyages in this context are navigations of Māori students and Pasifika students in the tertiary sector seeking ways to purposefully journey towards success. Here seascape (Ingersoll, 2016) holds a powerful imagery of a place of adaptation, of change and challenge, allowing for a flow of ideas and innovation. For our purpose, it encapsulates what the ocean holds; that is, it can be powerful yet has the ability to be fluid and be a space to bring people together (Ingersoll, 2016).

Pikipiki hama kae vaevae manava

Conceptually, we draw on the rich knowledge and imagery contained in the Tongan saying "pikipiki hama kae vaevae manava". Pikipiki hama means to stick, bind or link strongly to the outrigger of a vaka moana. Vaevae means to give or share and manava—similar to the word manawa in Māori—is a deeply complex, core term in Pasifika expression meaning the heart, centre, womb or breath (Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Taisi Efi, 2003). It is important to note that in the Tongan language the word manava differs from the word mānava. Mānava is breathe while manava can mean two things. First, it refers to the heart, centre or womb of a woman—the source of nutrition and life for an unborn baby. The second means food prepared and carried for travellers during ocean excursions. This meaning is used in relation to pikipiki hama kae vaevae manava. The two meanings slide into each other, as Tamasese Taifi Efi (2003) has articulated above, providing a very positive image of life-giving sustenance. Pikipiki hama is used to capture the ancient practice of lashing together of vaka moana as they traversed the Pacific Ocean to sustain and support each other. Important to note here is that "coming together" resists further homogenising the already problematic simplified notions of Māori and Pasifika identities in the tertiary sector. Instead, we understand each of the research projects, researchers, their topics and how they have worked with students as self-determined but interrelated sets of ideas. As an Indigenous framework. As an Indigenous framework, it is informed by a relational ontology that centres relationship building and connections.

Lashing is a traditional ancient practice of the Pacific used and seen in their architecture to bind beams and also hold their navigational canoes together (Teaiwa, 2010). The lashings are made from kafa (Fotu & Tafa, 2009). Filipe Tohi, a renowned Tongan artist and sculptor, articulates lalava as a form of lashing used to bind and connect, and more recently has developed three-dimensional sculptures in which he demonstrates the traditional practice of binding also with aesthetic properties (Hamilton, 2014). Here we recall the words of a young Tongan teacher who attended our He Vaka Moana presentation at the Vaka Pasifiki Education Conference at the University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji, in July 2018. He drew attention to the lashing of the vaka together as key to maintaining connections and sustaining relationships with one another. In the popao model developed by Fotu and Tafa (2009), the lashings are perceived as

communication between all relevant parties. If the lashing is weak, the entire structure is likely to be weak also. As articulated earlier, we are embarking on a process of looking inwards for strength from our own cultural values and ways of being. In doing so, we conceptualise and envision how each vaka lash together by drawing on what political scholar and poet Haunani-Kay Trask (2002, as cited in Good-year- Ka'ōpua, 2016) coined as the "rope of resistance". Goodyear-Ka'ōpua (2016) argues that the rope of resistance makes up what she asserts are methodological ropes that are critical for research and resurgence. She draws on four central principles from her Hawaiian culture, namely, lahui, ea, kuleana and pono, as the threads woven together to make a rope that will hold (Goodyear-Ka'ōpua, 2016, p. 2). Further, these four principles are single cords woven together to make a strong rope that holds things together and provides a way for connecting people. Goodyear-Ka'ōpua (2016) maintains that the concept of the intellectual rope is the work of early generations, who weaved and stored them for later generations to use. In the context of He Vaka Moana, the two navigators guide and provide the knowledge for when and how the lashing is carried out.

When Filipe Tohi talks of lalava or lashing, it is about how it can bind and hold materials together. More recently, he has argued that the patterns made on his artistic work of lalava also hold metaphorical and physical ties to cultural knowledge. To return to our young Tongan teacher's comment, the four principles underpin how each vaka or fellow lash to one another. A shared understanding of the aim and purpose of their journey enables the fellows to navigate their way in the vast space of academia. More importantly, the four principles provide both the rope and the knowledge of when and how to lash together. This is the sustainable aspect of the pikipiki hama kae vaevae manava. The fellows come together in purposeful ways guided by the two navigators, thereby ensuring that the act of binding is meaningful.

Coming together this year has entailed monthly hui hosted at CLeaR with guest speakers, regular professional development events, workshops, talanoa groups and writing retreats. As well as the fellows enacting pikipiki hama with one another, the fellows also pikipiki hama with colleagues in their faculty and across the wider university community, thereby growing the fleet.

In our use of this seafaring metaphor, we also acknowledge a similar metaphor: pikipiki katea kae vaevae melenga. Both metaphors are often referred

to interchangeably. The difference between them lies in where and when the ocean canoes join with one another to share rations and resources. While pikipiki hama kae vaevae manava refers to the joining of the outriggers in order to provide balance and to enable the voyagers to share, pikipiki katea kae vaevae melenga is when the canoes join at the hull (Fotu & Tafa, 2009). Both metaphors speak to seafarers' awareness and knowledge of the sea conditions as well as of the relationship between voyagers of each canoe. Hence, if the sea is rough, then lashing at the hull will be very dangerous. Both metaphors imply good practice and appropriate ways of sharing with one another. We posit this paper within the first metaphor because it points to a way of coming together intentionally to share what is most precious to us. Manava or manawa points to the human inner core; as Tama Ataua Tupua Tamasese Efi (2003) asserts, it is "the heart, centre, womb or breath" where the sharing originates from.

Pikipiki hama: Working together

He Vaka Moana is grounded in good and meaningful relations. In reflecting on both Māori and Pasifika peoples' relationality, He Vaka Moana creates a space for the fellows to come together and engage with one another. Indigenous peoples articulate a relational ontology that is grounded in their relationship with one another and with their environment, including the land, the cosmos and their thoughts and ideas. Relationality is core to the Pasifika word va.

Va, as we understand it, is our connection with one another as citizens of Oceania and all "things" (both living and non-living) in our environment (Anae, 2010; Kaʻili, 2005; Thaman, 2008). The word va exists in many Oceania/Moana languages, including Aotearoa, where it is referred to as wā (Kaʻili, 2005). The notion of va or relational space refers to a space between two or more points, people or things. Here we argue that the va is active rather than in the Western notion of space, where it is empty or null. From a Tongan perspective, Kaʻili (2005) draws attention to va as the space in between. When one understands and acknowledges va, it brings a sense of obligation alongside with the need to take care, tend and maintain existing relationships (Kaʻili, 2005; Mila-Schaaf, 2006; Thaman, 2008). Similarly, Wendt (1999, as cited in Reynolds, 2016) articulates the importance of va from a Samoan perspective, where the emphasis is on maintaining and nurturing the relationship. Mila-Schaaf and Hudson (2009) link a well-balanced va to "wellbeing and good

outcome". Along the same vein, Anae (2010) points out the significance of va not only in our sociocultural contexts but in the way it is also relevant and central to Pacific research relationships and educational contexts. She expands on the Samoan practice of teu le va or taking good care of the relationship at all times. The value of teu le va lies in its "prescribed ethical behaviour" that underpins it. "By its very nature teu le va has multi-relational, situational and spiritual inferences" (Anae, 2010, p. 13). Any actions to take care of the va are underpinned by cultural values, obligations and responsibilities to sustain good and long-lasting relations (Anae, 2010; Kaʻili, 2005; Reynolds, 2016; Thaman, 2008). A significant contribution of Anae's work in this space is her argument for the need for Pasifika researchers to teu le va first with Māori as tangata whenua and with relevant parties, including the institution, funding agencies and our communities.

In this research space, there is a need to constantly tend to the va in order to maintain good relations and, more importantly, work with one another to counter a colonial relationship that has continually minimised the importance of Indigenous knowledge and values in comparison with Western knowledge systems and paradigms (Mila-Schaaf & Hudson, 2009). Reynolds (2016) argues that va has a place in both the classroom and the New Zealand educational system.

He Vaka Moana as a fellowship model creates a space that Mila-Schaaf and Hudson (2009) define as negotiated space. In a context where Pasifika people come together with fellow colleagues and staff who are of diverse ethnic and cultural identities, a negotiated space enables research activities across cultures. Sanga (2005) points to the need for a better understanding of relationships between Pasifika and non-Pacific, a combination he sees as a new kind of "scrutinisers" (p. 16). Although his call aims at encouraging overseas aid in the region, it is relevant to our current context. Sanga (2005) argues that what he calls "new scrutineers" (p. 16) will consist of Pasifika peoples who are committed to forming good relationships with others, including non-Pacific Islanders. "These two categories of people will form the new scrutineers. As a group they understand both worlds; the metropolitan and the Pacific; the city and the village. They appreciate the tensions and dilemmas of both worlds. As leaders, they see the need for change and aspire to develop a vision for change" (Sanga, 2005, p. 16). He Vaka Moana brings together Pasifika and non-Pacific peoples who are Oceanic and who share a focus on teaching and learning. Oceania is vast,

and in Hauʻofa's (2008) vision it is big enough to bring all peoples together, to work towards a common goal. He Vaka Moana is an open space that allows a group of researchers to work alongside one another despite their cultural differences.

According to Johansson-Fua (2016), a cultural hybridity space emerges in a context where researchers come together to engage in knowledge re-creation and production. Bhabha (1994, as cited in Johansson-Fua, 2016) refers to this as the "third space", where negotiation can take place to explore new considerations and meanings. Further, in the third space it is possible for different positions to emerge, and even possible to disrupt historical establishments, while at the same time, work in the third space can also "settle" the "unsettled" (Johansson-Fua, 2016, p. 36). While Bhabha's third space provides a vision for co-existing with others, it can also evoke a place of tension because of the multitude of cross-cultural interactions that take place within it. Sharma-Brymer (2007, as cited in Johansson-Fua, 2016) concedes the third space as a place of tension and at the same time an actionable space where researchers can consider the value and effectiveness of their work.

Importantly, the work of the He Vaka Moana fellowship aims to benefit the wider community of Māori and Pasifika whānau and communities (Taufeʻulungaki, 2001) by improving the tertiary success rate for their students. Johansson-Fua (2016) in support points out that an Oceanic researcher "works to change mind-sets and expand the power and control for the benefit of the Pacific communities" (p. 37). Similarly, Māori scholars (Pihama, 2001; G. H. Smith, 1997; L. T. Smith, 1999) have argued for Kaupapa Māori theory and research that places at its centre Māori language, ways of being and community aspirations for positive transforming change. Such an approach requires a conscious and active lashing together of theory and practice—what Graham Smith coined as Kaupapa Māori praxis. Therefore, a transforming praxis is not "complete" once change is realised; instead, the states of conscientisation, resistance and transforming action need to be continually re-engaged.

When canoes come together to lash up for mutual support on Oceanic voyages, they are guided by navigators, whose role is to provide the knowledge and processes for lashing of their vaka. As navigators/leaders of the fellowship, we feel privileged to undertake this traditional role.

He Vaka Moana: Strengths and challenges

In academia we do not talk enough to one another nor are there sufficient safe spaces for purposeful conversations to take place. Similarly, we do not share enough of our successes and challenges in ways that advance success for our students. He Vaka Moana as a research fellowship centres Māori students and Pasifika student success and advances how we can employ our own ways of inquiry to further develop our research processes in a context that is grounded in Western paradigms. This project sees research fellows each navigating their vaka moana projects in purposeful and deliberate ways within the institution, regularly coming together to pikipiki hama—to share ideas and resources and gain knowledge from the navigators and other wayfinders. More importantly, it centres the responsibility on educators, thereby shifting the focus away from the deficit view that has been dominant in how we think about and work with our Māori and Pasifika students.

Statistics about school decile, rank score, secondary school to tertiary transition and preparedness, and low completion rates are regularly forwarded as determinants of success. While this statistical information is part of the story, we argue that it emerges from a deficit position that has not, and continues to not, serve Māori and Pasifika aspirations for success in the tertiary sector.

We acknowledge that there is no one prescribed model or answer to address Māori and Pasifika success. Based on our experience of He Vaka Moana, we offer some of the key enablers for a model as we look towards the horizon for strength-based ways to work collaboratively, both intra-institutionally and inter-institutionally, for better access, outcomes and opportunities for Māori students and Pasifika students.

Our model is also based on an internationally proven model from the University College Dublin, where they identified and developed key academic staff "with both the pedagogic expertise and the leadership capacity to effect transformational change in teaching, learning and assessment practices both in discipline-specific areas and thematically, across the institution" (UCD Teaching & Learning, 2020, para. 2). Fellows focus on "areas of strategic importance to the university . . . informed by a scholarly approach to the enhancement of teaching and learning and . . . curricular structures" (UCD Teaching & Learning, 2020, para. 3).

He Vaka Moana develops a sustainable tuakana–teina network of interdisciplinary fellows

who are academic and professional leaders in teaching, learning, assessment and research across the institution. Through using robust processes that test, evaluate and reflect on Māori and Pasifika students' success, our fellows construct innovative pedagogical projects to advance students' success, while ensuring significant, positive and enduring changes occur institutionally.

He Vaka Moana also encompasses what Alkema (2014) documents as the three pillars for Pasifika learners' success: people, place, and practices and pedagogies. Our model weaves these three key elements: by drawing on what we conceive as an Oceanic metaphor and methodology, we bring together a group of academics and professional staff (people) to work purposefully across faculties in a higher education institution (place) using culturally sustainable methodologies to (a) examine current practices, and (b) develop pedagogies that will help Māori and Pasifika students succeed (practices and pedagogies).

Similarly, the work of Sciascia (2017) provides an example of an inter-institutional project for improving participation, retention and progression of Māori tertiary learners in the Whanganui Region; two private training establishments (PTEs) collaborated on a common kaupapa and set of relationships that brought together distinct but complementary strengths to develop collaborative and complementary programming (p. 25). Importantly, the outcomes of this collaboration were not limited to the two PTEs but involved a local iwi authority and wider community groups with similar goals to improve Māori student retention and successful outcomes.

Sciascia's (2017) work highlights key considerations that have informed the planning and design of He Vaka Moana, especially the important role that Māori pedagogies, alongside people and practices, play in contributing to Māori learner success. Of relevance is the role that tuakana–teina approaches and culturally embedded methods or methodologies play in improving Māori student outcomes. Here we reiterate our agenda and role in decolonising research: we aim to legitimise our own values and Indigenous ways of being in a space that has continually rendered our voices and perspectives silent.

He Vaka Moana as an initiative proactively and positively engages with several national and institutional strategic priorities. Those involved care deeply that Māori and Pasifika students feel welcomed, feel empowered, feel a sense of belonging, feel pride, and experience success in their studies and, more widely, in their lives.

It is useful and important to note here the number of challenges that He Vaka Moana experienced. The .2 time release for each fellow is vital to sustain the momentum of the fellowship. However, it can also be a point of tension for the fellows as they try to carve out their time for the fellowship. In our experiences, if left unchecked the .2 time release can easily be absorbed and become an added responsibility in an already overloaded full-time workload. The low and overworked number of Māori and Pasifika staff within the institution makes it difficult for the fellows to prioritise their fellowship work. Hence, their .2 time release is often shelved in favour of other work demands. The support and understanding of managers, deans and the senior leadership team is critical to the progress and further development of He Vaka Moana. While we held on to our aspiration that He Vaka Moana would be taken up, we failed to obtain traction at the key decision-making tables.

Conclusion

In this paper we demonstrate how we as Indigenous academics and researchers can draw on the strength of our shared ancestral history for our benefit. We are decolonising research while at the same time seeking to advance the success of Māori students and Pasifika students in higher education. The He Vaka Moana fellowship creates a space for champions in teaching and learning to purposefully come together to pikipiki hama and engage in deliberate conversations to exchange knowledge and share stories. We recognise the critical role of Indigenous knowledge and values in our post-colonial context. As Māori and Pasifika peoples, we must look to our own systems of knowledge to develop methodologies to investigate our own problems and make visible the way we see our world.

Glossary

Māori

Aotearoa	New Zealand
hui	meetings
iwi	tribal kin group
Kaupapa Māori	Māori approach, methodology
manawa	heart (of a person)
Māori	Indigenous peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand
tangata whenua	people of the land; people Indigenous to Aotearoa
Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa	the Pacific Ocean

tuakana	elder sibling, more experienced relation
teina	younger sibling, less experienced relation
tūpuna	ancestors
wā	area, region, definite space
waka moana	seafaring vessels
whānau	family; nuclear, extended family

Hawaiian

ea	sovereignty and leadership
kuleana	positionality and obligations
lahui	collective identity and self-definition
pono	harmonious relationships

Samoan

teu le va	maintaining/tidying up the relational space

Tongan

kafa	plaited coconut fibre cord
lalava	traditional form of cord lashing
pikipiki hama kae vaevae manava	to bind or lash together at the hull of vaka moana and share resources
pikipiki katea kae vaevae melenga	to bind or lash together the outriggers of vaka moana at the hull
popao	outrigger canoe
talanoa	conversation, sharing stories, creating dialogues

Pan-Pacific

Pasifika	Peoples of the Pacific Ocean
va	relational space between
va‘a	boat
vaka moana	seafaring vessels

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IGNITING THE VĀ

Vā-kā methodology in a Māori-Pasifika research fellowship

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Abstract

Drawing on nautical notions of traversing the Pacific Ocean, we seek to encourage Māori and Pasifika researchers to come together in purposeful and transforming ways, not to further homogenise Oceanic identities but, as many sang in active resistance in Aotearoa New Zealand during the 1990s, Kia kotahi ra Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa ("Unite as one like the Pacific Ocean"). We present Vā-kā as a methodology that emerged from a research fellowship focused on Māori and Pasifika student success at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. Conceptually, we lash together the Pasifika term vā—relational time and space—with the Māori term kā—to ignite, to consider, to be in action. Bound together we forward Vā-kā methodology as a way to ignite Māori and Pasifika researcher relationships, and to share ideas, resources and "crew members" in allegiances that work to positively support our different and similar educational agenda, and seek transforming change for our diverse and complex communities.

Keywords

Indigenous methodology, Māori and Pasifika research, decolonising methodologies, higher education

Introduction

Māori and Pasifika peoples are people of Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa, the Pacific Ocean. They are connected through whakapapa, language, ancestral ties and shared (and differing) traditional stories, while simultaneously maintaining and asserting identities that are complex, heterogeneous and directly connect us to the Moana. Our more recent histories of colonisation, capitalism and changing connections to land, language and identity mean that we are regularly and problematically homogenised and defined by the "other". In tertiary education, the terms Māori (who identify themselves in tribal, sub-tribal and whānau groupings) and Pasifika (who identify as family and village collectives within larger island regions) are used as simplistic descriptors to gloss over complex and multilayered identities.

While continuing to interrogate and complexify identities and how they are used in education is important (Anae, 1997; Thaman, 1997; Webber, 2008), this article sets a different course, forwarding a research approach that lashes Māori and Pasifika researchers together in a way that seeks to maintain sovereignty as we support our multiple and diverse educational agenda. Theorising Vā-kā as methodology is a re-voyaging of ancient Moana relationships. It is an attempt

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to re-navigate, re-connect and re-ignite in and through the space(s) that bind us as Māori and Pasifika peoples in the context of transformative Moana research.

Moana concepts of voyaging deliberately ebb and flow throughout this article. Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa is the largest body of water on the planet and has for millennia sustained and nurtured our ancestors who learned to live in harmony with its rhythms. From food source to highway, from cleanser of the land through to the holder of stories, the Moana has shaped and formed the identities of its people with each lap of its waves upon islands from the sovereign kingdom of Hawai'i in the north to Rapanui in the east; from the eastern seaboard of Australia in the west and Aotearoa New Zealand in the south. Describing the term Oceania, Hau'ofa (2008) says:

> Oceania is vast, Oceania is expanding, Oceania is hospitable and generous, Oceania is humanity rising from the depths of brine and regions of fire deeper still. Oceania is us. We are the sea, we are the ocean, we must wake up to this ancient truth and together use it to overturn all hegemonic views that aim ultimately to confine us again, physically and psychologically, in the tiny spaces that we have resisted accepting as our sole appointed places and from which we have recently liberated ourselves. (p. 39)

Moana languages are rich and embodied, with much of their deeply held knowledge contained within their etymology. Colonising processes disrupted intergenerational language transmission, particularly with te reo Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand, meaning that many of the complex meanings contained within the language have not been transmitted (Fishman, 1996; Harlow, 2005; O'Regan, 2011). Māori scholar Taina Pohatu (2011) describes te reo Māori as a "library of language" deposited by generations and holding potential solutions for today's problems within its immense tomes of knowledge—for those who have the eyes to read it (p. 3). Indigenous scholars are encouraged to innovate, adapt and draw on the knowledge contained within our Indigenous and Moana languages and ways of being. Here we boldly go one step further to draw together a Māori term with a Pasifika term to create a new idea from old knowledge. It is on the "high tide" of Moana scholarship, rich with language, knowledge, theory and history that we set our course

The choice of terminology in a Vā-kā theorisation is important to our argument as "old"

language is theorised and lashed together in "new" ways. Choosing terms such as Moana over Oceanic, and Pasifika over Pacific is deliberate, and we simultaneously acknowledge that Pasifika scholars in particular choose to use these terms in different ways. Hau'ofa (2008), for example, prefers the term Oceania "above all others" (p. 52) to describe the Moana, while Suaalii-Sauni's (2017) preference for the term Pasifika lies in the way in which the word "brings alive to the senses" the familiar sounds that Moana languages share (p. 163). Our views align with Naepi (2019), who explains that her use of the term Pasifika is "not about homogeneity but about bringing our people together to better serve our own interests in a globalized world" (p. 221). Furthermore, Māhina (2010) argues that Moana is "the ethnographic indigenous-based, internally mediated name" rather than the "problematic foreign-led, externally imposed label Oceania or for that matter Pacific" (p. 168). Continued discussion amongst and between Māori and Pasifika scholars around the purpose and use of our terms is yet another vital aspect of us coming together.

Vā-kā methodology is our contribution to the exciting literature wave of Indigenous methodologies that have emerged from the Moana (see Campbell, 2019; Fa'avae, 2016; Hau'ofa, 2008; Johansson-Fua, 2014; Lee, 2008; L. T. Smith, 1999; Te Ava & Page, 2018). We choose here to use the term Moana or Moana-nui-a-Kiwa to shift the focus from a Western-applied naming of the "Pacific Ocean" and bring forth the familiar sounds of our Moana languages. More specifically, the act of creatively binding language is central to our assertion of Vā-kā methodology as we lash together two terms—vā and kā—from two (or more) sets of Moana languages to demonstrate a combined Māori and Pasifika researcher approach.

Indigenous and Moana research methodologies such as Vā-kā insist that researchers articulate their relationship(s) in and to the research. What or who should be included or excluded in the work and how data are interpreted, analysed and presented, and for what purpose, means that researcher positionality is a critical Indigenous methodological consideration (Chilisa, 2012; L. T. Smith, 1999). The notion of vā reinforces how groups and communities are valued over the individual (Autagavaia, 2001; Taufe'ulungaki, 2004). More importantly, it reinforces how in relation to others the integrity of the self is shaped and realised: "The self does not exist alone, and the Samoan individual does not survive in isolation"

(Autagavaia, 2001, p. 59). In the context of higher education research, it is also a guiding code of conduct that reminds us to be mindful of our intentions and our actions. Vā-kā methodology places importance on positionality and relationships, paying attention to the forming, maintaining and nurturing of relationships with and between researchers, and therefore we introduce ourselves at the outset.

The second author is a Tongan-born woman from the islands of Falevai Vavaʻu, Tongaleleka Haʻapai and ʻAtataa. She is a lecturer and academic developer at the University of Auckland. I am a Māori woman from the Te Rarawa, Ngā Puhi and Te Ati Awa iwi of Aotearoa New Zealand. A te reo Māori teacher and Kaupapa Māori researcher, my interests are in decolonial education, arts research, Kaupapa Māori methodologies and higher education. Emerging from our experience of working together as a Māori woman and a Tongan woman, ʻEma and I are keenly interested in how Māori and Pasifika academics can further enhance our Moana research relationships to create change in the tertiary sector.

We begin by introducing the "problem" that exists with a Māori and Pasifika research collaboration, locating our theorisation of Vā-kā methodology in the context of the He Vaka Moana research fellowship. Next, we scan the ocean/literature-scape of Indigenous and Moana methodologies as the theoretical foundations of Vā-kā methodology, unpacking the language of vā and kā, which we suggest can be lashed together to create exciting potential research relationships from old Moana ties.

Naming and claiming the problem

Put simply, Māori and Pasifika researchers in higher education do not talk enough. Our bodies of theory and research have necessarily developed their own distinct approaches that emerge from, and are in response to, both the different and the similar issues that our diverse groups encounter. Kaupapa Māori theory, for example, emerged as a radical response from Māori academics in the 1990s to create space for Māori-centric thinking and research in the academy, or what Māori scholar Leonie Pihama (2001) calls a "culturally defined theoretical space" (p. 77). Articulated by a number of prominent Māori academics (Henry & Pene, 2001; Irwin, 1994; Lee, 2008; Pihama, 2001; G. H. Smith, 2003; L. T. Smith, 1999), Kaupapa Māori theory places Māori language, values and beliefs at its centre, encouraging Māori researchers to look to their own sets of knowledge

to develop approaches to research. From this theoretical foundation, robust and innovative Kaupapa Māori research has for 30 years tackled an array of research problems across multidisciplinary fields both in Aotearoa New Zealand and abroad.

Similarly, Pasifika theorists have developed a number of innovative research approaches, including Kakala (Johansson-Fua, 2014; Thaman, 1993), Talanoa (Faʻavae, 2016; Vaioleti, 2006), Tivaevae (Maua-Hodges, 2001), the Fijian Vanua Research Framework (Nabobo-Baba, 2006) and Faʻafaletui (Tamasese et al., 1997), to name a few. In addition, we acknowledge and lean on the work of Pacific scholars such as Albert Wendt, Epeli Hauʻofa, David Gegeo and Manulani Meyer as voyaging pioneers who have theorised, contested and foregrounded Indigenous knowledges and research methods in this space.

It could be argued that Māori and Pasifika people have been socially set against each other through systemic racism and societal structures that have discouraged the forging of Moana relationships, forcing us to compare and contrast ourselves rather than collaborating and collectivising (Anae et al., 2015; Harris, 2004; Suaalii-Sauni, 2017). Airini et al. (2010), for example, discuss the need for Pacific researchers to teu le vā—or nurture relationships—with tāngata whenua and vice versa in order to grow Māori and Pasifika research space. Imagine for a moment the potential disruption to the monocultural social and political status quo in Aotearoa New Zealand that would result from a strengthened political, social and economic alliance of Māori and Pasifika energy.

There are examples of Māori and Pasifika collaboration in our broader Indigenous contexts—the great collaborative advances made in ocean-going sea voyaging (Evans, 2015; Howe, 2006) developed through Māori, Hawaiian, Tahitian and many other Pacific nations reclaiming and revitalising knowledge of seafaring vessels. Another example is in the field of arts research, where forums such as the Pacific Arts Festival draw together artists from all four winds of the Moana to collaborate. Yet Māori and Pasifika theoretical collaboration in education, particularly higher education, in Aotearoa New Zealand is lagging behind the fleet.

A recent example of Māori and Pasifika research in conversation with each other is a book chapter written by Samoan criminologist Tamasailau Suaalii-Sauni (2017), who writes about a direct relationship between the vā and Kaupapa Māori. She discusses the need for "a more deliberate conversation between Pasifika researchers about

how to go about engaging with Māori peoples and with research tools, concepts, and theories, including Kaupapa Māori" (p. 162). We align with Suaalii-Sauni's (2017) assertion that the time is ripe for Māori and Pasifika research to collaborate in ways that enhance our individual and wider collective agenda. Here we recall Graham Smith's response on the issue of Pasifika working together with Māori particularly in engaging with Kaupapa Māori and methodologies: "It is about people, it is about relationships" (as cited in Naepi, 2015). There is a need for increased and productive conversations between Māori and Pasifika researchers, our concepts and cultural frameworks. Vā-kā methodology offers a way to facilitate this kind of purposeful and deliberate conversation.

It is important to reinforce here the complex and heterogeneous nature of Māori and Pasifika identities. Resisting the tendency to homogenise identities and/or re-entrench boundaries between these groups, instead we seek to ignite the relational space between by theorising an approach to encourage Māori and Pasifika researchers to come together, each bringing with them, and maintaining, their sovereign ways of being to forward collaborative research that supports our wider, multiple and complex agendas.

He Vaka Moana research fellowship

Vā-kā methodology emerged from our experience as a Māori woman and a Tongan woman co-leading a one-year research fellowship on Māori and Pasifika student "success" at the University of Auckland. The fellowship offered a 0.2 time release for one year to nine academic and professional staff who each developed a strengths-based teaching and learning research project around Māori and Pasifika student success within their faculty. Five of these projects are presented in this special issue. A mixed "crew", the nine fellows consisted of three Māori, three Pasifika and three Pākehā across all but one of the university faculties.

The involvement of non-Māori and non-Pasifika research allies in a tertiary context is necessary—and in the context of this fellowship was insisted upon by the institution. At the University of Auckland, Māori comprise 5.9% and Pasifika 2.7% of academic staff (University of Auckland, 2018, p. 8), which, while low, is slightly above the national averages of 5% Māori and 1.7% Pasifika (McAllister et al., 2019; Naepi, 2019). Two recently published articles, "Why Isn't My Professor Māori?" (McAllister et al., 2019) and "Why Isn't My Professor Pasifika?" (Naepi, 2019) work powerfully in tandem to highlight the

"active structural underserving" (Naepi, 2019, p. 221) and exclusion of Māori and Pasifika from academic roles in New Zealand universities. For example, despite a 26% increase of Māori doctoral students between 2009 and 2016 (McAllister et al., 2019, p. 237) and broadly similar "equity and diversity" staffing policies that espouse the recruitment and retention of Māori and Pasifika staff, Pākehā academic staff remain the dominant ethnicity, accounting for between 56% and 83% of academic staff in our universities.

The tertiary sector continues to ignore issues of systemic racism and fails to prioritise the development, hiring, retention and promotion of Māori and Pasifika academics (McAllister et al., 2019; Naepi, 2019). Naepi (2019) argues that highlighting the critically low numbers of Pasifika academics is a powerful exercise in change to "hold government and universities accountable for their inaction against structural racism" (p. 220). Until the tertiary sector actively addresses these staffing inequities, our growing student body of Māori and Pasifika students will problematically continue to rely on the "goodwill" and cultural capabilities of non-Māori and non-Pasifika teaching staff to work with us in this space. Critical conversations must continue amongst Māori and Pasifika, and with non-Māori and non-Pasifika, about how to best serve the needs of our students in ways that neither appropriate cultural knowledge nor continue to homogenise cultural groups and perpetuate racial inequities in education.

Forwarding Vā-kā methodology does not set out to exclude non-Māori and non-Pasifika research allies or ideas. In the context of the He Vaka Moana research fellowship, strong and enduring relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous fellows were forged as we learned about our own strengths and weaknesses, abilities and fragilities, through time spent developing and consequently igniting the vā between us. This relationship is particularly crucial given the low number of Māori and Pasifika staff across the higher education sector. As with most relationships where diverse entities are drawn together, the fellowship was not devoid of friction and frustration as different sets of assumptions and cultural capabilities occasionally prompted tense debate and disagreement. As insecurities and anxieties were revealed, emotions were sometimes piqued but appeared to be mediated through, and because of, the time and energy spent in developing the vā within the fellowship.

The emotive issues of Indigenous and non-Indigenous collaboration, in research and beyond,

are complex. In the fellowship, for example, a non-Indigenous fellow may have been a senior academic with a great deal of research experience and expertise but little knowledge of Māori and Pasifika culture. Conversely, some of the Indigenous fellows who brought in-depth cultural expertise and knowledge may have had less experience in aspects of research such as publication or ethics. One example was what we might name in Te Ao Māori as kanohi kitea, that is, the "seen face", a phrase used to describe a person who always shows up or takes the time to be present as a demonstration of commitment to the group. Those who appeared at He Vaka meetings irregularly or sometimes not at all were commented on as not contributing to or nurturing the vā. The fellowship demonstrated that nurturing and maintaining of the wā (space) and vā (relational space) through being present and actively involved was critical and expected.

There are many and varied ways that researchers, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, come together to collaborate in research (and beyond). We encourage other cultural research collaborations to identify their connections to one another and to theorise their own language, knowledges and ways of being to develop transforming research methodologies. How, for example, might Māori and Aboriginal researchers work together, or perhaps Tongan and Hawaiian doctoral students, drawing on their common and intersecting knowledges? Here we privilege the powerful and unique relational space—the wā or vā—between Māori and Pasifika researchers by lashing together a Pasifika word and a Māori word to theorise our experience and offer a way to further develop purposeful and transforming research journeys. Having named our fellowship He Vaka Moana, 'Ema's cultural and language knowledge provided a Tongan proverb that gave us our conceptual framework.

Pikipiki hama kae vaevae manava

The fellowship drew its strength from the Tongan proverb "pikipiki hama kae vaevae manava" (see Wolfgramm-Foliaki & Smith, 2020). Pikipiki hama means to stick, bind or link strongly to the outrigger of a vaka moana (ocean-going canoe). Vaevae means to give or share, and manava (similar to the word manawa in Māori) is a deeply complex, core term in Pasifika expression meaning the heart, centre, womb or breath (Efi, 2003). This proverb speaks to the ancient Moana practice of lashing together the outriggers of canoes whilst at sea, a practice that enabled ocean travellers

to swap resources, exchange information about their travels and experiences, weather and ocean conditions, and sometimes even exchange crew members before unlashing and continuing on their journey.

Our theorisation of pikipiki hama in this research fellowship resists the tired and problematic education trope of "we are all in this vaka/waka together" or "let's all paddle this vaka/waka together" to denote an uncritical and overly romantic idea of unity or coming together of ideas and often cultural ways of being. Such rhetoric raises the question of whose vaka/waka am I being asked/coerced into, and are we really paddling in the same direction, with the same purpose and with a mutually agreed destination? Or indeed is getting in the "one vaka/waka" a further exercise in cultural assimilation? Instead, we suggest that in coming together each vessel's rangatiratanga or cultural sovereignty is better maintained and better facilitates a sharing of power and choice around when, with whom and for how long vessels may choose to be lashed to another. We are interested in igniting the vā to activate and give energy to the potentiality that exists in the space that binds and feeds the space between Māori and Pasifika in a research context.

Pikipiki hama was theorised and enacted in our research fellowship as a way to bring people, projects, ideas and identities together that encouraged each entity to retain their rangatiratanga while actively encouraging and creating space for productive discussion, critique and learning to take place. One of the research fellows (see Fonua, 2020) established regular monthly talanoa (a Tongan process of sharing time space and discussion) for academic and professional staff to meet and discuss important pedagogical issues in relationship to each other. Amongst the fellows, pikipiki hama was enacted through monthly wānanga and regular hui to come together both socially and more methodically to write, share ideas, talk through research issues and consider the impact and implications of our collective research agenda. Importantly, our intention was to enact and enable the forming and enriching of relationships—igniting the vā then fanning the flames—to create spaces that are all too rare for Māori and Pasifika academics in higher education.

The *why*, or reason to take up Vā-kā as a research approach, is straightforward: to work productively together to support change for our people. The *how* is far more complex. The practical applications to chart a course using Vā-kā methodology are as vast as the Moana itself, and

while practical examples such as Talanoa mentioned above are useful (see the five articles by He Vaka Moana fellows in this issue), we do not attempt here to provide a "how to do Vā-kā methodology"—such an attempt fails to recognise the heterogeneous complexities of varied and different contexts, people, capabilities and aspirations. Instead, we argue for *why* enhanced Māori and Pasifika research relationships are vital and encourage others to consider their own *how* in their own contexts based on the key tenets of productive Māori and Pasifika collaboration, sovereignty and transformation that Vā-kā methodology forwards.

Theorising a Moana methodology

As Moana people we have always been theoretical, developing our own methodologies or ways of approaching problems. These methodical sets of knowledge have for centuries supported great advances, enabling Indigenous communities around the world to explore, adapt and advance our technologies (Chilisa, 2012; Efi, 2003; Hau'ofa, 2008; Kovach, 2009; Meleiseā, 1987; Pihama, 2001; L. T. Smith, 1999; Thaman, 1998, 2000). Yet methodology in our more recent history has been captured and claimed by the academy, nudging our ancient ways of research to the academic margins. Here we turn to our own Māori and Pasifika scholars who have chartered similar courses through the sea of literature, connecting islands of theory that create and reinforce our whakapapa links.

Eminent Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith's seminal work *Decolonizing Methodologies* (1999) strongly advocates for re-framing and re-claiming methodologies as a critical element of a strategic Indigenous research agenda. Smith discusses the tides or states of survival, recovery, development and self-determination that intersect with those of decolonisation, healing, transformation and mobilisation, none of which are linear; nor are they goals or ends in themselves. Instead, they are "processes which connect, inform and clarify the tensions between the local, the regional and the global . . . processes which can be incorporated into practices and methodologies" (L. T. Smith, p. 116). Indigenous methodologies have evolved to fit a contemporary reality shaped by the struggle to resist the assault of colonisation through projects of cultural reclamation. Educationalist and academic Leah Abayao (2006) discusses Indigenous methodology as that which is "acquired over generations by communities as they interact with the environment . . . exploring indigenous

technological knowledge and knowledge transmission systems, and recasting the potentialities they represent" (p. 180).

Kaupapa Māori scholar Leonie Pihama (2001) reminds us that theory and methodology did not arrive with the coloniser. Rather, Indigenous peoples have for centuries engaged in their own forms of methodological research to test theories and advance thinking:

> As Māori we have a history of investigation. It is an ancient history of exploration, of navigation, not solely in the physical domain, but in ways that reach throughout the many dimensions of Te Ao Māori. These are all forms of research, they are all ways within which our people have developed knowledge and have located ourselves in the wider world. (Pihama, 2001, p. 47)

Consider, for example, the sophisticated navigational systems developed by our early ancestral sea voyagers that enabled them to criss-cross the Moana, technologies later regarded as superior to those of the Western world at the time (Evans, 2015). Navigational methods and methodologies such as these required high level theorisation, research, development and testing in order for return voyages across vast expanses of ocean to succeed. Pacific navigation is known to involve methodical systems that enabled Moana people to travel and successfully populate the countless islands in the region. Turnbull (1994) points out that Pacific navigation is the most outstanding example of a knowledge system that can be compared with Western technoscience. A more recent development is the New Zealand Ministry of Pacific Peoples' (2017) new Pacific policy analysis tool titled Kapasa. The word kapasa refers to the ancient Polynesian compass that was used by our ancestors to help them navigate the vast Pacific Ocean. As a policy tool it provides guidance for how Pacific perspectives and worldviews can be identified and included in wider policy.

Methodology, as an element of research, is an immutable aspect of academic scholarship. It refers to the concepts and theories that frame the way research is conducted, that is, the knowledges and influences that underpin research as a process for creating "new" knowledge. Over the last 40 years, Indigenous research methodologies within an academic context have taken up critical Indigenous theories (Kovach, 2005, 2009; L. T. Smith, 1999) that seek to re-claim, re-frame and re-present the lived realities of Indigenous peoples. Rather than accept a Western academic

definition of methodology, we are encouraged by other Indigenous researchers to look to our own "ways of being" in the world based on our own methodologies to create new knowledges that will serve us in our current lived realities. By re-claiming methodology as an aspect of being Indigenous that has for centuries served our people and allowed them to flourish, we are re-framing how methodology can be viewed both within academic paradigms and beyond.

Importantly, here we argue that methodology is a lived experience, a praxis if you will, of lashing together the theory and practice—the thinking and doing. We argue that Vā-kā methodology cannot simply be understood from a distance but must be enacted, embodied and experienced. Vā-kā methodology insists upon an understanding of the *who* I am that I bring to this research relationship, the language, the identity, the intent and the contribution that "I" offer to igniting the space. Important to note here is that in line with vā, the "I" or "self" is viewed in relation to others or the collective (Mila-Schaaf, 2006).

The vā and the kā

Vā has been theorised, embodied and enacted in research in a number of powerful ways by Pasifika scholars (see Anae, 2010; Autagavaia, 2001; Ka'ili, 2017; Māhina, 2010; Suaalii-Sauni, 2017; Taufe'ulungaki, 2001). Samoan criminologist Suaalii-Sauni (2017) describes the vā as "a central organizing principle in many Pasifika cultures [that] governs all inter-personal, inter-group, and sacred/secular relations and is intimately connected to a Pasifika sense of self or identity" (p. 163). In a Ministry of Education report on relationships across research and policy, Airini et al. (2010) state:

> Va—or vā, va'a, vaha—can be loosely translated as a spatial way of conceiving the secular and spiritual dimensions of relationships and relational order, that facilitates both personal and collective well-being, and teu le vā as the valuing, nurturing and looking after of these relationships to achieve optimal outcomes for all stakeholders. (p. 10)

Tēvita O. Ka'ili (2005) offers a Tongan scholar's perspective on Moana notions of vā. He describes vā as both social relationships and space (p. 90) and tauhi vā as the Tongan value and practice of "keeping good relations . . . to tend, or to nurture" (p. 92). He adds that "the performance of tauhi vā is often etched forever in the memories of people involved in the process" (p. 93). Samoan scholar

Melani Anae (2010) takes vā one step further, theorising a Samoan concept of teu le vā or the action of nurturing the vā, that is "to look after the space". She states that "by its very nature teu le vā has multi-relational, situational and spiritual references" (p. 13). Significantly, Anae's theory highlights the unique role of the vā within a Māori-Pasifika research relationship. She notes that the importance of "nurturing the vā and spaces that have already been created by tāngata whenua" was a means of acknowledging the special status of tāngata whenua in Aotearoa New Zealand (Anae, 2010, p. 17).

In the Māori language, definitions of wā (the Māori derivative of vā) are relevant to our theorisation. Wā is defined in *A Dictionary of the Maori Language* (Williams, 1997) as "definite space, time" (p. 472). *The Reed Dictionary of Modern Māori* (Ryan, 1995), meanwhile, defines wā as "an opportunity" (p. 330). The term wā appears in a number of Māori words such as wāhi, which means space to move, wānanga, as a learning or knowledge creation space, and wātea, to be clear of thought or free of burden. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) discusses how the concepts of time and space are particularly significant to Indigenous peoples, as well as the importance of reclaiming these ideas in a decolonising research agenda. "Space", she writes, "is often viewed in Western thinking as being static or divorced from time" (p. 52). In many Indigenous languages there is no clear distinction between the notions of time and space; in the Māori language, for example, the word for time and space—wā—is one and the same.

The Māori term for kā (with a macron) means to make fire, to be lighted or ignited and allow to burn, and, interestingly, ka (without a macron) also lends itself to our idea in that it means the commencement of a new action or condition (Williams, 1997, p. 81). By drawing on our knowledge of our respective languages to lash together a Māori term with a Pasifika term, we seek to enact Vā-kā, the igniting of the relationships between Māori and Pasifika researchers, of time and space, of interests and reciprocal ties that have for generations nurtured and bound us as Moana peoples. It is important to reiterate here that underpinning vā and wā is a commitment to ensure that the vā is nurtured and maintained, not just for research purposes but in all aspects of how we as Māori and Pasifika academics relate to one another, placing good relationships at its centre.

The vaka

The terms vaka (Tongan, Samoan), wa'a (Hawaiian) and waka (Māori) can be broadly defined as a canoe, vessel, vehicle or conveyance, of which there are many sub-types, such as waka taua (war canoes), a waka ama (outrigger canoes) or, in the present context, waka moana or ocean-going vessels (Evans, 2015). A resurgence of interest in ocean voyaging across the Moana has generated a sea swell of literature in the areas of vaka moana and sea navigation (Evans, 2015; Howe, 2006), reclaiming a rich source of maritime knowledge once in danger of being lost. Vaka have for generations served as powerful conceptual symbols within Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa. For example, in Vanuatu:

> The tree symbolizes rootedness in culture, while the canoe stands for movement along sea routes that connect people of different island locations. The canoe is history—the working out of relationships established through travel and movement of materials from one island to another. One may extend this metaphor to include present-day connections between Oceania and the surrounding continental landmasses and cultures. (Hau'ofa, 2008, p. 81)

More recently, vaka and its associated ocean terminology have been used as conceptual frameworks for arts practices (Looser, 2015) and in areas such as leadership (Spiller et al., 2015), to name just a few. In higher education, the idea of vaka moana has been used in powerful ways to bring students together in relationship and to encourage positive learning experiences (Teaiwa, 1994, 2017). In Pacific Studies at the University of Auckland, for example, Vaka Moana is a successful academic advancement programme grounded in Moana values to nurture the relationships between students and tutors.

Vā-kā within wider Indigenous research methodologies

We are encouraged to theorise Vā-kā methodology thanks to the powerful emergence of Indigenous research methodologies in the 1970s as part of a wider global movement of resistance and reclamation (see Chilisa, 2012; Kovach, 2005, 2009; Thaman, 1993, 2000). Indigenous researchers sought to re-centre Indigenous beliefs and privilege Indigenous knowledge systems in an effort to "decolonize dominant research methodologies" (Chilisa, 2012, p. 31) by theorising Indigenous approaches as valid, robust and rigorous forms of inquiry. Indigenous methodologies are decolonising and work to create legitimate academic space where the Indigenous disenfranchised and dispossessed, can re-claim, re-store and re-present—seeing with their own eyes their history of colonisation (Chilisa, 2012).

Indigenous research methodologies create space in the Western academy to view and conduct research through an Indigenous lens. Indigenous scholars such as Irwin (1994), Kovach (2009), Lee (2008), Maua-Hodges (2001), Nabobo-Baba (2008), Pihama (2001), Pohatu (2011), Royal (2011), Suaalii-Sauni (2011), L. T. Smith (1999), Thaman (1993, 2000) and Vaioleti (2006), amongst others, have encouraged other Indigenous researchers to look to our own systems of knowledge to develop methodologies to investigate our own problems and make visible the ways we see the world. Often activated by a politics of resistance, Indigenous researchers are using our own approaches to speak back to Western research practices that marginalise our ways of being. Instead, Indigenous methodologies work to re-centre, re-claim and re-present Indigenous knowledge as a valid and robust approach to research and, more importantly, as capable of contributing to positive transformations for Indigenous people.

Conclusion

Māori and Pasifika researchers must talk more. It is vital in our view that we create the wā and nurture the vā to come together in ways that create positive transformative change for our complex and diverse communities. Rather than further homogenise our broad decolonising agenda, we seek to ignite the space between us to offer ways to talk and share ideas. Theorising Vā-kā methodology hones in on a particular set of relationships, that is, the relationship between Māori and Pasifika researchers. Until the critically low numbers of Māori and Pasifika academics is addressed, it remains necessary to pikipiki hama with non-Indigenous allies capable of working within Indigenous Moana paradigms.

Theorising methodologies that examine deeply the language, beliefs and ways of being held within Māori and Pasifika sets of knowledge is critical to address issues that we face in our contemporary lived realities from within our ways of knowing, being and doing. Enabled and emboldened by Indigenous scholars who have, and continue to, chart the academic seascape, we forward Vā-kā methodology to encourage Indigenous Moana scholars to look to our own sets of ideas, understandings, knowledge, language and ways of being to theorise and seek transforming solutions. While Moana methodologies are becoming more visible

in academia, our methodologies are still held to the margins within Western (dominant) scholarship. Vā-kā is our contribution of one more "vaka to the fleet" of Indigenous and, more specifically, Moana methodology as an encouragement to new and emerging Moana researchers, as well as our experienced colleagues, to continue to collaborate, connect, ignite and transform.

Importantly, Vā-kā methodology charts a course into rarely traversed waters, that is, the body of water/wai /vai that both connects and separates Māori and Pasifika research(ers). While the same body of water nurtures and sustains, and sometimes batters and subsumes us, it is Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa, the Pacific Ocean, that ultimately connects us as Moana peoples, and it is to the Moana that we turn to once again ignite and join the space between us.

Glossary

Fa'afaletui	Samoan research methodology
He Vaka Moana	Oceanic Research Project
hui	meetings, gatherings
ka	commencing an action
kā	ignite, fire
Kakala	Tongan research methodology
kanohi kitea	the seen face, being present
kapasa	ancient Polynesian compass
Kaupapa Māori	Māori research methodology
Māori	Indigenous peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand
moana	ocean
Pasifika	peoples of the Pacific Ocean
pikipiki hama kae vaevae manava	to bind of lash together the outrigger of a vaka moana and share resources
rangatiratanga	cultural sovereignty
talanoa	sharing stories, creating dialogue in an inclusive, receptive space
Talanoa	Tongan research methodology
tāngata whenua	the people of the land, Indigenous Māori
Te Ao Māori	the Māori world
Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa	the Pacific Ocean
te reo Māori	Māori language
teu le vā	maintaining the relational space
Tivaevae	Cook Islands research framework
vā	relational space between
va'a	seafaring vessel
vaka	seafaring vessel
Vā-kā	Indigenous methodology
wā	time
wāhi	place
wai/vai	water
waka	seafaring vessel
waka ama	outrigger vessel
waka moana	seafaring vessel
waka taua	war vessel
wānanga	to meet and discuss, traditional learning space
wātea	to be free
whakapapa	genealogy, ancestry, history
whānau	family beyond the nuclear grouping

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THE ART OF WAYFINDING PASIFIKA SUCCESS

Jacoba Matapo*
Tim Baice†

Abstract

The notion of "success" for Pasifika students in higher education remains contested given the socio-political agendas of education in New Zealand targeting Pasifika engagement. The motivation to increase academic achievement for Pasifika peoples stems from "tail-end" outcomes, in which Pasifika populations are compared with other demographic populations in the attainment of higher qualifications. Many institutional "success" strategies are initiated essentially from a deficit positioning, to respond to barriers of participation, and ensure academic progression and student completion. While such aspirations may seem advantageous for Pasifika learners, the complexity lies in how such strategies shape Pasifika learner identity and subjectivity within institutions. In this article, the tensions for Pasifika success are argued from a position of decolonising education through honouring cultural onto-epistemology (practices of knowing-in-being) and relating to the world, thus challenging motivation for engagement with Pasifika learners as strength based rather than a deficit response. The art of engagement with traditional wayfinding tools designed for teaching and learning is utilised as a way of generating and reconceptualising notions of Pasifika success as Pasifika.

Keywords

Pasifika, higher education, equity, success, wayfinding, Indigenous

Introduction

This article draws upon a collective project called "He Vaka", a teaching and learning initiative established at the University of Auckland to support Māori and Pasifika student achievement. He Vaka brings together Māori and Indigenous Pacific worldviews in an attempt to decolonise spaces and places of learning within the institution. This article can be viewed as part of a whole, as it draws upon political, social and historical tensions identified within other research projects in this special issue. The intentional engagement with Pacific Indigenous navigational knowledge (as embodied) opens opportunities for re-imagining success as

Pasifika within the academy. Before moving on, it is important to distinguish the difference between Pacific and Pasifika as presented within this article. Pasifika refers to Pacific peoples living in Aotearoa, while Pacific specifically ties to Pacific ethnic and cultural connections to Pacific Island homelands genealogy (of people and knowledge).

The term Pasifika in an education context was introduced by the Ministry of Education (Pacific leadership) in the mid-1990s to ensure that only those of Pacific ancestry could access Pacific teacher education study awards. Since then, the term Pasifika has been contested by Pacific scholars as homogenising, as it groups together Pacific

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Islands peoples living in New Zealand (either New Zealand born or migrant) and is not ethnic specific (Finau, 2014). Other Pasifika scholars have reconceptualised the term Pasifika to represent a symbol of unity rather than a homogeneous grouping of Pacific Islands peoples (Samu, 2006).

Featured throughout this article is wayfinding and the relationship to Moana Nui as a life force that also connects Māori and Pasifika people, rather than visioning waters as a separating of lands (Hauʻofa, 2008). In this spirit, we present navigation and wayfinding as an art that affirms and generates connection, where the collective (relational self tied to place, ancestors, people) may thrive. Throughout this article, we present local and global debates regarding the representation of Pacific peoples in higher education, the impact of deficit theorising and the need for decolonising of personhood and the neoliberal institution. Neoliberal ideals have increasingly determined measures of success in higher education, from the guise of free choice, to the commodification of education and knowledge transfer. We challenge the human subject position as value-free and universal, and confront dominant notions of success presented within literature, policy and equity initiatives. The shared (re)conceptualisations of Pasifika students and Pasifika staff within the Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Auckland are presented throughout, in visuals of shell maps, and through poetry and narrative.

Methodological considerations

From the beginning, this research project sought a decolonising agenda: to inform engagement in all phases to be conducive to Pacific cultural onto-epistemology. Onto-epistemology brings together ontology of being and nature of knowledge, bridging a divide between dualisms of mind over matter (such as Cartesian mind–body dualism) and contests the dominant human subject position presented in the "great chain of being" (a presupposition that separates the human subject from cosmos and cosmogony). The processual movement and flows in relation to the body, mind and material evoke an embodied (embodiment sense) approach of interaction within this project, intersecting with subjectivity, Pacific histories, traditional Pacific knowledge(s) and contemporary Pacific research methodology.

Decolonising research calls for radical change in political and social environments (Smith, 2012). The decolonising movement confronts the assumptions on which colonialism is based, to arrive at transformation of the social and political order. Indigenous peoples must be active agents, sharing common goals that arise from lived experience of colonialism. Self-determination as understood by Indigenous societies is a key feature in the fight against the impeding forces of globalisation of Indigenous cultures, society and knowledge. Thus, research must raise public awareness of the diversity of Indigenous lifeways, thus sustaining Indigenous rights and empowerment (Smith, 2012). This research seeks to honour Pacific Indigenous ways of being and knowing to engage in generative and emergent reconceptualisations of success as Pasifika within the university. Highlighted within the study are the political tensions for equity and parity, which remain enmeshed in navigating success within the institution. Accordingly, this article presents the political context for Pasifika student achievement in higher education and emphasises the complexities of Pasifika engagement as an equity focus and tensions of parity under the guise of diversity.

In this study, engagement in arts practice creates generative and emergent ways of being-in-knowing in which traditional wayfinding materials and the process of making shell maps evoke storying of histories and culture, and the sharing of different realities. The act of reconceptualising by way of a social arts practice opened opportunities for a collective mapping of "notions of success" in which the shell maps were collective creative expressions. The process of reconceptualising requires deep questioning of taken-for-granted truths, an openness to experiential engagement with world (materiality and) complexity to make and remake meaning (Matapo & Roder, 2017; Pinar, 1995). Bringing together social arts practice with talanoa (explained later), provided our Pasifika kainga and students with an experience to sense, question and dialogue our experiences as Pasifika (students and academics) succeeding within the university.

As Pasifika academics within the Faculty of Education and Social Work specialising in Pasifika education and research, we position ourselves within a relational praxis—engaging collectively with Pasifika colleagues and students in culturally sustaining practice. As part of the decolonising agenda, we call into question the humanist position privileged in qualitative research and enact a Pacific onto-epistemology in which knowing is not only subject to human condition such as constraints in rational thought, ordered thinking (a priori) and representationalism (Mika & Matapo, 2018). The intentional engagement with traditional wayfinding materials in art-making

provokes sense as knowing—knowing that is grounded in the belly, knowing that escapes stratified language signification (Matapo, 2018; Spiller et al., 2015). Thus, the article presents various explorations of Pasifika success as visual provocations, the sharing of Pasifika academic and student narratives and storying through poetry.

Decolonising personhood: Researcher-in-research

By way of decolonising and heeding the invitation set out by Vaai and Nabobo-Baba (2017) to increase the need to revisit personhood, we, the authors of this article, share with you, the reader, our research journey. Here, we express researcher positionality, a personal narrative of researcher considerations engaged in and with research.

Jacoba Matapo

Being a New Zealand born Samoan and Pasifika early childhood education lecturer, I am continually faced with tensions advocating for marginalised Pacific Indigenous knowledge and pedagogy within a predominant Western ideologically based education sector. Although I intentionally and critically locate myself within a typically Western paradigm of education, I continue to contest dominant discourses that privilege themselves and continue to marginalise Indigenous knowledge (Matapo, 2018). Through my relationships, interactions and experiences within broad education contexts (early childhood, primary school and tertiary), I have become increasingly critical of taken-for-granted truths, notions of the universal human subject and how this influences the place of valued knowledge(s) in education and education research.

Through my engagement in Pasifika education research, I have been able to traverse Pacific Indigenous thinking, such as the relationship of human subjectivity to cosmogony, Pacific creation stories (Matapo, 2019). Pacific philosophy has challenged me to think differently about the spatio-temporality of being and is significant to me personally, as I operate to decolonise education and Pacific research from a location other than my ancestral lands of Siumu, Samoa. I have grown an affinity to specific places, my maunga, my awa, my shared connection with whenua and lasting relationships with tangata whenua. Through Pacific research and by way of storying, I am coming to understand and reconceptualise the collective histories of Māori with tangata o le Moana in my own becoming.

Tim Baice

Originally from the villages of Sataoa-Safata and Siufaga-Falelatai, I have spent most of my adult life immersed in the heart of Aotearoa's Pacific capital (Mangere). This fusion of multiple structural factors (cultures, traditions, knowledge and patterns of knowing) is simultaneously different—at times conflicting and at other times harmonious, as they shape and continue to mould my Pacific itulagi (Vaai & Casimira, 2017).

As an "equity practitioner" in higher education, I occupy a role designed to support Pacific students by constructing interventions infused with Pacific cultural values. Here, I am constantly challenged with the task of privileging multiple Pacific itulagi within the confines of the "neoliberal university". Within the academic context, we work with students to reconsider and reframe their thinking in multiple ways. Concurrently, we encourage those in academic and professional roles to reconsider and reframe their ideas about Pacific education and equity of provision. Central to this process of decolonising the academy is the validation of Pacific epistemologies (Si'ilata, 2014) and the legitimising of "relationality" as key to Pacific success (Vaai & Casimira, 2017).

Such challenges transcend the walls of the university. They provide the context in which Pacific itulagi are contested and negotiated at the national and regional level. My advocacy work here in Aotearoa, Samoa and across the region frames my positionality as a citizen of the Pacific—a notion that goes beyond geographic and political boundaries, which speaks to a relational interconnectedness that is bound by a common cause to champion all things Pacific.

Talanoa and shell map making: Art of wayfinding

The meaning of talanoa is explained as *tala*—"talk", and *noa*—"nothing in particular" (Vaioleti, 2006). The complexity of talanoa lies within deeper ethical relations (to concepts and people) as a condition and milieu for the creation of knowledge that is socially constructed. Talanoa, as explained by Farrelly and Nabobo-Baba (2012), has potential for emergent and different ways of thinking and as an embodied and embedded approach with Pacific Indigenous knowledges. Talanoa is a relational and dialogic methodology, considerate of the intricate multiplicities conceived and reconceived in the social space, which draws connections rooted within Pacific oratory histories (Vaioleti, 2006). Trust within the practice of talanoa creates capacity for the

sharing of feelings, inner stories, and experiences that speak to our hearts and mind (Farrelly & Nabobo-Baba, 2012). The act of talanoa within this study intersects with collective arts practice, engaging all involved in the creation of shell maps as a provocation for dialogue and reconceptualising of Pasifika success within the university. As Samoan Pasifika researchers drawing upon Micronesian navigation tools, we are critical of our positionality (neither of us have Micronesian ties); however, we value the shared genealogical connection of Pacific navigation knowledge(s). In this spirit, we wish to engage the social and relational nature of Pacific wayfinding arts practice as a woven socio-historical fabric of cultural expression, where peoples and materials share story of place, connection and genealogy. The shell maps through talanoa became a reconceptualisation of political, cultural and critical expression.

In the Pacific, teaching the art of wayfinding included specific tools that engaged learners with the complexities of navigation. One such tool is known as the Marshall Islands shell map (rebbilib or meddo) which plots islands, ocean swells, currents and refraction of ocean swells. The meddo shows the swell patterns of a few islands and the rebbilib covers a larger part of the whole archipelago (Lewis, 1994). The rationale for the selection of the Marshall Islands (Micronesian) shell map or Marshallese stick chart is in the experiential arts process of teaching and learning. Traditionally, the expert or master navigator would use the shell map to teach the novice navigator about the ocean

swells and islands (Genz, 2018). Pacific Indigenous navigation flows out of a belief in sacred kinship with all of creation and a deep sense of belonging in an interrelated woven universe. At the heart of Indigenous navigation knowledge is a spiritual core—a belief in "co-evolution" whereby humans did not evolve only in relationship to each other, but that all of creation co-evolved in a symbiotic spiritual exchange, and we all connect to a shared origin (Spiller et al., 2015). We are reminded of the "embodied" nature of navigation as a way of being with, in and through the world—the body and nature multiplicity. Wayfinders can use

the whole body as a perceptive instrument, attuning to the changing and often seemingly imperceptible signs of nature. They move with purposeful stillness, and know the world around them as they know themselves. Theirs is a highly disciplined way based on using all of their senses and different types of intelligence to truly "see" what is going on—and processing these signs to understand the relationships between them. (Spiller et al., 2015, p 17)

It is important to note that, traditionally, the shell map was not taken out on the water; it was used on land as a process of learning the ebbs and flows of the water (encouraging engagement with body and mind as perceptive instrument), to be memorised, to be a visionary tool. Through this processual engagement, we explore the markers (shell map markers) of success as Pasifika. Shell markers, as focal points within the maps, referred

FIGURE 1   Faculty of Education and Social Work—Pasifika Kainga and Pasifika students' shell maps

to cultural, personal and collective values; aspirations such as tautua, spirituality, aiga, collective responsibility, ancestors, Indigenous knowledge, resilience and connections to ancestral lands were explicitly conveyed. As Pasifika staff and students connected their stories, experience and critique of Pasifika success in the academy to the shell map markers, an assemblage of wayfinding Pasifika success with Indigenous navigation knowledges emerged. There is a sense that knowing success is grounded in knowing context, knowing the body (feeling the right direction), and knowing the environment and political landscape. We would argue that this is inclusive of the socio-historical context and hidden agendas of education and education policy. A Pasifika student and a Pasifika staff member expressed the following:

> We must go by the waves, you can see and feel the right direction to take, the path that will bring you success. (Pasifika staff)

> The shell maps are about understanding how our people navigated through the seas but relating it to how we are navigating our way through study. (Pasifika student)

Following the talanoa, a Pasifika staff member was asked what was most significant to them during the talanoa. In her response, she expressed particular tensions for Pasifika aspirations to succeed as Pasifika. The aspirations or ideal (presented in the shell map) were indeed different from the lived reality. She said:

> The sense of connection. Also, the challenges of connecting the past to the present and reconceptualising traditional practices to something that is real and relevant juxtaposed to an ideal that seems far removed from what we are experiencing. (Pasifika staff)

Privileging Indigenous knowledge

Pre-colonisation Pacific philosophical and theological thought is grounded upon its relation to all things; monotheism and cosmogony directly influenced the Pacific collective constructions of knowledge and spirituality is encompassed in ways of knowing (Hau'ofa, 2008; Matapo, 2018). The impact of colonisation upon the Pacific body of knowledge has changed what before was immanence in the generation of knowledge (the creation of new images of thought in relation to all things—material, human and non-human) to a transcendental epistemology (based upon

Christian values and beliefs). There is a strong presence within the Pasifika research literature of a blending of Christian values with Pacific ways of being (Anae et al., 2001), which was also present through the shared values, beliefs and cultural connections made throughout each of the talanoa and shell map making experiences.

In the sharing of narratives expressed through talanoa and shell map making, it is evident that Pacific cultural knowledge, as nomadic, travels to enable new identity formations, and belonging within the university institution is no exception. We question how cultural knowledge that is nomadic and open to relations of change deterritorialises and reterritorialises (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) notions of success that are taken for granted within the institution. The process of talanoa and shell map making calls upon shared histories, connection and an affinity with Moana Nui to bring together Pasifika peoples, and Indigenous knowledge, histories and genealogies. Using the words of Manulani Meyer (2014), we reflect upon the capacities of Indigenous knowing:

> It is time to expand the discussion of knowledge with a more ancient capacity linked to land, water, people, and language. Time to extend knowing beyond cognitive accumulation perfectly rendered in textual form. Here is a space for mindfulness to enter the academy via chant, insight and spirit. We are long overdue for intelligence that recognises patterns of continuity and remembers the purpose of culture. (p. 157)

Along with ancient capacities to know that extend beyond cognitive accumulation, we argue for self-determination against colonising naming of Indigenous peoples that engender political and systemic intentions to fix definitions of specific ethnic groups. The complexities for Pacific peoples living in Aotearoa away from ancestral lands, yet connected to ancestral lands, ties to people and culture demonstrating strength and resilience in collective responsibility and care. From here, we question how education regimes continue to marginalise Pacific Indigenous onto-epistemology and what this means for Pasifika peoples continuing to negotiate education and education politics. Re-imagining the human subject as generative and emergent becoming(s) rather than a universalised subject may change dominant views of success in education. One Pasifika student expressed her connection to the collective and appreciation for organic material as a symbol of Indigenous knowledge. She went on to say:

When I look here [at the shell maps], they're kind of grids, and so students from this collective can have different pathways and if you look at the symbolism of the top being the epitome of success, *whatever that looks like*, these are how you get there, different pathways, but you still come from this collective, and I think that in some ways, the fact that it's all organic material, like particularly green leaves, that's got to be indicative of what feeds us in terms of our Indigenous knowledge. (Pasifika student)

Pasifika success: What does the discourse tell us?

We move into notions of Pasifika success targeted at Pasifika students within Aotearoa. As a minority ethnicity group and like minority ethnic groups globally, Pacific students in the context of higher education in New Zealand are more prone to unfavourable stereotypes or "stereotype threat" (Allen & Webber, 2019) whereby they are typically deemed "less able", "less intelligent" and (comparatively) "academically" disengaged (Hunter et al., 2016). Connected to stereotype threat are the ensuing effects of low teacher expectations. Teachers in Turner et al.'s (2015) study cited deficits in Pacific students' home backgrounds that lead to a lack of goals, motivation and aspirations in education. These perceived deficits were suggested as being responsible for the gap in academic achievement. Such perceived deficits are often adapted by students, who in their socialisation within a given context internalise paradigms of failure, which leads to a distortion of wider possibilities for success (Walker, 2006). Furthermore, Pacific students have been marginalised by inequitable teaching practice, cross-cultural misunderstandings and deficit theorising by educators (Hunter et al., 2016). The tensions presented in the literature are also relevant to the challenges faced by students. To mitigate such deficit conceptualisations, Pasifika students suggested:

> Success for Pasifika needs to be defined by Pasifika people. (Pasifika student)

> Tula'i, means to arise, not as individuals but as one—as a collective. (Pasifika student)

Another Pasifika student echoed the call to confront such deficit theorisations of Pacific peoples:

> Pasifika success means a lot coming from Pasifika . . . as we are known stereotypically for not passing in academics, but achieving highly out on the sports field! However, being Pasifika means carrying your ancestors with you, as you have big support group behind you, they maybe struggled significantly and it is the push factor for Pasifika success. (Pasifika student)

Defining success for Pacific students in higher education is complex, given the need to consider holistically how success is determined. On the one hand, it requires a holistic approach to fully understand the relativity of any success to the multiple worlds they operate within (Si'ilata et al., 2018). Academic success is seen as the fruit of a collective effort, in which Pacific students are supported heavily by peers, families and communities. Success contributes to the well-being of the collective and shows that success has both internal and external impacts (Mayeda et al., 2014). Pasifika success viewed as a holistic practice was also conveyed in the talanoa:

> Success is about my whole hauora, you know, it is about balance. (Pasifika student)

The literature on effective teaching and learning practices for Pacific learners in higher education features a variety of small-scale case studies focused on equity-funded initiatives (Airini et al., 2009; Airini et al., 2011; Chu et al., 2013; Curtis et al., 2012; Hunter et al., 2016; Lafaialii, 2012; Mayeda et al., 2014; Patterson, 2012; Williams, 2009). See Universities New Zealand (2018) for a list of equity-funded projects. The initiatives are almost exclusively funded by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) Education Fund, also largely positioned outside of formal programme and course structures. Such approaches to effective teaching and learning for Pacific students lacks systemic engagement with deeper issues, such as subjugation of Pacific ways of being and knowing within the academy. From an institutional perspective, success for Pacific learners is defined as academic achievement rates on par with their Pākehā counterparts. Characteristic of contemporary education policy, parity for Pacific learners is also underpinned by a strong economic focus. This is mandated by projections that Māori and Pacific communities will constitute 30% of the working population in 2030 and the recognition that, historically, both groups have been underserved by the education system (TEC, 2018). Estimations from Universities New Zealand (2018) based on census data and statistical projections show that if parity is achieved in the education sector, this will generate an extra $123 million and

$55 million in the Māori and Pasifika economies respectively.

The neoliberal university and equity

Equity is a contested term in its meaning, understanding and practice (Barrow & Grant, 2019). This difference in nuance shapes institutional policy framing and implementation differently. In higher education, the most prevalent differences are between the understanding of equity as either "fairness" or "inclusion"—in which the former refers to increasing absolute representation of underrepresented groups and the latter refers to a proportional representation of underrepresented groups to their broader proportion in wider society (Marginson, 2011). Moreover, "equity as fairness" refers to policies of redistributive justice, and "equity as inclusion" refers to policies that seek to redress (ameliorate) inequities in higher education (Savage et al., 2013). On this note, Salmi and Bassett (2014) define equity as the provision of "equal opportunities for access and success in tertiary education" (p. 365). They distinguish this from the concept of "equality", arguing that equity is not bound by the same commitment to treat everyone the same. Equity recognises difference and is a means of providing "interventions" that promote equal opportunity (p. 365).

Equity in higher education is a direct result of the emergence of the neoliberal imperatives to build human capital (knowledge and education) and strengthen the commodification of knowledge (Barrow & Grant, 2019). This follows a global trend in which higher education reforms (including privatisation, marketisation and internationalisation) have reduced education to a commodity, to be bought and sold (Sakhiyya & Rata, 2019). At the heart of a "knowledge economy" is the production and sale of knowledge. Under these imperatives, higher education institutions have become key drivers of (national) economic development (Sakhiyya & Rata, 2019). Equity—framed by theories of neoliberal economic development—then become the means by which (equitable) participation in higher education for all is enabled.

Under the competitive nature of the global knowledge economy, universities have traditionally acted as screens, ensuring intense competition for limited places, restricting participation and success to those who have the capital (means) to succeed (Espinoza, 2010). The shift in the idea of higher education as a public good versus a private commodity captures the troubled place of equity in the university. As higher education institutions have intensified their neoliberal outlook,

remnants of the ecological model of universities are struggling to remain true to their altruistic origins. Commitments to achieving social justice, equality, equity and human rights are undermined by the prioritisation of expanding and enhancing economic growth. This dual focus of equity (educational equity and economic competitiveness) is often presented as "harmonious" and complementary in institutional and government policy (Savage, 2013).

Higher education institutions are, however, problematic sites for equity initiatives to thrive in, given the competing and often conflicting interests (economic vs. social justice) (Barrow & Grant, 2019). Equity in the academic achievement of Pacific students in the New Zealand higher education context continues to be a persistent and enduring challenge. Pacific academic achievement continues to lag behind that of other students, which has important ramifications for the achievement of social justice and social cohesion (Hart, 2018). Successive government policy and investment have been made into addressing the issue of inequities in education. Despite concentrated efforts by both government and higher education institutions in New Zealand, this has yet to lead to academic achievement of Pacific students at levels of parity with other students.

Pacific students at the University of Auckland are considered a target "equity group", which the university recognises as "more likely to have experienced one or more barriers to accessing and succeeding at the University, such as discrimination, marginalisation, under-representation, underachievement in school, and/or socioeconomic background" (University of Auckland, 2017, "Definition", para. 4). At its most basic description (in practice), equity can be described as the investment of additional resources (funding and academic support programmes) to lift Pacific academic achievement so that it achieves parity with the performance of others (Ministry of Education, 2014).

Based on these challenges, Pacific students—a minority group within the university—have faced similar challenges to other minority group and Indigenous students globally in higher education (Naepi et al., 2017). In the literature, Pacific students are referred to as non-traditional students (Wong, 2018), working class (Walker & Wilson-Strydom, 2017), low socioeconomic status (Universities New Zealand, 2018), minority ethnic (Blessinger et al., 2018), first in family (Wolfgramm-Foliaki, 2016) and ethnically diverse students (Allen & Webber, 2019). The circumstances outlined above

have led to the growth of equity (supplementary) initiatives designed to lift the academic performance of Pacific students. Across the university, these equity initiatives are known as Tuākana mentoring programmes—learning communities based on the tuakana–teina model (senior successful students supporting first year Māori and Pacific students) (Patterson, 2012). Essentially, Tuākana programmes are underpinned by Māori and Pacific concepts of relationality and privilege "Indigenous" Māori and Pacific ways of learning collectively. Māori and Pacific students who engage with these supplementary programmes have shown increased levels of academic achievement and retention (Universities New Zealand, 2018). However, given that many of these supplementary initiatives sit outside of the formal course or programme structure, there has been little to no university-wide evaluation of their impact. The structural location of Māori and Pacific support initiatives outside of the formal class structure has also been criticised as an ostracising of Indigenous (Māori and Pacific) pedagogies for teaching and learning (Williams, 2009).

Although the challenges raised in much of the literature regarding Pasifika success are related to student academic achievement, further implications arise for Pasifika academics navigating an academic trajectory, which requires further research. Much of the responsibility of Māori and Pasifika student support initiatives rests upon the shoulders of a very few Māori and Pasifika academics, mentors and student support staff. Again, the systemic challenges were made clear throughout the shell map making talanoa.

> The hegemonic culture of the university needs to be challenged and changed. This needs to be done on a political level. Also, more Pasifika people need to be reflected in the higher hierarchy of this institution. (Pasifika staff)

> It's not about being individualistic, you know, it's about being as a collective. I've always had that with me, it's not just me, on my own in that journey, I take the others with me, in particular my students, our students. (Pasifika staff)

Navigating vision: Pasifika success as Pasifika

The concept of self in Pacific societies as explained by Vaai and Nabobo-Baba (2017) is always a relational self, that is, one constituted by relations, in which the relational self is the part of the whole and the whole part of the self that is irreducible to the sum of its parts. The need for Indigenous epistemologies, ontologies and cosmological ideas and philosophy must be considered in global conversations; thus, consideration of local Indigenous understandings can support the way in which Pacific peoples are governed—taking ownership of decisions made with regard to land, seas, people and knowledge (Vaai & Nabobo-Baba, 2017). The process of decolonisation of personhood is complex: the relational capacities that tie one's own subjectivity with collective identities, identities that are not always static or fixed. Here, we recognise the multiplicity (network of relations) of student, Pasifika, academic, kainga, personal and collective that intersect and cut across the act of wayfinding success as Pasifika. A Pasifika academic within the faculty summarised the key values reflected through talanoa:

> Spirit, space and stewardship, it's about knowing where we come from, that kind of spiritual grounding, why we do our work. (Pasifika staff)

In an effort to decolonise personhood and reconceptualise Pasifika success, we share a poem that navigates the tensions, challenges and possibilities that Indigenous onto-epistemology offers us in confronting deficit theorising of Pacific peoples.

Closing thoughts in poetry

Priority learner
I'm a priority—that's what I'm told,
from the time, my mother held me in her
arms, my father on his shoulders I stood,
always trying to look beyond the horizon.
I'm a priority . . . learner, that's what I'm
told, lowering my head, lower statistics
reveal. This dichotomy is my story.
Priority learner to lift the outcomes of
success, yet when I hear my grandfather's
words I am a success in his eyes no less.
I am his story and he is mine, sensing more
than education outcomes to define me. My
wairua, my mauri, my life force.
Why the obsession to fix me?
Do I need to be fixed?
How is education shaped by taken for
granted truths?
Am I reduce-able to one's perception taken in
brief moments of assessment?
When in brief moments, solidified are my
fears.
My fears to fail, to be another statistic
another rhetoric, to persuade others that I
need to be fixed, I am broken.

The pieces of me, become pieces of you—
fragments in politics, policies of change and
priority education plans.
What motivates you to help me to achieve
higher degrees?
Responsive to policies, a responsive tap to
funding . . . and in changing my perceptions
of wisdom, what it is to know, and who's
knowledge matters most.
And still, with fire in my eyes, and warmth
in my soul, the horizon I seek beyond one's
control.
Responsive, inclusive, equality, terms coined
in essentialising difference . . . of culture,
of colour, of ability . . . my hopes, for
education is that our eyes may meet in
search of the horizon and for that moment,
knowing the potential in me, is knowing
the potential in you.
How can we navigate potentiality, to bring
forth new subjectivities, what it means
to lead and to know, to traverse tides
of change in a globalised space, spaces
together, yet spaces apart, spaces of
difference and an openness to the unknown.
These are our indigenous histories, that bring
us together, the vā of our ancestors, within
me, within you, and the hope for wisdom
for a people yet to come.

(Matapo, 2017)

Glossary

Cook Island

| Moana Nui | the Pacific Ocean; lit. "vast ocean" |

Māori

Aotearoa	commonly used as Māori name for New Zealand; lit. "the land of the long white cloud"
awa	river (connections to sea/ocean); as important as the mountain in the genealogy of Māori and Pacific peoples
hauora	Māori view of health exclusive to New Zealand that covers the physical, mental, social and spiritual needs and well-being of all
mauri	life essence, life force, energy, life principle
Pākehā	a person of predominantly European descent
tangata whenua	Indigenous peoples of the land
wairua	spirit, soul; attitude

| whenua | placenta or land (significant in Māori and Pacific tradition; the returning of the placenta to the land is a symbolic connection to land and ancestors) |

Marshallese

| meddo | Marshall Islands navigational chart focusing on a small group of islands |
| rebbilib | Marshall Islands navigational chart focusing on a large part of the archipelago |

Pacific Islands (shared)

kainga	village, home, a collective from an academic perspective
maunga	mountain (important in the genealogy of Māori and Pacific peoples)
Pasifika	a term that represents a grouping together of Pacific Islands peoples living in New Zealand, either New Zealand born or migrant Pasifika ethnicities, including but not limited to Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Cook Islands, Niue and Tuvalu
talanoa	a Pasifika concept of dialogical discussion or talk (Vaioleti, 2006)

Samoan

aiga	family (including extended family)
itu	side
itulagi	worldview, one's thinking, including culture, family, religion, people, land, ancestors, ocean, language, spirit and the tualagi (Toso & Matapo, 2018; Vaai & Casimira, 2017); lit. "side of heaven"
lagi	heavens
tangata o le moana	people of the sea/ocean (Mallon et al., 2012)
tautua	service
tualagi	universe
vā	relational space

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I AM WHO I AM

Pacific tertiary students and the centrality of ethnic identity for successful outcomes

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Pikipiki hama kae vaevae manava

Abstract

This article is about a university course which decolonises the classroom by making culture count. It examines how the ethnic identity journeys of 13 Pacific students in a third-year course in Pacific Studies run by the University of Auckland define and derive meaning for a more secure ethnic identity as a strategy for success across teaching/learning and life courses. It also shows that in the context of a New Zealand monocultural education for Pacific students across all sectors, while good courses and teachers get the job done, great courses and teachers have the potential to liberate and heal. The main aim of the research this article is based on was to investigate how the influential factor of a secure ethnic identity contributes to Pacific students succeeding well in their studies. Developing a secure ethnic identity is defined here as the transition from a confused ethnic identity caused by obstacles and hardships experienced by challenges to one's ethnic self-identity to a secure ethnic identity where resolution of a stable ethnic identity is reached over time, despite these challenges (Anae, 1998; Manuela & Anae, 2017). Students' pre-course ethnic identity understandings were articulated in their life story interviews (Olsen & Shopes, 1991) at the beginning of the course, and their secure ethnic identity transitions were gleaned from the identity journey essays they wrote mid-course, as well as focus group discussions held at the end of the course. This article also seeks to ascertain the nature of any trends in teaching and learning (curricula, ethnic identity issues) which support or constrain a secure ethnic identity. Finally, it calls for strategies, changes to environments, teaching/learning communities, courses and curricula that allow students to think, write about and act on their ethnic identities to support Pacific success in their studies, within their families, and in their wider communities.

Keywords

ethnic identity journey, ethnic enhancements, secure identity,
student success, inter- and intra-ethnicity

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Introduction

This article focuses on Pacific 300: NZ-Born Pacific Identities, a third-year course which examines the ethnic identity construct and its relationship with well-being taught over one semester at the University of Auckland. The course provides a space where Pacific students' (and students of other ethnicities') notions of self-defined ethnic identity are examined, explored and experientially written about using European and Pacific theories of ethnicity and students' own experiences. This article analyses this course through participants' lenses of success and a transition to a secure ethnic identity, thus providing optimal and healing outputs from the course learnings. Rather than a cultural enhancement course, this process positions the course as an ethnic enhancement course (Manuela & Anae, 2017).

Methodology

The qualitative research project on which this article is based tracked students' experiences of the course. It consisted of thematic analysis of focused life story interviews (see Olsen & Shopes, 1991) during the first week of Pacific 300 classes, which explored understandings of success, ethnic and cultural experiences, family life and schooling. These were followed by thematic analyses of students' ethnic identity journey essays (mid-course) and focus group interviews which were held at the end of the course.

The research project took place from 16 July to 19 October 2018. All students enrolled in Pacific 300 were invited to take part in the research. Participants consented to the interviews and their identity journey essays being accessible to the researchers. All participant names and data were kept confidential to the researchers. Students were also invited to complete a demographic questionnaire, the results of which are presented graphically in Appendix 1. None of the individual/focus group interviews took place during class times. Out of a class of 34, 13 students participated in the project. The focused life story interviews at the beginning of the course took between 1 and 1.5 hours, and were held on campus at a date, time and place which suited the participants. The interviews centred on students' experiences of their ethnic identities themed across schooling during primary, secondary and tertiary stages. Participants were asked what it was like to grow up "Pacific" in Aotearoa New Zealand. The life story methodology was enhanced by the teu le va methodology (Anae, 2016), whereby the interviewer/interviewee relationship was a respectful one, cognisant of the

sacred and secular spaces of relationships. The focus group interviews were held during the last week of lectures and focused on thematic areas from the life story interviews that were not covered in the identity journey essays. Out of the 13 participants (two were male and 11 female) who took part in the project, nine participated in the focus groups. Two focus group interviews were held.

Research findings

This section contains the description of the course, the thematic analyses of the life story interviews at the beginning of the course and of the ethnic identity journey essays, and the analysis of the focus group interviews held at the end of the course. Overall, the research findings describe the transitioning for some of the students from the positionality of ethnic identity confusion—described as "challenges" to their own perceived ethnic identities—to a secure ethnic identity position where learnings from the course have provided "coping" and "empowering" strategies.

The course

Pacific 300: NZ-Born Pacific Identities explores the complex issues of growing up as a member of a minority ethnic group or bi/multicultural person and how these dual or multiple identities affected and/or interacted with an individual's behaviours, priorities, social relationships and concept of self. The concept of intra-ethnic identity was also explored, allowing the researcher to ascertain ethnic issues within each participant's own Pacific ethnic group. To achieve a broad understanding of ethnic issues, part of the course used a cross-cultural perspective in which materials about minority ethnic groups and inter-ethnic relations in New Zealand were examined. Case studies from other countries provided comparative global perspectives. Special emphasis was given to class discussions, creative writing, and the exchange of viewpoints.

The four coursework components consisted of a literature review, a book/film/music album review, an ethnic identity journey essay and an oral presentation. The literature review surveyed European and Pacific theories of ethnicity. The book/film/music album review was based on course materials that analysed the local/global ethnic identity journey of a published Indigenous novelist, poet, rapper, musician or playwright from an ethnic group other than the students'. In the middle of the course, students wrote an essay describing their own ethnic identity journey. The students' oral seminars were presented individually, in pairs,

or as a group presentation. These presentations, which were based on their identity journey essays, took the form of a summary of their essay, a song, a poem, a performance, role-play, a rap, a painting, weaving or other creative piece, or a short video.

Life stories before the course

Life story interviews centred on growing up as a "Pacific" person in New Zealand. Emanating from the students' experiences were themes of home (relationships with parents and families, support systems, culture of the home vs palagi spaces, interpretations of success); schooling (intersectoral experiences and influence of teachers and schooling, career aspects); stress points (challenges from both palagi and other Pacific Islanders about their self-perceived ethnic identities, identity confusion, trying to find the balance between home/school; being a Pacific "academic" person, racist experiences); and coping mechanisms (support from family and church, achieving goals, helping families financially, serving and respecting families.

The 13 participants in the life story interviews were made up of 11 females and two males, and their ethnicities consisted of eight Samoans (including one self-ascribed Afakasi-Samoan), three Tongans and two Cook Islanders (see Appendix 1 for more detail). In presenting quotes from participants, and across the life stories/identity journeys/focus group, the following coding system is used: Participant number/Gender/Ethnicity. For example, P[No.], M[ale], S[amoan]) This coding system is used to maintain the ethical consideration of keeping participants' names confidential. It is interesting to note that across the three ethnicities birthplace seemed irrelevant to self-ascribed ethnicities. For example, while some Samoans were born in New Zealand, they self-ascribed as "Samoan", others as New Zealand-born, and so on.

Home

When speaking about home, participants stressed the centrality of home and family and the tremendous support they received from their grandparents, mothers and siblings. Most started with the stories of how either one or both parents came to New Zealand as Pacific migrants, and the difficulties they faced as they settled in a new country—problems with the language, getting a "good education" and the sacrifices made to give their children a "better life".

> My dad didn't even finish year 10 and it was that sacrifice that I know that enabled me to set foot

on campus, and when I don't want to get up like my biggest challenge is getting up in the morning because I . . . it's cold and I have to catch an early bus to uni just to get here on time. I think about how they surely didn't want to get up in the morning to like go work or umm, you know, make ends meet but they got up anyway for me and I just need to get up today to ensure that it's going to work out. . . . I always refer to that when you know the going gets tough. (P1FS)

Many speak about the need to communicate and explain to their parents how the tertiary institution works, the rigour of university systems, and the economics of "passing well" because of scholarships and through course grades assessments.

> I literally explain to my parents the downfall of what would happen, how hard it is to get to this university, how easy it is to actually like get dropped if you don't do good . . . the GPA [grade point average] systems, the grades you should get if you're on scholarships, the grades that you don't want to get . . . (P2MS)

Many participants spoke about how important it was for them to succeed in life. There were differing definitions of success. Many spoke of the competitiveness required of them to get top marks. Overwhelmingly participants spoke about the need to win certificates and high educational achievements in order to "please" parents and to make them happy.

> Yup—success was always winning, getting certificates, especially . . . rewards from teachers in primary, and then in high school . . . always getting that one spot on the top. That was success until I came to uni. There was no such thing as ranking and each year they're not going to say, "Oh you've done so well, here's something to reward you with" . . . (P4FT)

> I completely denied my identity as a Tongan in order to assimilate to the culture that is believed to enhance opportunities and success. This was the mindset and attitude that I continued to carry all throughout primary, intermediate and high school education. (P12FT)

Other participants saw success in terms of education as a means of "getting a good job", to become rich and to support their parents and families, and were cognisant of the additional dimension of cultural roles and obligations.

I know as a 10-year-old I wanted to be rich. I actually wanted to be really rich . . . [*laughs*] but through high school success was actually coming to uni and now while I'm at uni it's actually getting a degree and actually getting a good job so I can provide for my family. I think that's success and making my parents happy. That's success for me. (P7FS)

Schooling

While participants' primary school experiences were mostly fondly remembered as "enjoyable" and "fun", secondary school experiences were very different. Some secondary schools had "Pacific spaces", which made some participants feel comfortable, accepted and celebrated. It also gave them a strong sense that their Pacific ethnic identities were solid. For some, this grounding disappeared when they moved on to tertiary institutions where they were definitely the minority, and this made them feel alienated and unwelcome.

I went to AGGS [Auckland Girls' Grammar School]. I feel like I was comfortable in my skin and there was no question of who I was because my school was very diverse . . . like we have PI's [Pacific Islanders] . . . at our school and they really talk about strong tamaitai [young women]. . . . At uni . . . I feel like when I go to my science papers and then it's predominantly palagi and then there's me sitting in the corner and I feel like I can't breathe until I come here . . . I feel like I can't breathe or relax until I come to Arts, you know, like my safe space . . . (P1FA-S)

The power and influence of teachers at secondary level and beyond who can "make you" or "break you" was glaringly apparent in many of the narratives, especially for P4FT: ". . . because sometimes I just get scared of asking them [teachers]. Because of the whole mindset that she's too stupid to ask in class, so why would you need help afterwards?" She continued:

When [a male lecturer] gave the lectures, we just felt comfortable with the way he lectured and when we wanted to go ask for more help he'd just willingly help. But I think it just has to do with the way they sort of answer the questions or put themselves up there. Because there are some lecturers who when you go ask them for help, they're quite stand-offish. . . . And then that's when you just, "Yeah I'm not going to come and ask you a question again."

. . .

I loved Mozart. . . . I could play sports, but it wasn't my first choice. . . . But every time I got my schedule back, I'd be put into PE. I guess that's where I encountered my first white teacher who stood up for me because he came in and he was like "Do you want to do classical music?" and I said: "Yeah", and then he said: "Do you know how to read music?" and I said: "Yeah, I know how to read music", and then he was like "Let her in."

Ethnic identity stress points

Most of the stress points in the life story narratives concerned ethnic identity confusion and the cultural tensions between roles and expectations around being both a Pacific person and a university student, and how "switching between [the] two" impacts on family members.

Like I have to switch my mind, and my mind becomes intellectual and academic. . . . I didn't realise the way I was talking until my brother was like "Why do you always use big words?" . . . So I feel like that's an ongoing journey for me as I'm always switching between two.

. . .

Not being able to speak mother tongue is another ethnic identity stress point, one which is compounded when one's parents are NZ-born or raised. (P5FS)

I think yeah—you need a strong hold of it like you know the language even though you don't speak it but at least understand it, then you're fine. I guess with them [parents] it's just they grew up and so they came at a really young age and so they grew up with the whole palagi mentality, I guess, and my parents didn't put too much emphasis on the language or like speaking at home. Even at home we don't speak Tongan. We only speak English, and it's fine with them, so I guess that's why they're just like "Oh they're not Tongan." Especially when they go out with their friends and stuff because of all the stereotypes with all the Islanders, they don't say it out loud. (P4FT)

Perhaps the strongest and most common stress point amongst the participants was their overt experiences of racism and sexism, which, prior to the course, the participants had no intellectual way of dealing with. The anger and bitterness they experienced, for many on a daily basis, remained in their psyche, in deep spaces of sorrow, hurt and pain.

Because the [workplace] . . . is predominantly European it is always a struggle for me because not only am I a Pacific Islander but I'm also a woman, and so there's the struggle of breaking the stigmas that already exist within the film industry . . . which is Pacific Islanders are usually in front of the cameras and they act, and if they're behind then they're usually the catering unit. Like I got asked that so many times on that first film shoot. When I walked on, they were like: "Oh where is the unit?", which is the film terminology for catering, and they were like "Is the unit here?", and I was like "I don't know". He was like "Oh, you don't know . . . Oh, what are you doing here?" And I'm like "I'm a producer, I'm the producer for this film set", and then they just like take a second and then I think they realise almost their racism they've just done and then they're like "Oh, it's so great to have you", and I'm kind of like "Yeah . . . you just kind of just snapped yourself out." (P5FS)

Some participants also recalled school place racism and the anger at being racially profiled with Pacific stereotypes, for example, as a thief:

. . . then I got called up at lunch and I walked up to the office and there were the other two Islanders in the school, and it was us three. I mean I still remember her name now. . . . She asked me to come into the class and then she said to me: "You won't be in trouble, but you just need to tell me the truth. Why are you taking lunch out of these kids' bags?" And I thought, first of all, you didn't even ask: "Are you taking lunch out of these bags?" You just completely just said: "Why are you taking . . .", and I remember just being gobsmacked, and I remember that was my first real . . . I guess that was my first interaction with racism. (P5FS)

The impact of racist attacks, taunts and stereotyping was described by participants as making them "out of balance", as "affecting schoolwork" and making them "feel unwell". Some participants feel confused about the extent of this impact when they are otherwise a "good" and obedient son/daughter who keeps the "links" with family members and who are "successful" in their studies.

Yeah, I think mental health is so important . . . that would be a big one for me. Because I feel like when I'm not in balance, like just how much that kind of mucks me up. So I feel like success is being like I'm okay, I'm on top of my work, I've been going to church, praying or journaling—something to do with my mental health or spirituality. You know

I've been in contact with my mum and my brother this week so I'm feeling—like those relationships of maintaining, so yeah and obviously getting good grades. It's not so much I think getting good grades, it's more that doing the best that I can be doing if that makes sense. That I know, okay, I didn't say get an "A", but I know that I gave that my all. Like what more could you ask for? (P3FA-S)

Coping mechanisms

Participants' narratives prior to their course learnings described a variety of coping mechanisms for the racism and ethnic identity confusions that they experienced. Most participants talked about success being the strongest coping mechanism. With success they will be able to be good "Pacific children" who support and serve their parents and extensive Pacific families in New Zealand and abroad.

Success to me means achieving my goals, and when I do achieve them, I'm completing the tasks that need to be achieved at the best of my ability, so not half-do anything and ensuring that when I achieve my goals it means that umm there is stability in my home. Like I'm doing something, my goals mean something . . . [which] also means that I can help my family, help my parents and those abroad. (P1FS)

The same participant spoke about the frustration they felt about not being literate in their mother tongue. Most would only seek help from a counsellor as a last resort; others sought other coping mechanisms.

I write in my book and then I go to eat, or I go to Albert Park and read, and you know to realign my focus. When things get really tough, I'll go to . . . if it gets really tough, then I'll go to . . . the counsellor or I'll seek official help, but I just read my book. Yeah, I think sometimes there's this language barrier or embarrassment or shame . . . (P1FS)

One participant, who lived through the Christchurch earthquakes, had struggled with her mental health and coped by just "off-loading" to a counsellor or her mother. Her narrative reinforces that it is "okay" to ask for help in dire circumstances.

I'm definitely someone who is proactive, and I learnt quite early on just how important it is to ask for help and, yeah, after the earthquakes in Christchurch it was just like a crazy time, and I

got—well I wouldn't say I got depressed, but my mental health definitely did take a hit. I just remember the burden just getting lifted off my shoulders once I went to see a guidance counsellor, and then from that talking to my mum and so that just taught me just like ask for help, put away your ego and your pride. It's okay not to . . . like, don't see it as a weakness. (P3FA-S)

Identity journey essays

The identity journey essays were written purely from personal experiences and involved intellectual-engagement issues that are often confronting to students on a personal and collective level. Many participants said that writing their essay was an empowering experience because it allowed them to negotiate their way through both positive and negative reflections of their own self-identities and the challenges to them. This is not to say that their personal issues were resolved. Rather, it gave students the opportunity to use and appreciate acquired inter- and intra-ethnic skills to try and negotiate a way through what were overwhelming events for many. It also highlighted the privilege of having a healing and liberating education that allows them to think their way through issues, rather than relying solely on others' representations of who they are. Below are excerpts from participants' identity journey essays.

> I feel that my ethnic identity has improved. . . . I find myself secure in who I am and what I want to become in the future. I used to think of my culture as dull, useless and a waste of time. However, . . . I now realise the value in cultural practices and traditions, I am New Zealand-born, I am Tongan. (P10FT)

> Joining [this course], solidified my identity. It was a course which introduced a space that was unique and part of who I am. . . . This course helped me to make sense of who I am, where I have come from. . . . It has allowed me to go home and have conversations with my parents about ethnic identity. I always wondered "what if . . . I did not take the course?" Will I still be courageous towards my Pacific ethnicity or not? I am grateful to learn about amazing Pacific scholars which contribute and help shape a persistent Pacific worldview that many take for granted. . . . As the year progresses, I am still transforming and am still learning who I am. (P6FC)

> Three years have passed since I shaved my head. My hair is now just past my shoulders. I've bleached it twice and dyed it four times. Today, I've come to appreciate my hair. I've lost my tight curls for good now. But the wavy curls which remain I absolutely adore, even after all that bleaching. I see my identity journey as an extension of my journey with my hair. From losing my tight curls and praying for white skin, shaving my hair and re-evaluating my identity, to growing my hair from the beginning and finding myself through siva [Samoan traditional dance]. My hair is still growing and inevitably so am I and my journey in understanding myself as a Samoan. Thank you. (P5FS)

> In summary, I can say that through [this course], I have come to think about my identity critically. The labelling convention—like my name makes me appreciate it more. My appearance, I am not too fussed about because it is what is on the inside that matters and not the outside. The Tongan concepts that my dad has tried to teach me, and my siblings play a major role in my life. I am always trying (emphasis on trying) to keep the Tongan values and practise being Tongan. And I cannot say anything about possibly marrying. I always tell people that I love kids, so I think I'd just end up being a single mother with 10 adopted kids. We'll see what the future holds. (P12FT)

> All in all, the core values normalised in Samoa that differentiates from other cultures portrays the significance of one's identity, the unique pride one has over the other and the sentiment of belonging to another culture that isn't necessarily salient or first-placed in the diaspora. To have a sudden realisation of the little things that contribute to the strengthening of my identity journey is manifested through who I identify as, the practices of my culture and traditions, my ekalesia [church], and lastly language. (P2MS)

> It is scary to think of the dangers of losing our identity, and how it will eventually cost us our mental health. (P1FS)

> This course completely flipped my point of view, it burned the assumption that there is nothing to learn about the Pacific . . . simply because we allow it to happen. . . . However, the most significant impact of this exposure, was the ignition of pride through support and encouragement. I was able to rediscover my purpose as a student but also as a young first-generation migrant female. (P12FT)

Analysis of the identity journeys essays suggests that Pacific students' initial perceptions of success

such as "achieving goals" and helping families financially (through a good education and securing employment) at the beginning of the course had developed into notions of tautua—serving and respecting parents and families—and the feeling of satisfaction from what one has achieved by the middle of the course. The focus on ethnic identity helped them to demystify accusations of being "plastic" and to challenge the racial profiling they experienced. It has also provided a space for them to find balance and a holistic sense of who they are. Some participants had realised that these challenges, if not reconciled, can lead to unwellness and mental health issues.

Focus groups

The focus group interviews revealed that experiencing the course and understanding the theory and practice of the ethnic identity journey had extended participants' perceptions of success in their life story interviews at the beginning of the course. Two very vocal focus group participants in particular were adamant that they had been empowered by life-changing learnings from the course. For P3FA-S, her ethnic self-ascription had changed from Afakasi-Samoan to Samoan, and she had a newfound pride and confidence in her "secure" identity. She shared the following during the focus group interview:

> . . . such a nice feeling to be at uni and know the grounding in your ethnicity and your ethnic experiences. They're all important things in shaping you and YEAH, THEY MATTER! [*expressed with appreciation and happiness*].
>
> . . .
>
> After [this course] I feel more grounded and more secure in my identity. I feel more balanced. Not feeling balanced or secure in my ethnic identity would lead to mental health issues but because of this paper, I've been able to critically analyse my journey and myself and I feel good . . . like, in a sweet spot—it's really grounded me.
>
> . . .
>
> Just someone being interested in who I really am. . . . The feeling that you don't have to leave part of yourself at the door when you come into class.
>
> . . .
>
> I think I could get by life, uni, etc., without

acknowledging my ethnic identity . . . but I wouldn't be happy, or I wouldn't be honouring myself. Like, you know how I talked about being in balance I always use this and that would take me off balance and so then I could probably go through uni and life but not very well.

A pivotal moment for P3FA-S was when she was recently challenged about her Samoanness by another Samoan who called her a "plastic Samoan":

> Previously, these statements would have made me very upset and uncomfortable and I would've internalised them. Now I don't feel as affected by them because I don't crave validation in my identity as a tamaitai Samoa. I feel a little annoyed at this student's ignorance, but I don't feel upset nor does it make me question my identity. . . . Putting me down enables them to feel more superior in their knowledge and identity. I didn't realise how far I had come in my ethnic identity journey until I was confronted by this student's comments. It was such a strange but a nice feeling to be so secure that I was not affected by her words.

For others, early understandings of meanings of success such as "getting money to help parents" had been re-evaluated to "not just the big things . . . like material things, but maximising knowledge and skills and abilities at every level. Helping my parents out financially are just bonuses". "Giving back" was another theme in focus group discussions, especially in relation to parents' migration stories. Another life-changing experience occurred for P6FC. What changed for her was that her ethnic identity as Tongan Cook Island counted. She had come to realise that in multi-ethnic and diverse contexts knowing one's ethnic identity and where one comes from provides more understanding about diversity, different cultures and different lifeways.

> I didn't consider my identity or culture as part of my education, so coming to university, everything has fully changed. Now I feel a lot closer to my identity than I was back then. In high school or in intermediate or primary I felt like I didn't really care much about who I was. For myself I felt like as long as I knew I was Tongan Cook Island that was more than enough. But with university . . . everyone tends to know where they come from and all this and so I felt like I needed to also know more . . . I feel like if I'm able to understand more who I am or know who I am, it will help me with other

career pathways. Like say for example if I were to go and do case managing there will be families I will come across who have issues and maybe if I didn't have the view that I have now I'd be biased in some kind of way. Whereas knowing all this knowledge and able to be accepting and understand other circumstances or situations or like people's problems . . . so more of an understanding point of view rather than being like one-viewed. (P6FC)

This course empowered these two students referred to above in life-changing ways. Experiential and existential exercises that are engaging, inclusive and challenging and facilitate serious conversations are incorporated in Pacific 300. Feedback from students who took part in the study reveals that they felt the course work, although difficult, was more rewarding than that of other papers. They found it empowering because it forced them to understand and apply theory to practice; it enabled them to intellectualise and evaluate their own ethnic identities in a way that provided them with a newfound confidence, self-reflexivity, a new self-respect and a secure identity. Based on both European and Pacific ethnicity theories and their own personal identity journeys, they were able to demystify "racism", "difference" and "self-identity". As a consequence, they were able to analyse and articulate theories of ethnicity with their own identity experiences, thereby rationalising coping mechanisms along the way.

Pacific 300 provides students with space to disturb existing experiences, perceptions and thinking about who and why they are; why the correct pronunciation of their names correctly is important to them; why the negative stereotypes of South Auckland are not who they are; why they no longer regard themselves as plastic Samoans/Tongans or half-castes. This allows them to understand and engage with themselves, their peers, lecturers, their academic work, their families and their ethnic communities, as well as other ethnic groups and the wider New Zealand communities, and to connect with "difference" in positive ways to optimise their ethnic identities for successful outcomes.

Conclusions

Theorising the ethnic identity journey
I am . . . a Samoan . . . but not a Samoan
To my aiga in Samoa, I am a palagi.
I am . . . a New Zealander . . . but not a New
 Zealander.
To New Zealanders I am a "bloody coconut"
 at worst, a "Pacific Islander" at best,

I am . . . to my Samoan parents . . . their
 child.

The "I am" verse above arose out of the first author's doctoral research amongst a group of New Zealand-born Samoans of the Newton Pacific Islanders Congregational Church, the first Pacific ethnic church to be established in New Zealand. The verse depicts the core shared understanding of growing up as a New Zealand-born Samoan amongst the research participants (Anae, 1998, p. 159). Although based on New Zealand-born Samoan identity journeys, the "I am" verse can also be applied to New Zealand-born Pacific and other ethnic groups. The first two lines describe the simultaneous inter- and intra-ethnic identity confusion state they find themselves in—usually in their adolescent years—and the last line represents a reconciliation of inter- and intra-ethnic challenges to their self-perceived identities, which leads to a permanent secure identity.

Thus, ethnic identity is not to be explored as a static state but as a series of states or as a process changing over time and increasing maturity, that is, as a journey and a series of responses to challenges regarding one's self-identity (Anae, 1998). A secure ethnic identity is a political commitment to one's ethnic identity in the diaspora/transnational space; an ethnic identity in which coping mechanisms and strategies have been developed and which connects "roots" and "routes". It connects homeland/indigeneity with diaspora and transnationalism, with a positionality where one is comfortable and secure in one's own skin, despite inter- and intra-ethnic challenges from both the dominant settler group and their own ethnic group (Anae, 1997, 1998).

Courses/pedagogies such as Pacific 300 are integral because they provide students with ethnic enhancements through exegeses of their inter- and intra-ethnic relationships with others (Manuela & Anae, 2017). They interrogate how individual success is understood, described and explained by Pacific students themselves. In the focus group interviews at the end of the course, students explained how the power of a secure ethnic identity provided them with a "sweet spot"—grounding, a balance, newfound confidence, self-reflexivity, and a new self-respect with which to view and pursue success, their studies, and their university and life experiences. Thus, the power of a secure ethnic identity will have flow-on effects at many levels.

In its ontology, epistemology and pedagogy, Pacific 300 demonstrates how to teu le va—a Samoan term meaning to value, nurture and act

in the social and sacred spaces of relationships for optimal outcomes (Airini et al., 2010; Anae, 2010, 2016). This attention to relationality can help teachers positively re-vision their practice. Pacific 300 is about ethnic identity and the va, which necessitates a dialogical approach and also supports a relational positionality whereby both the student and the teacher become "edgewalkers" between Pacific and palagi concepts, Pacific Indigenous and palagi knowledges, Pacific and palagi communities, Pacific- and palagi-orientated pedagogies, and amongst themselves. Relatedness overlaps with dialogue, constituting relationships and flowing across relational spaces. While dialogue is to do with the way expression shapes relationships, relationships are more contexts for expression. In an intercultural educational setting, relational methodologies have the potential to facilitate interactions across groups of participants, for instance, teachers and students, catalysing

FIGURE 1 Post-it notes from fono participants gathered from faculty-based groups of departmental academic and professional staff

relational intensity and enhancing understanding (Reynolds, 2016).

The learnings from this project can be understood through concepts such as va and a secured ethnic identity, disrupting existing thinking about Pacific students and what and who they represent. As a result, this research has the potential to assist a re-framing of theory and practice in the field, as well as providing a model of relational inquiry for further social justice research and praxis into intercultural fields such as Pacific education. These learnings also show how attention to, and indeed a focus on, va provides a relationality that can help teachers positively re-vision their practice.

The practice of teu le va has a strong tradition as a strategy for inquiry, meaning making, and dissemination of ideas in Pacific cultures. Researching and implementing strategies to enhance the engagement of Pacific students in their learning through ethnic identity journeys has the potential to improve participation, retention and success for Pacific students. Collaborative teaching and learning technologies provide an opportunity for both teachers and students to experience a range of diverse intercultural experiences and perspectives where culture counts.

The fono

The dissemination of our research findings occurred during a Pacific professional development fono for academic and professional staff members of the University of Auckland, which was held after the focus group sessions. Fono participants were provided with the research project findings as well as an opportunity to be immersed in Pacific-ness. The fono programme consisted of a welcome— an ava ceremony by the Samoan students—and then the keynote speakers presented the research project data, followed by Pacific Island-themed workshops where fono participants were able to circulate amongst booths for a diverse range of Pacific nations. At these booths Pacific postgraduates shared specific Pacific Island-themed sociocultural aspects with them. This was followed by a talanoa—faculty/departmental groupings sharing reflections—and recommendations on ways forward. The programme ended with lunch and cultural performances.

We end our article with a visual form of feedback from staff who attended the dissemination fono, highlighting their needs, aspirations and desires for this vaka now and into the future (Figure 1). We believe the fono represented a great start to the liberating and healing process for both students and teachers of Pacific students.

Faafetai/Acknowledgements

Glossary

afakasi	half-caste
aiga	large extended family
ava	beverage made from the dried roots of the plant *Piper methysticum* and mixed with water before it is strained for drinking; used in ritual ceremonies
fono	meeting
palagi	lit. "sky-breaker", white man, European, foreigner, Samoan not born in Samoa
pikipiki hama kae vaevae manava	pikipiki hama means to stick, bind or link strongly to the outrigger of a vaka moana; vaevae means to give or share; and manava— similar to manawa in Māori—is a deeply complex, core term in Pasifika expression meaning the heart, centre, womb or breath
talanoa	sharing stories, creating dialogue in an inclusive receptive space

tamaitai	young, unmarried women
tautua	to serve, service
teu le va	to value, nurture and to act in the social and sacred/spiritual spaces of relationships for optimal outcomes
va	relationality; the sacred and secular/spiritual and social spaces of relationships both animate and inanimate
vaka moana	ocean-going canoe

Appendix 1: Demographic data

See Figure A1.

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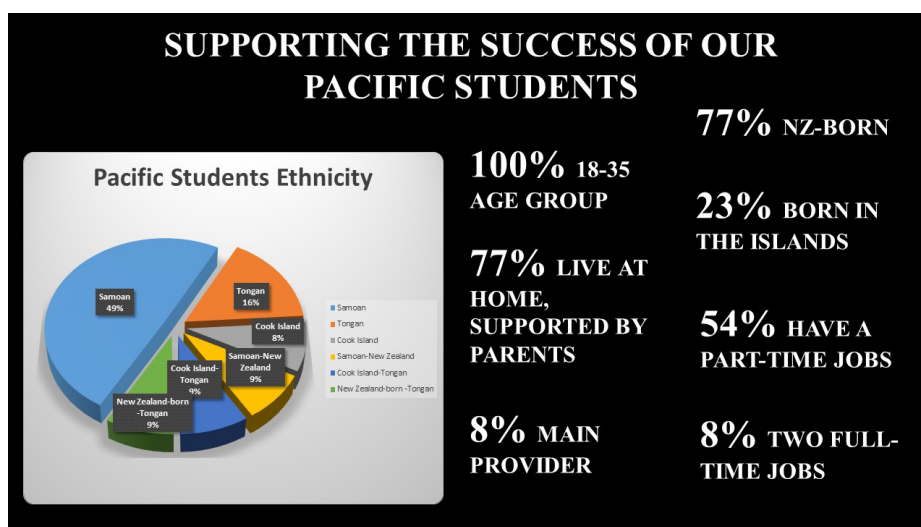
FIGURE A1   Demographic data collected from the students of Pacific 300: NZ-Born Pacific Identities who participated in the study

LALANGA HA KAHA'U MONU'IA

Helping science educators to embed Indigenous knowledge, values and cultures in their courses for Māori and Pacific science student success

*Sonia Fonua**

Abstract

Māori and Pacific students are not achieving in science in comparison with other ethnic groups in Aotearoa New Zealand. At the same time, evidence of engagement with their traditional ways of knowing and being in university science settings is limited. Most formal science curricula globally are founded on Western modern science, and this focus can contribute to the underachievement of Indigenous students in science, particularly if Indigenous knowledge is not included (Howlett et al., 2008). Culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris, 2012) acknowledges cultural pluralism, yet many science educators lack the cultural capital to comfortably reference Indigenous knowledge in their teaching. In this article, I describe some of the tensions, benefits and considerations that need to be acknowledged and addressed when encouraging non-Indigenous university science educators to incorporate and embed Māori and Pacific values, culture and knowledge in their teaching practice and learning spaces. This article discusses findings from a research project on embedding Indigenous knowledge, values and culture in university science teaching, with a particular focus on relationship building.

Keywords

Indigenous knowledge, cultural values, science education, vā,
relationality, critical self-reflection, Tonga, Pacific, Motutapu

Introduction

Over 15 years ago, Osborne et al. (2003) highlighted an increasing "recognition of the importance and economic utility of scientific knowledge and its cultural significance" (p. 1049). They also noted that fewer young people were studying science or pursuing a career in science, and scientific ignorance was increasing in the general populace. Despite its importance in pre-professional education and for enhancing societies' scientific literacy (Coll et al., 2010), Bull et al. (2010) argued that science education did not fit with the needs of the time. Although not recent, these concerns are still pertinent, particularly that

> traditional science education, designed to prepare science-able students for science careers, is in fact turning many students away from science and it may not be serving any of our students particularly well—even those who are high achievers on current measures. (Bull et al., 2010, p. 32)

Similar concerns exist regarding university science education. Since the 1980s, market reforms

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have shifted the strategic economic and social objectives of universities nationally and internationally (Shore, 2010). In Aotearoa New Zealand, universities have increasingly aligned to a more business-style model of operation, introducing various performance measures and emphasising economic competitiveness within the "global knowledge economy" and "education for citizenship". Some question the subsequent impact on what is taught and what counts as "proper knowledge" (Shore, 2010). Of particular concern is that the increasing number of university students enrolling has not corresponded to more teaching staff, which has often drastically affected teaching ratios (Shore, 2010) and the time academic staff have to teach students as individuals (Wilcox et al., 2005). The current situation remains problematic, particularly regarding whether students' needs are being met, and whether the quality of their learning experience as students is becoming more and more diverse.

Science education

Basing formal science curricula on Western modern science creates a "learning gap" or tension between Western and Indigenous value systems (Little, 1990). This can contribute to the underachievement of Indigenous science learners, particularly if Indigenous knowledge is excluded from the formal science curriculum (Howlett et al., 2008), thereby maintaining the feeling that it is being "othered" or deficient in an educational institution's culture (Bishop et al., 2014; Kahu, 2013). Including Indigenous knowledge in curricula celebrates multiple perspectives and challenges the "hegemonic role that Western science plays in a rapidly globalizing world" (Hammond & Brandt, 2004, p. 2). Indigenous knowledge has benefits for all students, their institutions and wider society (Thaman, 2003). However, many science educators lack the cultural capital to comfortably refer to Indigenous knowledge.

Culturally sustaining pedagogy

Culturally sustaining pedagogy seeks to "perpetuate and foster—to sustain—linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling" (Paris, 2012, p. 93). It requires pedagogies to be responsive and relevant to multiethnic communities, supporting young people to maintain their own cultural and linguistic competencies while building cultural competence in the dominant culture. In Aotearoa New Zealand, an excellent opportunity for science educators to initiate a culturally sustaining pedagogy is to

consider how they are teaching Māori and Pacific students.

As a non-Indigenous university science educator, I embrace the idea of critical reflexive practice being more sustaining of the cultures and values of Māori and Pacific students and becoming more inclusive of Indigenous knowledge. However, improving the quality and equity of university science teaching requires an understanding of the culture of students who struggle in a system dominated by a different worldview (Fonua, 2018). In light of the low number of Māori and Pacific science educators in Aotearoa, it could be inferred that most university science educators have limited Māori and Pacific cultural capital. If true, this has implications for how culturally sustaining science educators can be without support, especially if we want to minimise the potential to further isolate Māori and Pacific science learners with potentially tokenistic, offensive or incorrect attempts to include them.

Relationships in education

Relationships have been emphasised in Māori and Pacific education research and policy for many years (Bishop et al., 2014; Hill & Hawk, 2000; Reynolds, 2018), in particular the need for educators to form "good", meaningful or quality relationships with Māori and Pacific students because the quality of the teacher–student relationship affects engagement and achievement. However, what constitutes a good relationship is not universal, as cultures understand good in different ways (Thaman, 1998). Instead, the significance of the expression of the teacher–student relationship in relation to Māori and Pacific student academic outcomes must be recognised.

Deficit theorising of Māori and Pacific students by linking teacher expectations to student ethnicity has been clearly demonstrated for over 15 years, if not longer (e.g., Alton-Lee, 2003; Nakhid, 2003). Educators need to recognise their role in maintaining stereotypes, including how their actions continue or expand these problematic depictions of Māori and Pacific students, and how this affects the students themselves.

Relationality

From a Māori perspective, relationality refers to "our lived relation to other human beings, other living creatures, and to the non-living entities with whom we share our spaces and the planet" (Ritchie, 2013, p. 307). While often mistaken for relationships, relationality's essence is broader, encompassing any type of association or link with

anything and replacing the linear idea of connection with a connection through an expanse or space. To be able to discuss relationality in a Pacific context, it is necessary to understand vā.

Vā is a viewpoint found in many Pacific countries, including the Kingdom of Tonga, Samoa and Fiji. Vā can be variably understood as the space where relationships or interactions occur, the "socio-spatial" connection, and is also associated with balance in relationships (Airini et al., 2010). The vā is never empty; it is filled with the relationship that exists between two people, groups or entities that both have responsibility for how the relationship works. From a Tongan academic perspective, vā "emphasises space in between. This is fundamentally different from the popular western notion of space as an expanse or an open area" (Kaʻili, 2005, p. 89). Therefore, understanding vā can help educators working in Aotearoa and the wider Pacific to consider the embodiment of relationality in their teaching and learning spaces (Kaʻili, 2005; Reynolds, 2018).

Positionality

The framing of my research and teaching is influenced by my three "situated positions" (Samu, 2014): (1) university science educator, (2) non-Indigenous Pākehā educator and (3) member of a Tongan family. As a university educator, I have spent 20 years continually witnessing the inequitable outcomes in Māori and Pacific student achievement. For the past 15 years I have taught science exclusively to Māori and Pacific students. This has often been challenging, triggering extensive critical self-reflection, particularly regarding my Pākehā privilege, how I engage with cultural values and the power dynamic present when I teach Māori or Pacific students. My lived experience as a wife, mother, aunty, daughter-in-law and so forth in an extended Tongan family has also influenced my ontological and epistemological thinking. This is now shaped more by the contemporary expressions of Tongan culture demonstrated by my Tongan family, who maintain close ties to the Kingdom of Tonga, than the Pākehā culture I was brought up in.

I am not claiming to be Tongan (or an insider). However, I believe my worldview situates me as an "external insider", someone who has become affiliated with an "outside culture" and who may adopt aspects of this culture, while critically regarding and rejecting many of the values and beliefs of the culture they were first socialised in (Banks, 1998). Johansson-Fua (2016) defines an Oceanic researcher as "one who is actively involved in Pacific societies, working to change mind sets and expand power and control for the benefit of Pacific communities" (p. 37). Based on this definition, I consider myself an Oceanic researcher, but also an Oceanic educator. I feel I am now much better equipped to understand what it is about the wider university context that drives the inequitable achievement of Māori and Pacific science learners, a position that formed the basis of the project discussed below.

Method

Previous research suggests that incorporating Pacific values, behaviours and concepts within the formal classroom curriculum and pedagogy of science may address Pacific students' engagement and achievement in science (Kalavite, 2010). Influenced and informed through reflection and critique of my own teaching practice and ongoing doctoral studies, I developed a research fellowship project, "Lalanga ha kahaʻu monuʻia—Embedding Indigenous Knowledge, Values, and Culture for Māori and Pacific Student Success". The Tongan phrase "Lalanga ha kahaʻu monuʻia" can be translated as "weaving together for a better future". The goal of Lalanga was to enable science-focused educators to identify ways to embed Māori and Pacific values, culture and knowledge in their teaching and learning by creating safe spaces for Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff to undergo critical self-reflection. Indigenous experts (internal and external to the university) provided guidance, insight and perspective on the current content and delivery approach, helping to expand or develop more culturally sustaining approaches.

Pikipiki hama kae vaevae manava

Methodologically, Lalanga is underpinned by "pikipiki hama kae vaevae manava" (to lash together to give or share from the heart). This Tongan metaphor describes the purposeful and deliberate connecting together of ocean-going vaka mid-journey to allow people to converse and share resources during long voyages. It is employed to demonstrate deliberate and purposeful ways of creating deep and honest connections, sharing information, knowledge and resources, and collaborative engagement alongside individual responsibility. The connections are strong like the lashing of vaka outriggers. They are also intentional and encourage sustainability and trust because they are connections that can be repeated as and when necessary and are reciprocal.

Lalanga focused on encouraging educators

who oversee curriculum design and assessment to consider the reality of Māori and Pacific science learners' lived experiences. Many Māori and Pacific students experience micro-aggressions (Nadal, 2011), stereotype threat (Steele & Aronson, 1995) and unconscious bias during their tertiary studies. Creating spaces to discuss and document why Māori and Pacific values, culture and knowledge should be expressed and experienced in the formal classroom highlighted these negative experiences. Furthermore, it encouraged educators to explore ways to address such experiences when previously they may have been unaware of or unsure how to deal with them.

A pikipiki hama kae vaevae manava approach encouraged connection and sharing opportunities. After one year, over 35 university science educators had participated in an intensive monthly reflective process documented by note-taking. Ten of these participants also engaged in an intensive course development process guided by Māori and Pacific experts external and internal to the university. Further, two faculty-sponsored talatalanoa opened up the discussion and sharing space, accumulating an interested audience of 150 academic and professional staff. Several talanoa sessions also collected Māori and Pacific student voice (N = 16) regarding changes in teaching practice they noticed and their suggestions on how science-focused courses could better reflect Indigenous values, culture and knowledge. In addition, one year after the project began, talanoa were held separately with eight science educators to gather their stories of reflection and change.

Talanoa

Talanoa, or "talking about nothing in particular, and interacting without a rigid framework" (Vaioleti, 2006, p. 23), allows participants to reflect on the research topic, providing their own critique and argument. Talanoa is complex but flexible, allowing for formal or informal conversation in different contexts or settings for different purposes (Johansson-Fua, 2009). In Lalanga, it allowed unstructured conversation triggered by an idea or a question, rather than set interview questions (Johansson-Fua, 2009), enabling participants to determine the discussion focus so they were purposeful and deliberate conversations.

Our monthly hui lasted 90 minutes and provided ways to experience or consider relationality and to enjoy the journey with others, something that is not usually common, encouraged or emphasised in the university environment. My intention was to demonstrate what Waddell (1993) described

when responding to Hau'ofa's (1993) "Our Sea of Islands":

> the individual—the self—does not exist. One exists only in reference to others. Hence the practice of always consulting, meeting, talking matters out, such that all decisions are fundamentally collective ones, based on a remarkable degree of consensus. While such a way of proceeding may be tedious and unproductive to the rational, Western mind . . . there is something fundamentally generous about such a way of proceeding, where dialogue, debate and collective searching are at the centre of our preoccupations. It is of course a style, a manner of proceeding which is remarkably rare among scholars, where each is so often ensconced in his or her inviolable truth. (Waddell, 1993, p. xiii)

As expected in any Māori or Pacific context, we always recognise the importance of sharing food. Sharing food can build relationality, especially if it is handmade and connects the consumer to a particular culture or nation through stories, histories and explanations. Discussing values and how different cultures can consider the same value, such as respect, in different ways has been another point of connection. Lalanga participants are diverse with respect to gender, age, ethnicity, seniority in the institution, indigeneity to Aotearoa or the wider Pacific, migrant status or born in Aotearoa, teaching experience and educational background. Importantly, we embraced the presence of both academic and professional staff, ignoring the institutional hierarchy and considering everyone's contribution equal, whether they were academic deans or lab technicians. We also initiated opportunities for Māori and Pacific experts to attend and share their stories, knowledge and perspectives, as a way to provide intercultural support (Reynolds, 2017).

Findings and discussion

The expectation to form positive relationships comes with very little explanation of what this means in practice. For example, *Tapasā*, a recent Pacific-focused document, expects a teacher to "establish[] and maintain[] collaborative and respectful relationships and professional behaviours that enhance learning and wellbeing for Pacific learners" and highlights the need to employ Pacific constructs to do so (Ministry of Education, 2018, p. 8). Although an admirable directive, most university science educators prioritise content delivery over investing in the learning environment where they deliver this content.

In other words, there is often limited focus on forming any relationship, regardless of whether it is a positive one. Yet, for many Indigenous students, the learning environment they experience is far more important than the content, and it can inform and influence their engagement and success (Fonua, 2018; Hill & Hawk, 2000; Reynolds, 2018). This creates an interesting tension, one that usually plays out according to who has the agency or power in this situation—often this is not the Indigenous student.

Sea of islands

A good place to start considering vā, particularly the expectations, ethics and responsibilities of tauhi vā, is Hau'ofa's (1993) essay "Our Sea of Islands", which critiques how Oceania is considered. Hau'ofa described Oceania (Central and South Pacific) as a "sea of islands" rather than "islands in a far sea", offering a more "holistic perspective" that encompasses the "totality" of relationships and countering the dominant deficit "smallness" description associated with Oceania geographically and economically. Instead, Hau'ofa acknowledged the breadth of Oceania and its wealth of knowledges, cultures and history existing beyond imposed colonial boundaries and narrow perspectives. Hau'ofa raised the importance of ontological positioning; seeing the islands as connected (a sea of islands) or disconnected (islands in a far sea) will determine what is and therefore what is possible in that space.

Like other researchers embracing Hau'ofa's work, Reynolds (2017) notes parallels between the separation and connection of islands in Oceania and those in classroom relationships. My contribution is this: if we specifically shift the view of science educators away from Māori and Pacific students as islands in a far sea to a sea of islands that are connected socially and spatially, we highlight and emphasise the need to reduce the conscious (and unconscious) bias towards Māori and Pacific science learners. Educators also need to recognise that these connections and separations in classroom relations are perhaps more obvious when the subject being taught is one in which knowledge is derived from an investigative method that seeks to avoid subjectivity or human influence. More science educators will then recognise their role in acknowledging diverse viewpoints and knowledges in their classrooms and teaching spaces, and their role in maintaining the relational space. The following stories (using pseudonyms) demonstrate how the Lalanga participants explored a process of embedding Indigenous knowledge, values and culture into their teaching practice along with some of the critical self-reflection they experienced.

Science is often positioned as objective, neutral and unbiased. As a result, science teachers often consider their role to be exclusively to deliver content, not to build a connection. Yet, for many cultures, an introduction is common practice to set the tone of an interaction, to position oneself and to demonstrate linkages and connections. In Māori and Pacific cultures, this often includes a spatio-temporal acknowledgement of geographically significant places and ancestral links, known as a pēpeha in Māori (Mead & Grove, 2001). In our first Lalanga hui, Indigenous cultural experts explained how a pēpeha demonstrates your positioning in relation to the world and creates connections and relationships by sharing who you are from.

As discussed above, relational links are often not made in science lectures. Instead, lecturers prioritise content delivery, perhaps introducing themselves professionally so as to qualify their academic position as the teacher. Unsurprisingly, the initial Lalanga discussions about introductions revolved around the time spent on introductions, usually considered a waste of time because of the content's importance. For example, in her first lecture, Eloise, a non-Indigenous lecturer, explained the need to "communicate [to the students] where I stand and how I work in terms of efficiency and being task-oriented so as to not 'shock' them if I come across as being blunt".

However, once the participants became better informed about pēpeha, they all expressed a desire to learn their own as a way of connecting with students of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds from theirs. For example, another non-Indigenous lecturer said:

> I wanted all of my students to feel relaxed and comfortable in my class because I think that's important to allow them to achieve, and I'm interested in being able to build relationships as a part of that and I know it's easy for me to build relationships with students that I understand and they tend to be the ones that are from my own culture, but I am not so good at it with students who are not from my own culture. I need to make more of an effort and this is a way [through pēpeha] that I think I can make more effort. (Ella, non-Indigenous lecturer)

Despite their efforts, some participants felt unsupported by their colleagues when they expressed a desire to develop their pēpeha. Others were discouraged by their department because a pēpeha

would not "fix" Māori and Pacific student engagement. For example:

> when I discussed this [project] with other academics and my desire to be involved to make a positive change. . . . They start to want evidence and science because that's where I work. The kinds of questions I get are "why should you be doing this?", "what's the real point?" . . . The number one question from my department was "Is that just token, just throwing a bit of Māori in to your introduction? [It] isn't going to do anything." [Yet] they wanted to solve the problem [of Māori and Pacific success]. (Ella, non-Indigenous lecturer)

Many educators had avoided specifically engaging Māori and Pacific students because they did not know how, and were not ready, to admit their ignorance or lack of ability. Understanding pēpeha more deeply helped Hester, a non-Indigenous lecturer:

> I came here 10 years ago . . . and I'd like to learn more but I have always been a bit uncomfortable with trying things like using the language and beyond sort of reading academic text, I haven't become very versed in how to use things like the language in order to help people feel included and welcome and a part of things. . . . I really want to feel more comfortable talking about that and not just feel like I can parrot these words [of the pēpeha]. I want to know what pēpeha mean, what does it really mean to someone if I say it and I think if I feel confident of how it will build that relationship of that person who hears it then I feel I can defend saying it to anybody [i.e., colleagues], even if they don't agree.

To be clear, the purpose of sharing these stories is not to excuse the inaction of science educators or absolve them of any responsibility; instead, it is intended to highlight the personal reality for many science educators who do not know what to do or where to start. Most felt unsupported by the university or were unclear about available resources, or even if there was an expectation that they would learn to engage Māori and Pacific students. Often, they had managed to avoid engaging in any personal development concerning Māori and Pacific student success because there was no clear directive to do so nor seemingly any consequences if they did not.

During the students' talanoa sessions, how teaching staff interact and build connections in their first lesson was a key topic of discussion. They felt that pēpeha made a hugely positive contribution to building relationships as it demonstrated respect. One Māori science learner, Te Huia, described it this way:

> it warms you, aye, when somebody stands like this year, it doesn't happen frequently at med school [but] when it does happen, it sends a warm fuzziness over you and . . . I don't think that the lecturers realise that when they mihi, when it's in Māori, they acknowledge that Māori are tangata whenua, when they do that it's a good thing, that is coming from a place, from caring and aroha from them.

However, some students were concerned that staff considered a pēpeha or in-depth introduction was enough to engage Māori and Pacific learners. They wanted to ensure there was more to it:

> [pēpeha is good] but does it stop there? [laughter] Because to be honest . . . it's good, a nice culturally touching experience but in reality what's being practised is totally different. . . . that's a minute, maybe five minutes max at the beginning of a lecture. You have to ask, is that then it for the rest of the semester? "Kia ora"? (Tana, Pacific student)

For some educators, their pēpeha development and delivery was reasonably straightforward and had immediate benefits for their student interactions:

> they remembered [me after my pēpeha] a lot more. And that was really special for me. . . . So, I think having that relationship, that, you know, because I was opening up a little bit to them . . . it really did. And I continue to do that, at the start of all my first lectures. And I think that's really important for me. It's not normally what I do, but, I was challenged, but I think it was a good challenge . . . so that's a personal goal, that I felt, that I was able to do, I had confidence, I could see the merit in why I was doing this. . . . It gave me sort of a bit of more rapport with the students. (Evan, non-Indigenous lecturer)

While the Lalanga participants were keen to find ways to embed Indigenous values, culture and knowledge in their teaching and learning practice, they were very aware of their own insecurities and capabilities. They wanted to be able to do things better but felt challenged about acting immediately. For example:

> for me, [this project] . . . taking the time out to think about and discuss and be challenged on some of my existing ideas [was important] . . . when we

started the whole journey with pēpeha . . . I sort of felt hesitant about doing it in the traditional way, which is how I've heard other people do it . . . [in English was] a different way, but at the same time authentic, it made connections to the audience and it led nicely into his talk. So, I think I need to leverage that idea and present myself and make connection with my audience in a more authentic way that I'm comfortable with. Um, and that may not necessarily be in the framework of a traditional pēpeha but, um, yeah. (Eloise, non-Indigenous lecturer)

When there is some pushback about not embracing a pēpeha or particular cultural practice immediately, I would argue that ensuring the cultural safety of the students and the educator is paramount. What we do not want to happen is for staff to take an idea and run with it in the wrong direction, as in the following example:

doing a mihi or introducing, them doing it not in Māori, how when lecturers just introduce themselves in English . . . I think that's cool . . . when they introduce themselves, that's the first thing you see of them, I think that's a good way for us to get to know them . . . but I think also they need to be more educated when they introduce themselves, not just introducing themselves in Māori but [if you say] my family were the first people in the South Island . . . when you are not educated, "Wow, she's cool because she is the first person in the South Island!" but then . . . you [were] not, you colonised and you took it all, you know . . . so making sure they are culturally aware and educated when they are doing something that is trying to be culturally appropriate. (Areta, Māori student)

Although the science educator (who was not a participant in the Lalanga project) referred to in the above extract seemed to be engaging in attempts to build positive relationships, in reality they demonstrated their ignorance (at best). Describing themselves as the first people in the South Island, when they are not Indigenous, entirely dismisses Māori as the first people of Aotearoa, which is hugely problematic and risks isolating Māori and Pacific students even further.

Engaging in developing their pēpeha had wide-ranging consequences for the participants. Some felt they were beginning to understand their Māori and Pacific students in ways they had not previously—these shifts had immediate implications for improving Māori and Pacific success in tangible ways. For example, Hester's deeper understanding of Pacific relationships resulted in a tangible behavioural shift. Instead of refusing to shift assessment dates, with dire consequences for the student, because of her increased awareness and cultural understanding she:

allowed a student to sit a test early so she can go back to Samoa with her grandmother because I now understand how central family is to her, that she's been chosen and can't just say no—that her life is not that of the "strive to be what you can be as an individual" mindset.

Motutapu

Lalanga had key goals: to increase connection between educators; to raise awareness of their teaching context, namely, Aotearoa and the wider Pacific; and to create a safe space for non-Māori and non-Pacific educators to meet, reflect, discuss and learn without feeling judged, as most had limited Māori and Pacific cultural capital. Although familiar with the third space concept, I was taken by the hybrid space suggested by Johansson-Fua's (2016) description of Motutapu, sacred islands found across the Pacific and considered safe spaces for travellers to rest. Building upon Hauʻofa's Oceanic philosophy, Johansson-Fua (2016) suggested Motutapu were "actionable" and "ethical" hybrid spaces where self-efficacy and awareness can be raised and where cooperative partnerships between Indigenous people and Western institutions can be negotiated.

Although Johansson-Fua (2016) was originally developing a space for Oceanic comparative and international education in the Pacific, I believe the concept translates easily to science education and attempts to improve it for Māori and Pacific students. For example, Johansson-Fua emphasises time and the importance of resting, waiting and considering the next part of the journey, rather than rushing to "finish". Sustainable transformative change must be true change; any change must be desired not forced and must allow time for each (science) educator to navigate their own journey, with expert guidance. I would argue that there is not just one way to become a culturally competent science educator; yet, to be able to embed Indigenous values, culture and knowledge in their teaching practice well, without being tokenistic, offensive or incorrect, educators need time to become confident and familiar with them. This benefits students because the delivery will then be appropriate, useful and relevant, which reduces the risk of isolating or marginalising Indigenous science learners.

The sanctity for critical reflection created by Motutapu assists science educators to engage in a process of discovery, providing them with somewhere "to rest until it is safe to continue their journey" (Johansson-Fua, 2016, p. 36). I believe it also aligns well with our pikipiki hama methodology by providing opportunities to come together and share resources, in this case somewhere to rest, and recuperate, together. University-level science is predominantly taught by non-Māori and non-Pacific teachers, as are most subjects at secondary or tertiary levels; often the teachers have limited intercultural relational experience. Our Motutapu helps educators to try, to ask, to think and to understand information that they might not otherwise be exposed to or have a place to explore safely. For Ella:

> part of my preparation process has been if I want to be able to share this I want to expose my vulnerability in a way that I feel safe. I'm prepared to be very open with you, but not necessarily with people in power positions over me who affect my employability.

Being able to speak freely and openly does not often exist in higher education work spaces. However, together we have created a space "to explore something different, something new and perhaps unrecognisable, but in that process find new areas of negotiation, drawing new meanings and representation" (Johansson-Fua, 2016, p. 36). Although most Lalanga participants were not Indigenous to Aotearoa or the Pacific, they aspired to change their practice to benefit Māori and Pacific university-level science learners. Realising the value placed on connections and relationship building through the Lalanga process, these participants were keen to become more aware of values, or "the cornerstones of Indigenous culture that [I] can keep in mind or work with" (Eloise, non-Indigenous lecturer).

For me, the idea of Motutapu enables me to participate in a third space that:

> enables other positions to emerge, it displaces, unsettles the histories that constitute it and at the same time it settles the "unsettled". The third space sets up new structures of authority and new political initiatives; it is an ambiguous area that develops when two or more individuals/cultures interact. The third space is a place of continuous tension and negotiation. But if the third space is in Motutapu, then it can also be a place of

rejuvenation, a sanctuary, a place to launch new journeys. (Johansson-Fua, 2016, p. 37)

Perhaps this is one element that is missing from approaches attempting to improve Māori and Pacific science learner achievement.

The educators acknowledged the value of working closely with people, knowing that there was support and sanctuary:

> [at university] people do critique things quite a lot especially when they're not the ones who need to actually engage the students or implement something. So, when a suggestion is made about how I could do it or who I could approach, it's like it's easier to critique and be negative about something than it is to sit there and say "OK, how are we going to do this together?" (Evelyn, non-Indigenous lecturer)

> the smaller group that we had . . . that small group, I thought I could you know, it was just because I was seeing them very often. . . . And there was that, a feeling of trust, and you could talk . . . you could discuss things and you could bring in your stories, they might not be relevant to that, but was just something, I felt that really was key . . . I think, yeah, being able to share my things and be able to then bring it back [to my work] . . . [because] you become really, sort of lonely soldier fighting against the system, which it shouldn't be" (Evan, non-Indigenous lecturer)

We have created connections that did not previously exist—not just individual relationships, but broader and deeper connections based on shared philosophies, ethics, morals and, now, understanding. For example, understanding vā and considering the relational space created within science learning contexts at university was hugely important. For the Lalanga participants, learning about vā often resulted in "ah-ha moments", when the realisation that the empirical understanding of relationships they were used to did not capture all the invisible factors that occur in any interaction (if they are even acknowledged), such as the emotional state of those involved.

Presenting this conceptualisation of socio-spatial relationships helped explain the necessity of taking time for introductions at the beginning of a lecture or class. Vā provided a framework for these educators to understand connecting, in particular why sharing where they were from, whether they had children and their interests was more important than listing academic qualifications

and scientific research projects, or not introducing themselves at all and spending that five or ten minutes teaching science content. Furthermore, such a simple but powerful change in their approach to their students would "speak" to Māori and Pacific (among many other) students who understand vā, or a similar epistemological position that holds maintaining positive relationships as a core value. Ultimately, embodying vā enabled us to contest the impression that relationships are not essential in science education.

Conclusion

Many attempts have been made to improve Māori and Pacific academic success in the tertiary education space, yet Māori and Pacific students still do not succeed on par with other ethnicities. Instead of finding ways that Māori and Pacific students can change so that they succeed, I purposefully and explicitly focus my energies and efforts on the teaching staff as the locus for change. It is they who need to be assisted to build their cultural capital and critical self-reflection so that they can understand and engage with Māori and Pacific students, not the other way round.

Science educators must understand that Māori and Pacific science learners want and need to feel welcome, valued, respected and included in their learning spaces. Yet the current system, which emphasises delivering large volumes of Western modern science content according to Eurocentric ways of being, often contradicts core cultural values and practices such as tauhi vā. Such a system does not acknowledge or assist the cultural border crossing Māori and Pacific science learners must engage in to be successful in their university science studies. Science educators have the agency to challenge the current preference or habit of delivering science in a dehumanising manner. Yet often they are unaware of the cultural contexts Māori and Pacific students exist in and have no means to learn about them. By exposing them to some ways of knowing and being within Māori and Pacific cultures, science educators are able to begin to disrupt and decolonise university science learning spaces by safely embedding Māori and Pacific knowledges, values and cultures in them in a manner that will engage Māori and Pacific science learners, and benefit the learning of all science students.

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Glossary

Aotearoa	commonly used as Māori name for New Zealand; lit. "the land of the long white cloud"
aroha	kindness, affection, love, compassion
hui	meeting
kia ora	hello, best wishes
mihi	speech of greeting, acknowledgement, tribute
Pākehā	a person of predominantly European descent
pēpeha	personal introduction based on one's identity and heritage
talanoa	talking about nothing in particular, and interacting without a rigid framework
talatalanoa	to continue to talk about
tangata whenua	Indigenous people of the land
tauhi vā	caring for socio-spatial relations
vā	relational space
vaka	canoes

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LEADERSHIP THROUGH LEARNING

Normalising Māori and Pacific leadership and learning success in a tertiary environment

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Abstract

Leadership Through Learning is a 12-week (i.e., one-semester) programme for Māori and Pacific tertiary students run by Te Fale Pouāwhina, a Māori and Pacific student learning service at the University of Auckland in Aotearoa New Zealand. The programme is designed to help students lead, empower and transform through normalising their leadership and learning success. As a strategy, normalising success counters negative stereotypes, micro-aggressions, and the everyday colonialism and racism these students encounter. By normalising success, positive stereotypes are created that challenge the deficit framing faced by Māori and Pacific students. This article describes research exploring the Leadership Through Learning programme, its focus on "students as leaders", the relationships that develop between students on the programme as they engage with the curriculum, and the impact of innovative teaching and learning praxis. Kaupapa Māori and Pacific research methodologies, particularly talanoa, are employed to highlight the student leaders' voices, aspirations and growth as leaders. Student leaders' engagements and relationships strengthen their identity and self-efficacy, and provide opportunities that have created positive stereotypes, especially in the programme's three critical areas: leadership, empowerment and transformation.

Introduction

How do Māori and Pacific students learn to lead, empower and transform in a tertiary setting, when their aspirations are rarely normalised, and they experience negative stereotypes, micro-aggressions, and everyday colonialism and racism? One way is through Leadership Through Learning, a transformational programme run by Te Fale Pouāwhina, a Māori and Pacific student learning service at the University of Auckland in Aotearoa New Zealand. The programme takes small cohorts (10–12 students) on a transformative journey to build self-efficacy, promote their unique identity, and reinforce positive stereotypes. During one 12-week semester, academic literacy skills, leadership, personal growth and professional development provide a curriculum backdrop for students to understand their academic context. This context includes the self in relationship with the whānau/aiga, broader communities, the institute and tertiary study, and explores why all of this matters to them. Normalising Māori and Pacific leadership and learning success is at the heart of Leadership Through Learning. The programme

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provides broad and unique strategies for Māori and Pacific success and is designed to empower and transform Māori and Pacific "students as leaders". Purposefully emphasising the "students as leaders" concept helps to foreground Indigenous knowledges and leadership. Furthermore, this prominence creates a counternarrative to the usual deficit framing of Māori and Pacific sensibilities (Le Grice, 2017). To develop this counternarrative further, I refer to those who participate in the Leadership Through Learning programme as "student leaders" throughout this article.

Significantly, success and a range of performance indicators for Māori and Pacific students in tertiary institutes remain a priority for the Tertiary Education Commission (Chauvel, 2014). However, success is still narrowly defined in degree-level studies, despite influential studies of Māori and Pacific students' success being published a decade ago. Airini et al.'s (2010) report *Success for All: Improving Māori and Pasifika Student Success in Degree-level Studies* made the key point that "success" encompasses many factors not easily measured through quantifiable data. Drawing from these studies and using examples from the Leadership Through Learning programme, this article asserts that Airini et al.'s (2010) findings are still relevant 10 years later. Whilst earlier studies identified a need for a holistic approach to success, I contend that Māori and Pacific student success in the tertiary context must also be normalised.

Secondly, this article argues for developing a countercultural lens and a counternarrative to dominant and hegemonic discourses. It is intended that while on the Leadership Through Learning programme, student leaders learn skills which empower them to better navigate degree-level studies and enjoy greater academic success. As Bamberg (2004) observes, "Countering the dominant and hegemonic narratives is the flip side of being complicit" (p. 351). The alternative for student leaders is to assimilate, leaving their cultural values at the gates of the institute, a point frequently made by the student leaders who participated in this research (see below).

Leadership Through Learning is designed to help participating student leaders understand the degree-level context. The programme's strategies provide them with a decolonising countercultural lens and a counternarrative that enables them to critique their postcolonial study environment at university. Learning countercultural affirmative language helps student leaders explain and frame their experiences. Student leaders learn to explore their context with a critical eye and develop analysis tools to help navigate their academic journeys more successfully.

Over the five years Leadership Through Learning has been running, each cohort of student leaders has demonstrated a strengthening of self-efficacy and promoted a strong cultural identity within the university and study context. In this way, student leaders learn new academic competencies in addition to the content-specific literacies learned in their courses. Within the programme, these approaches create positive stereotypes and challenge the prevalent and ongoing deficit framing Māori and Pacific students face.

Māori and Pacific student leaders come from cultural traditions where oratory and storytelling is used to pass down knowledge, history and culture. Furthermore, student leaders' knowledge, discussion and storytelling are associated with mana (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Hau'ofa, 1993) and make an important contribution to how they learn and grow. Patterson (2012), a Pacific scholar, argues that when students' voices are emphasised, their "knowledge and lived experience is valued and legitimized" (p. 3). Having witnessed these changes in the student leaders on the Leadership Through Learning programme, I sought to explore the following research question:

> What teaching and learning innovations in the Leadership Through Learning programme impacted the student leaders' leadership, empowerment and transformation?

Talanoa research methods were used to garner student leaders' attitudes and experiences of the programme and to explore whether it was beneficial to their studies and leadership development. It was within this context that student leaders discussed the micro-aggressions and everyday colonialism and racism they experienced in the spaces they traversed, and thus the importance of having access to a programme with a countercultural and counternarrative approach.

The opportunity to feature the voices of Leadership Through Learning's students came as a result of the author being awarded a University of Auckland Centre for Learning and Research in Higher Education (CLeaR) fellowship in 2018. The CLeaR fellowship theme that year was "He Vaka Moana: Navigating Māori and Pasifika Student Success". The Leadership Through Learning programme objectives were a good match for the fellowship's theme. Fellows were encouraged to work within a collaborative framework derived from the Tongan saying "pikipiki hama kae vaevae

manava", which describes the practice of binding vaka/waka together on long-distance journeys in order to share ideas, knowledge and resources before they are separated so that they can navigate independently again. Metaphorically, the saying supports the Māori and Pacific methodological approaches taken in this research, such as working with the other fellows' reciprocating ideas, knowledge and resources, which parallels what student leaders do in Leadership Through Learning. It was a pleasurable experience to work collaboratively with Māori, Pacific and Pākehā fellows, navigating independently and lashing our waka together to reclaim, re-view and re-story our journeys and aspirations for better outcomes for Māori and Pacific staff and students.

Theoretical background: Culture, self-efficacy and identity

This article draws largely on two key ideas about normalising Māori and Pacific leadership and learning success. The first is that psychological constructs, such as self-efficacy and other self-concepts (self-esteem, self-confidence, self-mastery), are important factors in the success of Māori and Pacific students. Self-efficacy relates to an individual's belief that he or she is capable of completing a duty (Bandura, 1982), and within Leadership Through Learning it relates to student leaders' capability to lead, empower and transform. Strengthening self-concepts through acknowledging a Māori and/or Pacific identity is important because it connects student leaders and facilitators through genealogy, land/islands and the Pacific Ocean. Bishop (2003) argues that "we need to create contexts where to be Māori is to be normal; where Māori cultural identities are valued, valid and legitimate . . . [and] Māori language, knowledge, culture and values are normal" (p. 226). These are important factors that guide classroom exchanges (Bishop, 2003); indeed, they are analogous to Māori and Pacific cultural identities, languages, knowledges, cultures and values. Having these factors embedded in Leadership Through Learning helps normalise success.

Studies in Aotearoa have brought together culture, self-efficacy and identity, which helps to explain why these concepts are significant factors in Leadership Through Learning. Webber (2012) has conducted important racial-ethnic identity work about Māori and Pacific school students in collaboration with McKinley and Hattie (Webber et al., 2013). Although their age groups are different, my findings from student leaders at degree-level are similar. For instance, Webber (2012) concludes that for Māori adolescents having a positive racial-ethnic identity is important "because when they develop healthy, positive and strong racial-ethnic identities they are able to repel negative stereotypes and accommodate other positive attributes, such as academic achievement, into their Māori identity" (p. 26). Houkamau and Sibley (2011), meanwhile, found a positive correlation "between ethnic identity and various psychological constructs including self-esteem, self-efficacy, personal mastery and an internal locus of control" (p. 380). In alignment with this finding, when student leaders in the Leadership Through Learning programme strengthened their ethnic and cultural identity, self-efficacy and positive self-concepts, they started to normalise their success. In this way, wider transformation occurred, and their ability to provide a countercultural approach and counternarrative to everyday colonialism and racism, micro-aggressions and negative stereotyping was strengthened.

The second idea about normalising Māori and Pacific leadership and learning success that this article draws on is the concept of a strengths-based approach. Deficit-based approaches put the responsibility of low achievement on the students, a perspective that is indirectly maintained through "acceptance of the assumptions held of Pasifika [and Māori] students by the education system", according to Nakhid (2003, p. 299). Bertrand Jones et al. (2016) recommend a strength-based or assets approach in leadership programmes and classrooms. These authors, building on the work of Ladson-Billings (2014), trialled the strength-based approach at an American university and "transformed teacher education by calling on teachers to adopt an assets approach to teaching culturally diverse students" (Bertrand Jones et al., 2016, p. 10). The strength-based approach adopted in the Leadership Through Learning programme has transformed the experience of Māori and Pacific student leaders and normalised their leadership and learning success.

Agency, self-efficacy, and Māori and Pacific students

Personal agency and self-efficacy are important components in Māori and Pacific students' leadership and learning success. Social-cognitive theorist Bandura (2000) asserts that human agency encompasses collective agency. Bandura (2000, 2006) observes that self-efficacy is fundamental to human agency and notes that it is an intentional activity. Self-efficacy is not always reliant on the individual producing experiences or shaping events.

A study of Pacific tertiary-level students found high self-efficacy and agency amongst the group because success was considered a collective pursuit (Marat et al., 2009). Thus, responsibility was taken on personally by the Pacific student(s) for and with the extended family, as a simultaneous agentic force in their success. Self-determination is a Māori collective aspiration (Bishop, 1996). Additionally, "Māori cultural aspirations, preferences and practices will facilitate agency (self-determination)" (Bishop & Glynn, 1999, p. 177). For Māori and Pacific students, collective agency is a familiar cultural notion, where shared capacities and knowledge achieve success for, by and with the collective.

Māori and Pacific students having either more or less self-efficacy is influenced by a host of factors. For instance, the benefits of reclaiming culture, values and language are well documented locally in Aotearoa (see Bishop & Glynn, 1999; G. H. Smith, 1997; R. Walker, 1990). Houkamau and Sibley (2011) draw from international literature sources to argue that viewing one's Indigenous culture positively is good for one's self-concept and wellbeing. Bandura (1982) sees self-efficacy from a psychological perspective, where it pertains to one's insight, innate ability, behaviour, mindset and emotional capability to manage challenging circumstances and to implement essential actions that deal with those circumstances. Stajkovic and Luthans (1998), meanwhile, see self-efficacy as relevant to performance and the ability to face challenges for a sustained period. Therefore, self-efficacy is necessary for Māori and Pacific students' success. Self-efficacy leads to better and longer-term maintenance of performance to help student leaders achieve their degree goals.

Success for all: Defining and facilitating Māori and Pacific success

The title of Arini et al.'s (2010) report, *Success for All*, stimulated my imagination because it encompasses the idea that what is good for Māori and Pacific students' success has wide-ranging benefits. Positive exchanges between Māori students and teachers who developed a "culturally responsive pedagogy of relations" (Bishop et al., 2009, p. 736) impacted their achievement. Building on this, Airini et al. (2010) found success was linked with "notions of potential, effort, and achievement over time" (p. 4). They described this as holistic progress, with students accomplishing important individual goals that were linked to their whānau and communities. Furthermore, students viewed the teachers that helped them achieve a pass grade

or higher as the most valuable to their educational journeys. Whilst this is the case, institutes that tend to have narrow success markers, mostly in the form of pass rates, will perhaps inhibit the aspirations of Māori and Pacific students, and therefore minimise the enjoyment of the broader aspects of their definition of success.

In terms of what might facilitate success, the student leaders in the Leadership Through Learning programme enjoyed being part of a collective and engaging in supportive relationships. Curtis et al. (2012) argue that feeling comfortable in the university environment is an important factor in Māori and Pacific students' success, as is supporting their academic and pastoral care. Providing culturally specific practices and content in the classroom, and promoting positive relationships between learners, their peers and the staff (Airini et al., 2010; Bishop, 1991; Bishop et al., 2009; Curtis et al., 2012) correlate with Māori and Pacific students' success. These activities move the learner from the position of an outsider when they arrive to that of an insider, where they find belongingness and flourish (Airini et al., 2010). For Māori and Pacific student leaders in the programme, fostering relational trust helps with their adaption to the university environment and bridges the gap between the institute and the students.

Factors that influence and challenge success

Leadership Through Learning student leaders believed forms of colonialism, racism and micro-aggression were major challenges to their success. Essed's (1991) work on racism towards ethnic minority groups in contemporary society found that racist acts were pervasive yet subtle, and provided a persistent backdrop for people of colour from the ethnic groups. Essed (1991) coined the phrase "everyday racism" to acknowledge the often unconscious acts that are not intended to be offensive. Based on the same ideas, and in recognition of Māori students' historical and continued connections with colonisation, a similar term, "everyday colonialism", was coined by Mayeda et al. (2014, p. 174). These scholars differentiated Pacific students' experiences of colonisation from those of Māori students. They argued that Pacific students' experiences were more in line with everyday racism and fine tuned the phrase into "everyday colonialism and racism".

Micro-aggressions, on the other hand, have a similar underpinning to everyday colonialism and racism. Micro-aggressions have been defined as "subtle verbal and non-verbal insults directed

toward non-White students, often done automatically or unconsciously" (Solorzano et al., 2002, p. 17). According to a comparative study looking at the United States and Aotearoa, white privilege brings "social advantages, benefits, and courtesies afforded to members of the dominant culture in every society" (Santamaria et al., 2014, p. 6). The authors refer to research by L. T. Smith (2012) and Delgado and Stefancic (2011) evaluating white privilege in Aotearoa, where Pākehā educators failed to recognise the difference between their Māori and Pacific students. Accordingly, this leads to forms of acting out both conscious and unconscious micro-aggressive, discriminatory and prejudice behaviours (Santamaria et al., 2014). Bishop et al. (2009) have argued that in order "to serve the interests of a mono-cultural elite", the education system has been dominated by Eurocentric agendas and deficit theorising that must be challenged with "agentic positioning promoted by teachers" (p. 738).

On the other hand, attributing low achievement to student deficits and student-blaming rhetoric denies the existence of structural racism and oppositional cultural systems. Curtis et al. (2012) note that structural power lies with the institute and argue for "the development of interventions aimed at changing the institution (rather than the learner) . . . to produce meaningful improvements for Māori and Pasifika student success" (p. 599). One of the barriers to leadership and learning success is when students do not feel comfortable with or know how to navigate the university system. Leadership Through Learning provides a platform for informal sharing of information between facilitators and students to bridge knowledge gaps.

Methodology

The best fit for an exploration of normalising Māori and Pacific leadership and learning success was found to be a dual approach: Kaupapa Māori (G. H. Smith, 1997; L. T. Smith, 1999) and Pacific research methodologies (Health Research Council of New Zealand, 2004). Kaupapa Māori is an established methodology and theory drawing from Māori principles to advance Māori aspirations (Bishop, 1996; Pihama et al., 2002; G. H. Smith, 1997; S. Walker et al., 2006). Bishop (1996) fought to have Kaupapa Māori research recognised in the academy and challenged the mainstream to increase power sharing and self-determination. Utilising cultural values and practices from both Māori and Pacific perspectives, Airini et al. (2010) took the approach of including Māori and Pacific

input at every stage of the research. Adopting this approach and following the 2018 CLeaR fellowship theme of He Vaka Moana, the fellows provided each other with input throughout the various stages.

Pacific research acknowledges and privileges Pacific peoples' knowledge, values and principles. Talanoa is a Pacific research methodology that has found wide acceptance with researchers across Pacific nations (Fa'avae et al., 2016; Farrelly & Nabobo-Baba, 2014; Halapua, 2013; Prescott, 2008; Suaalii-Sauni & Fulu-Aiolupotea, 2014; Vaioleti, 2016). Aspects that bring Kaupapa Māori and talanoa methodologies together are mana, tapu and noa (Tecun et al., 2018). These are important underpinning principles for this research project and the Leadership Through Learning programme itself. For instance, respecting the research participants' time and value acknowledges their mana and aspirations for self-determination. Furthermore, starting talanoa with karakia and whanaungatanga builds relationships and acknowledges tapu. The tapu is made noa with the provision of food and hospitality. Having two methodological lenses recognised that the Leadership Through Learning student leaders are Māori and/or Pacific.

I am a Kaupapa Māori researcher, and so to ensure Pacific representation I employed Rachel Cocker-Hopkins, who is of Tongan and Native American descent, as my research assistant. She brought the expertise of an Indigenous doctoral researcher with experience using talanoa. Talanoa provides "a cultural synthesis of the information, stories, emotions and theorising" (Vaioleti, 2016, p. 21), and is "a co-production of knowledge through relationally mindful critical dialogue" (Tecun et al., 2018, p. 157) and building relationships (Fa'avae et al., 2016). For the interviews and focus group, Rachel was given the research questions as a guide. She was also aware of the project aims and objectives, and therefore was able to assess how to best talanoa with the participants for the co-production of knowledge.

Utilising Kaupapa Māori transformative praxis and talanoa methods, this study recruited eight student leaders enrolled in semester one of 2018 and four alumni student leaders from various Leadership Through Learning cohorts. Five student leaders took part in a focus group, with one student leader also participating in a one-on-one talanoa. All together eight (four alumni and four enrolled) student leaders had one-on-one talanoa. Utilised as part of the Leadership Through Learning programme, talanoa provided a familiar

way to gather data from the student leaders as research participants and enabled them to delve deeply into the issues concerning their success. Talanoa helped cross cultural boundaries through story sharing, empowerment and empathetic communication.

Findings and discussion

This section presents the findings from the talanoa and discusses the key themes identified by participants relating to countering deficit framing, negative stereotypes and micro-aggressions. The counternarratives work to normalise Māori and Pacific student leaders' success and produce a form of positive stereotyping. What Māori and Pacific student leaders say to, and about, each other is powerful and relevant for understanding what is meant by normalising leadership and learning success. The Leadership Through Learning programme also encourages peer support and accountability, which in practice normalises success for student leaders. This section considers the student voice, their participation and growth in the programme, and how those aspects shape normalising success to provide a countercultural perspective on degree-level studies.

Normalising Māori and Pacific success for some of the student leaders started in the Leadership Through Learning programme. Student leaders from stage one through to doctoral candidates have joined the programme, and sometimes it is the first time that their value is acknowledged. As one student leader expressed, "Yeah, it's about you realising your potential and knowing that you do have a lot to offer." This awareness helped the student leaders to recognise and value their worth, which in turn developed their self-efficacy. For instance, from the first day of the programme, they are called leaders, and they eventually grow into the role by the end of the semester. One of the leaders exclaimed: "You don't get told you're a leader when you go to some random class. You don't go to Sociology 100 and they're like, 'You're awesome, you're a leader!'"

Changing negative self-talk is one of the objectives many of the student leaders choose to address during the programme. One student leader suggested that negative self-talk is sometimes generated in the social environment and around the university. Coming to the programme helped her recognise this:

> There is a lack of prior knowledge and understanding of Māori and Pacific things at university. Like you don't have a compulsory Te Ao Māori 130 paper where you learn about what Indigenous people have gone through in New Zealand and the Pacific. And so there's still a lot of racism. . . . It's an unhealthy environment for Māori and Pacific to be in. You're constantly fighting or working against a system that's working against you. It's hard!

The programme helps student leaders to critique and evaluate their struggles, and to transform them into successes. One student leader commented, "It has made me more culturally aware and more culturally sensitive as a person. Because I think what a lot of people perceive our people to be, is really negative. Like more negative than positive." Being in the Leadership Through Learning programme has helped some student leaders recognise that the negative perspectives and stereotypes people hold do not accurately represent them or their peers in the programme.

A seminal study on negative stereotypes found some fundamental differences about the way Pākehā New Zealanders, Māori and Pacific people are stereotyped. For instance, Sibley et al. (2011) found that Pākehā are stereotyped as highly warm (in an approachable way) and highly competent. The authors also found that Pacific people were also stereotyped as highly warm but low in competence, and that Māori were stereotyped as low to medium in both areas. They conclude that "socio-structural characteristics of ethnic group relations (competition and status) foster fundamentally different forms of legitimizing ideology, prejudice and discriminatory behaviour toward different ethnic groups in the New Zealand context" (Sibley et al., 2011, p. 25). Therefore, negative stereotypes have implications for how Māori and Pacific students are viewed and treated on campus, and how they see themselves.

Pākehā hegemony is a risk for Māori and Pacific students in a large institution because it subsumes them under the dominant group's norms and ideas. Hohepa (2000) recognises the dangers of hegemony, and Hoskins (2010) notes that hegemony is the cultivation of common sense that becomes instituted. G. H. Smith (2004) insists that Pākehā hegemony must be undone through decolonising. Pihama et al. (2004) argue that hegemony must be challenged, questioned and critiqued to maintain aspirations of success. Student leaders not understanding their own context risks the penetration of negative beliefs into their psyche.

One student leader in the talanoa touched on negative beliefs and stereotypes about his Pacific people, before discussing how Leadership Through Learning had changed his outlook:

In my experience, not to stereotype, but I haven't met many [ambitious friends]. That's just me maybe; I choose the wrong friends. Some that are not really succeeding. Like they don't look long-term. But a lot of people here have shared stuff like their ambitions and big goals. So being around that, and people that have experienced lots in life, kind of makes you open up.

He started to feel unsure of which group he belonged to: Was he more like his friends or like the other student leaders? This example demonstrates that student leaders have influence over each other and can build self-efficacy in the programme, in a reciprocal manner. When Māori and Pacific student leaders see others like themselves achieving, it helps motivate them to do the same.

One student leader reflected on a stereotype about Māori and Pacific students not going to classes, and insisted it was because they did not feel comfortable or supported like they do in Leadership Through Learning. She examined the difference in her desire to show up to the programme:

> You're not just another number, not just another brown face that doesn't go to class because you felt uncomfortable. But it's a space where you do feel comfortable, and you really do want to be there. It's just really positive and everyone's supporting each other. And that's leadership, yeah!

Another student leader critiqued the negative perceptions that people outside of the programme had about him and other Māori and Pacific students. He felt pressure to succumb to the negative stereotypes in his actions but rejected the idea because other student leaders in Leadership Through Learning did not reflect those stereotypes. He was able to voice these contradictions to the group:

> I feel like I'm being myself more than I was before. Yeah, that's a big thing for me personally, that kind of "you don't care" attitude. I feel like I was suppressing it. You know, like you've got to act a certain way. But for me, I feel like that's something I'm going to carry; embracing individual uniqueness.

Another Pacific student leader considered the influence of the wider university's culture on the perception she held of herself culturally. After being in the programme, she concluded that having to leave cultural values at home was not the way she would succeed:

> When we were in the programme it would challenge my ideas of like how much do I know? I was raised with values and so looking back on those values and having to reassess where I'd put them and how I'd pushed them aside, and then having to implant them back into my life was a big impact for me!

Over time this student and others developed a countercultural lens and narrative. She started to speak up in her lectures rather than take the content of her lectures at face value and as fact. She was able to reflect on her grandparents' teachings and ponder a cultural perspective not being taught in the lecture theatres. It made her think about how much of what she was learning was knowledge based and how much of it was based on unconscious bias. She questioned how much she adopted from a mainstream perspective about who she was culturally. Reclaiming her Pacific cultural values and consciously living them in the university space set this student on a pathway of building a strong scholarly trajectory based on her cultural identity. Being able to reflect on her upbringing and the respect she held for her grandparents helped this student leader to reconnect with her cultural roots. She was able to take the influence of those cultural values on her life and reframe herself anew. She realised she did not have to leave important parts of herself behind at the university gates. The impact caused her to make a 180-degree turn and develop a desire to serve her community:

> From the past to the present, and I guess to the future as well, because even career-wise I would have never considered anything in a Pacific sort of field. I wouldn't have considered it. I don't know if I will end up in that sort of career or anything, but it wasn't one I would consider before.

Asserting agency over one's cultural identity for both individual and collective success is a positive outcome of the programme. It develops from being with other proud Māori and Pacific people in the programme. One student leader was able to shed the stereotypes and see herself as part of a collective of like-minded individuals, comfortable with their cultural identity:

> For me, it is tapping into working with Māori and Pacific people and working in a way that benefits them, but also hopefully bringing that into the Western, mainstream world. So, working collectively rather than individually is where I'm at. What I see is that people can thrive when they work together, and that is how collective societies work.

Experiencing the value of working collectively in the programme and reclaiming the value of a collective identity had pushed this student and others in Leadership Through Learning to reclaim their cultural identity. In the degree-level setting reclaiming cultural identity as a notion should not be a conscious decision that Māori and Pacific students need to make because it is a right and a responsibility for their institute to support. When cultural identity is strong, self-efficacy improves.

Developing self-efficacy can be challenging when Māori and Pacific students start degree-level study. Success is a factor that helps improve self-efficacy while perceived failure lowers it (Bandura, 1982, 1997; Bandura et al., 1980). When one alumni student came to the programme, he had a strong critique of the university. He understood conceptually about structural racism and colonising agendas yet did not understand it at a personal level. He noted how negative stereotypes had pushed him towards an unhealthy habit of perfectionism. The toll of his perceived identity was heavy, but Leadership Through Learning helped empower him:

> It got rid of perfection, and it shifted my thinking to think more proactively and got me to acknowledge that a) I'm not a perfect person, b) I will always probably be carrying something, emotionally, or mentally, or spiritually or physically. But it's like I now feel that I shouldn't beat myself up about it.

He developed self-efficacy through learning more about himself, which changed his outlook and career pathway:

> You do end up becoming more kind to yourself (in the present tense). And in that manner—I think that it does make your future look brighter by about 20 to 50 per cent—which means so much; especially in this place!

Quite often student leaders strengthened self-efficacy because of the relationships and trust they developed in the programme. A praxis that creates power sharing and relationship building in the classroom helps students to participate actively (Bishop, 2003) and therefore engage at a deeper level with each other. Māori and Pacific student leaders identify with this approach as it reflects cultural pedagogies like ako and tuakana–teina, which are practised in the programme. One student leader recalled:

> What makes it different is the groups are a lot smaller and you're surrounded by people who are similar to you. Just seeing the same people helped me keep going with the programme and developing my journey alongside my peers, which was really inspiring.

Leadership Through Learning is a programme that by definition is countercultural for Māori and Pacific student leaders, and is an attempt to remedy a history of inequities. One student leader, for example, said that some people think these kinds of programmes are "unfair" because "they lack the understanding of colonisation, of inequities in Aotearoa". These kinds of statements constitute everyday colonialism and racism. This student leader and many others over the course of the programme shared similar stories about the burden of everyday colonialism and racism, microaggressions and negative stereotyping. Carrying these burdens through degree-level study has made them question their place in the university, their ability to succeed, and their ability to empower, lead and transform.

Conclusion

This article has discussed normalising Māori and Pacific leadership and learning success. The Leadership Through Learning programme has been used to illustrate examples of success and to showcase knowledge about some of the challenges Māori and Pacific students face in degree-level study. These challenges affect their identity, studies and ability to succeed. Student leaders' voices and their understandings of those experiences have been highlighted to stimulate reflection, especially for those working with or intending to work with Māori and Pacific degree-level students. These students look to staff in academic, frontline, administrative and leadership roles to create opportunities to engage with them on an authentic level and not through a lens of stereotypes. It is in these relationships, the worthwhile exchanges created with staff members and other students, that stereotypes can be broken down.

Normalising leadership and learning success for Māori and Pacific "students as leaders" changes the students and everyone around them. Positive stereotyping through actively reframing negative beliefs held and assumptions made about Māori and Pacific students is one way to help them lead, empower and transform. In turn, this strengthens their self-efficacy and identifies them as successful leaders and learners in their own families and communities. I suggest educators working at degree

level think about ways in which they can create positive stereotypes for Māori and Pacific students and negate diminishing ones. A countercultural and counternarrative approach not only reduces negative stereotypes and micro-aggressions for Māori and Pacific students; it sets the scene for other students to follow an alternative "normal"— one without everyday colonialism and racism.

Teaching and learning environments vary across institutions, faculties and departments, and this article has focused on the ways educators try to normalise Māori and Pacific students' leadership and learning success at the University of Auckland. Māori and Pacific students have graduated with degrees despite the challenges of an uneven playing field. Recognising that this unevenness persists, as this study has demonstrated, raises the question: What more can *you* do to normalise and empower Māori and Pacific students' leadership and learning success?

Acknowledgements

Glossary

Māori

ako	to teach and to learn
Aotearoa	New Zealand
aroha	kindness, affection, love, compassion
karakia	prayers
Kaupapa Māori	research methodology based within a Māori worldview
mana	power and authority
Māori	Indigenous people of Aotearoa
noa	non-sacred
Pākehā	New Zealanders of European descent
tapu	sacred
Te Ao Māori	the Māori world
tuakana–teina	older sibling–younger sibling, mentor–mentee relationship
waka	ocean-voyaging canoes
whānau	extended family
whanaungatanga	relationship building

Tongan

aiga	extended family
talanoa	discussion, conversation; research methodology based within a Pacific worldview
vaka	ocean-voyaging canoes

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PASIFIKA STUDENTS AND *LEARNING TO LEARN* AT UNIVERSITY

*Marcia Leenen-Young**

Abstract

As a Samoan educator, I have frequently heard the claim that Pasifika students need to *learn how to learn* to succeed at university. As part of the He Vaka Moana Fellowship in 2018, I sought to explore this claim by conducting talanoa with 24 Pasifika students who had taken a Pacific Studies course at the University of Auckland. The talanoa focused on their thoughts about learning and learning processes inside and outside the university. This study demonstrates that Pasifika students know how to learn and frequently reflect on their learning processes. These findings are important for recognising that Pasifika students' learning processes are not an issue, but that educators need to be more aware of how Pasifika students learn at university to successfully support Pasifika student achievement.

Keywords

Pasifika students, learning, Pasifika pedagogy, higher education

Introduction

For Pasifika peoples, learning has always been a central and lifelong occupation. Pasifika communities value knowledge and have clear frameworks for learning centred on the multiple knowledge systems of Pasifika peoples. At the core of this is the understanding that Pasifika people know how to learn, think about learning and learning processes, have developed deep ways of knowing and doing, and above all value reflection and wisdom (Gegeo, 2006). This deep respect for learning encompasses both cultural knowledge and Western education. However, this motivation and passion for learning has not historically been recognised or translated into success within the Western education system in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Pasifika pedagogy and effective learning environments for Pasifika students are complicated issues that have been written about by many esteemed Pasifika academics (for example, Alkema, 2014; Benseman et al., 2006; Chu et al., 2013). We are told that Pasifika educational success is a governmental priority (Ministry of Education, 2014; Tertiary Education Commission, 2017). While many people and organisations have taken strides towards educational equity, universities in general have not yet figured out how to reconcile what has been proven through research to support Pasifika student success with the Western structures of education embodied in the university (Alkema, 2014). University systems in Aotearoa still prioritise Western-based pedagogical practices, but this system is looking increasingly outdated in the face of an evolving and increasingly multi-ethnic student body (Salesa, 2017).

Pasifika students in tertiary institutions in Aotearoa often fall into a division between those who adjust to the expectations of a Western institution and those who do not. While there is a push against deficit student blaming for achievement rates in education, my experience shows that excuses are still sought that overlook the teachers

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and the tertiary institutions themselves in order to place blame elsewhere. One claim I heard repeatedly is that Pasifika students need to *learn how to learn* in order to be successful at university. This justification places the onus on the student who does not know how to learn, alongside the secondary schooling system that did not teach them how to learn. Issues with the National Certificate of Educational Achievement and Pasifika student achievement have been well documented, although there has been positive development in recent years (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2019). However, more significant is the offering of *learning to learn* as an excuse to exonerate the universities themselves and place the burden of blame on the student and their secondary schooling. But do Pasifika students need to *learn how to learn* and what exactly does that mean in the context of a university? The increasing number of Pasifika faces in lecture theatres envisioned by Salesa (2017) makes urgent the argument that tertiary institutions "ought to be more culturally democratic, taking more serious consideration of the ways in which Pasifika people think, learn and communicate with one another" (Thaman, 2009, p. 1).

In this project, the 24 Pasifika students who participated and shared their experiences clearly showed that they know how to learn at university, think and reflect on learning, and adapt learning skills to circumstance. Learning is not a Pasifika problem. But it also became clear through this project that the underlying ideology for learning and assessment focused on at university is not effective for knowledge acquisition at the undergraduate level for Pasifika students. The demands of assessment and time pressures alongside Western-based pedagogical frameworks and environments contribute to settings that are at odds with Pasifika ways of learning. In the context of an increasingly Pasifika population, the inability of universities to separate themselves from outdated Western-based systems of learning increases the divide between Pasifika students and higher learning institutions.

He Vaka Moana CLeaR Fellowship

The He Vaka Moana CLeaR (Centre for Learning & Research in Higher Education) Fellowship was a one-year fellowship programme held in 2018 that brought together Māori and Pasifika professional and academic staff from different faculties at the University of Auckland to work on projects to enhance the success of Māori and Pasifika students. Led by Dr Hinekura Smith and

Dr 'Ema Wolfgramm-Foliaki, the fellowship was framed through the Tongan adage "pikipiki hama kae vaevae manava", which speaks to the ancient voyaging practice of lashing together vaka on the ocean to share food, information and resources. Within this framework, this fellowship became a space defined largely by Māori and Pasifika women to tautoko and manaaki each other as we lashed our vaka together once a month and discussed our shared visions for our projects.

I was fortunate to pursue my questions about Pasifika students and learning through this fellowship and step outside my area of expertise. While not trained in education, I have a unique perspective as a Samoan educator and early career researcher who has focused on learning and Pasifika student support through both academic and professional positions within the tertiary education sector.

Literature

Pasifika student success in education has been a focus of research in Aotearoa for several years (for example, Airini et al., 2010; Alkema, 2014; Benseman et al., 2006; Chu et al., 2013; Ross, 2008; Thaman, 2009; Theodore et al., 2018). However, research on Pasifika students' processes of learning is rare.

Pasifika ways of knowing and learning

Pasifika ways of knowing and learning have significant value in contemporary education. Thaman (2014) explains the differences between Pasifika knowledge systems and Western knowledge systems on "contextual, substantive and methodological grounds" (p. 302). Western knowledge systems are commonly identified as scientifically based and located around recognised centres of knowledge creation, such as universities and governments, whereas Indigenous knowledge systems are generationally developed, tested and transmitted through specific ethnic groups or regions (Thaman, 2014). European colonisation of the Pacific undermined the value of Indigenous Pasifika knowledge systems and privileged a European structure of education that suppressed ancient systems of learning and teaching. Prior to European contact, a robust system of informal education existed in the Pacific with recognisable methods of teaching and learning. As Thaman (1995) points out, more formal education for specialised areas of knowledge also likely existed in areas such as warfare, navigation and the passing down of cultural knowledge to females.

The "classroom" for such education was the 'aiga and wider village community, with

teaching conveyed through oral history, dance, song, poetry, proverbs, material culture and cultural rituals (Thaman, 1995). Those with specialist knowledge would teach the younger generation to ensure the continuation and future development of the knowledge they had inherited. There was a clear method of teaching and learning prior to colonisation, through observation, listening and imitation (Thaman, 1995). Gegeo (2006) identifies key aspects of Indigenous Pasifika epistemologies, highlighting methods of learning acquisition that were communal and dialogic; practice oriented; based on memory, reflection and intuition; alongside learning using the senses of sight, touch, hearing, smell and taste. Significantly, he also highlights the importance of testimony in learning from ancestors and elders (Gegeo, 2006).

Indigenous Pasifika methods for learning and teaching have a long history and are by no means redundant in the contemporary world. In particular, the practical aspects of Indigenous Pasifika methods of learning resonate with research on active, experiential and student-centred learning that place the student within the learning process and not as a passive observer focused on theoretical learning (Lea et al., 2003; Moon, 2013; Tangney, 2014).

Pasifika students and learning

A significant amount of Western educational research analyses how students approach learning using analytical learning assessments (Biggs, 1987; Tait et al., 1998). Richardson et al. (1995) used a learning assessment tool, the Approaches to Study Inventory (ASI), at the University of the South Pacific (USP) to analyse two groups of undergraduate students. Results from this research were ambiguous and raised questions about applying ASI in non-Western countries. A decade later, Phan and Deo (2007) used a revised version of Biggs's Study Process Questionnaire at the USP to conclude that undergraduate Pacific students approach learning in two ways: either to understand information or to reproduce information for academic assessment ("Pacific" has been used when referring to these studies at the USP because the context is outside Aotearoa).

Both Richardson et al. (1995) and Phan and Deo (2007) support the centrality of context, culture and environment to learning approaches. The recognition that cultural differences affect educational experiences and achievement is not new (Benseman et al., 2006; Mayeda et al., 2014; Thaman, 2009). Mugler and Landbeck (1997) discuss cultural differences between Pacific students at the USP and the vague concept of the "Western" student. While generalisations about students are impossible because of the varied geographic and ethnic Pacific backgrounds of their participants, they acknowledge that culturally specific learning styles are of significance. One key point Mugler and Landbeck (1997) query is the assumption that Pacific students prefer collaborative learning to individual learning. Lesa (1995) conducted a study into learning styles of students at the American Samoa Community College and found that 83% of participants preferred collaborative and participatory learning. This aligns with Mugler and Landbeck's findings that most of their participants found group work useful; however, there were Pacific students who preferred to learn individually. As Ross (2008) points out, assuming learning preferences based exclusively on ethnicity is not conducive to effective learning support.

Mugler and Landbeck (1997) also report participant distinction between learning as acquiring new knowledge, often for assessment or to fulfil a requirement of the course, and "real learning", which points to understanding a topic. Real learning or understanding is not automatic to learning since learning for a purpose does not necessarily presuppose understanding. Similarly, according to their participants, rote learning or memorisation did not assume lack of understanding, which is often presumed (Purdie et al., 1996). Notably, Mugler and Landbeck (1997) emphasise that their participants knew what real learning was:

> Our interviews make clear that students are perfectly aware of what they consider "real learning", for instance, but "real learning" may not always be what they think is asked of them to pass a course. To paraphrase one of our students, there's real learning, and then there's studying for a course. (p. 236)

Learning for assessments is often only achieved at the surface level and reflects the significance of motivation in the learning process (Hattie & Donoghue, 2016). In the Pacific, Phan and Deo (2007) argue that for students at the USP, particularly Indo-Fijian students, the objective is to achieve good grades in order to have social mobility, which promotes a link between surface learning and assessments. They claim this is institutionalised, citing rote learning and memorisation as techniques learned at school that are continued into tertiary education (Phan & Deo, 2007).

Additionally, academic staff and students often identify time management as a key skill for

academic success. However, research has shown that the concept and management of time may be different for Pasifika students (Davidson-Toumuʻa & Dunbar, 2009). Yet, limited attention has been paid to Western concepts of time as a barrier to Pasifika student success. Davidson-Toumuʻa and Dunbar (2009) argue that Pasifika students find it difficult to adapt to a culture in which time is finite, using Hall and Hall's (1990) definition of polychronic time to illustrate that Pasifika students value relationships over keeping to schedule. Although Davidson-Toumuʻa and Dunbar (2009) acknowledge that Pasifika concepts of time are unlikely to be embraced in a Western institution, an awareness of this by those who teach Pasifika students is paramount.

While much scholarly focus has been aimed at Pasifika student success, there is a gap in the literature on Pasifika learning processes. Filling this gap could contribute to a shift in tertiary education in direct response to the learning requirements of Pasifika learners.

Methodology

The research processes undertaken during this project centred Pasifika values. Although the data gathered from this project was exceedingly valuable, the process was not without difficulties, specifically with conducting talanoa and using a research assistant (RA) for the first time (Faʻavae et al., 2016).

This research project was qualitative and used talanoa as a method for interviews and focus groups to promote open, authentic dialogue (Faʻavae et al., 2016; Vaioleti, 2006). The methodological focus of this project was on ensuring the centrality of key Pasifika research values: respect, service, reciprocal relationships, Pasifika ways of knowing and being, and of benefit to Pasifika communities (Naepi, 2015; Penetito & Sanga, 2002).

Twenty-four participants took part in six semi-structured focus groups and nine individual interviews. Participants had to be of Pasifika ethnicity and an undergraduate student, and to have attended a Vaka Moana session. Vaka Moana is an academic enhancement programme in Pacific Studies in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Auckland for students who take Pacific Studies courses. It prioritises Pasifika ways of knowing through academic-focused workshops and study sessions, providing a Pasifika-centred learning environment for students.

An RA led the participant recruitment, and conducted and transcribed the talanoa. Participants were recruited through flyers around the University of Auckland City Campus and Facebook advertisements through the principal investigator's or RA's networks. Participants chose whether to do an interview or a focus group between July and August 2018 on the University of Auckland City Campus.

All of the participants were Pasifika students. There were 12 male participants and 12 female participants. Interview and focus group length depended on the participants, and none was over 90 minutes long. Questions were used to guide the talanoa because of the inexperience of the RA (Vaioleti, 2013). Each interview and focus group opened with prayer and shared food, and each participant received a $30 Westfield voucher in appreciation.

This was the first time I used an RA in a research project and there was much to learn. Because I teach in Pacific Studies, employing an RA to do the interviews was intended to counter any potential conflict of interest. Faʻavae et al. (2016) articulate the complications of putting talanoa into practice in a culturally competent way that does not contradict the research guidelines of a Western tertiary institution. This was further complicated through the allocation of this task to someone else. The RA for this project was a young Samoan male with whom I discussed the theoretical application of talanoa; however, I did not support him enough with practical models of the process. This resulted in some interviews and focus groups progressing like a free-flowing talanoa and others reverting to a question–answer style. From the recordings and transcriptions, it was clear the RA was more comfortable with the male participants, with whom he allowed a free-flowing conversation in which he offered his own insights and prompted further reflection. In contrast, in the recordings and transcriptions of the interviews and focus groups with female participants, the RA relied on the questions. The relaxed conversation with males was also characterised by periods of joking and reference to male participants as uso or uce, which contributed to the relational tone of these interviews and focus groups, but this was absent from his dialogue with female participants. This dynamic was not one I anticipated but should have in line with Pasifika cultural norms. Much reflection on the process of talanoa and how it is taught to young researchers has been done in the wake of this research project, although nothing could be done to mitigate effects. This has reinforced for me as an early career researcher the importance of fully anticipating potential cultural challenges and the significance of providing practical examples

instead of relying on theoretical models to guide young researchers.

Research data

Analysis of the data gathered through this research uncovered several subthemes for Pasifika students and learning. Key themes relevant to this article are thinking about learning and processes of learning inside and outside university.

Thinking about learning

Participants gave three types of responses to the question of how much they thought about their learning processes. They thought about their learning (9), did not think about their learning (5) or sometimes thought about their learning (8). Figure 1 is a representation of responses. Two of the 24 participants did not answer.
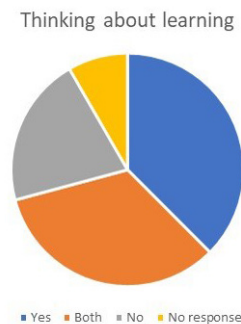

Thinking about learning

■ Yes ■ Both ■ No ■ No response

FIGURE 1   Thinking about learning

For the nine participants who both thought about learning and did not think about it, the decision to do so depended on circumstances: "There is a bit of a mix, so sometimes you just have to dive in and sometimes you have to think about it—depending on what it is" (D1).

Seventeen participants thought about their learning and recognised the importance of understanding how you learn in order to be better at it. One participant recognised the importance of analysing your own learning strengths and weaknesses:

> I definitely do . . . [you] definitely need to know yourself and how you can learn better, otherwise you're not going to do it . . . I had to be honest and identify what my learning difficulties were and what my strengths were [and] working around that to study. (G1)

For participants, the decision to think about the process of learning relied on three key factors: having the time to think about it, being interested in the subject and viewing the subject as important. Time featured as a key deciding factor in whether to think about learning or to just do it: "I do think about how I learn, how I study and stuff as well, but sometimes I probably just do it. If I don't have the time, then I'd just do it" (P1). Key to this was the immediacy of assessments in particular and the time factor in completing them for submission: "Previously I would do learning, instead of learn how to learn . . . Yeah, 'cause I was just, I got this assignment to do and I just have to do it" (J1).

Alongside time, interest was identified as a factor that motivated participants to think about how they learn because learning became important once the student was invested:

> I use[d] to be a just do it person, but . . . I changed my perspective on uni. I was doing something just for the sake of it, but I started taking crim—criminology—and it's some of the most interesting stuff I've ever come across. So I went from just doing it to appreciating the field and wanting to learn and know more about [it]. (N1)

The perceived importance of the course in terms of the overall degree programme was also a determinant, and less emphasis was put on courses that were not considered essential. General Education courses were identified as having fewer consequences, so were given less thought in terms of learning processes: "I reckon it just depends on what reason you're doing it for, for me, for my Gen Eds I just do it but for my other papers I would try and pass them" (O2).

One key theme discussed by participants was that thinking about how you learn develops over time. Several participants contextualised their thinking about learning as reflection at the end of their degrees:

> It's like you come to the end of your degree and then you do a lot of self-evaluation in terms of how I could of done this and this better and I feel like I should have done [this] earlier on in my degree 'cause I just like, previously I would do learning instead of learn how to learn. (J1)

Thinking about learning as a skill developed over time was also linked to taking courses that encouraged thinking about learning, developing interest or achieving better grades: "I started to, just do it . . . do it to get it out of the way, but then not realising that I sort of need to understand how I learn in order for me to get a better mark" (C1). One participant illustrated the impact of

senior Pasifika students encouraging them to think about their learning processes:

> I definitely think a lot more and I say that comes down to having [been] given that knowledge by other island mentors around the uni who would stress the importance of studying, thinking and planning before going straight in to it and then also my own personal experience of trying to straight do it. (K1)

Overwhelmingly, participant responses demonstrate that the majority of Pasifika students think about their learning, but in different ways and motivated by different factors.

Learning processes and assessments: Essays and examinations

Participants were prompted to discuss learning for essays and exams in different ways. For essays, students were asked what kind of learning they got from writing essays. The majority of participants responded with discussion of technical skills with much less emphasis on content-based learning.

Participants questioned whether any learning was done in the process of writing an essay: "Sometimes we don't even learn . . . 'cause some people just do it for the sake of the grade" (N1). Participants identified the learning achieved through assessment essays as based on skill rather than content:

> Sometimes it's not really the topic you learn about, I mean that is the gist of it . . . but the skills . . . it just depends how active you are in researching . . . and whether it actually sticks in your mind or if it's just used for that two days to write the essay then goes out the window. (D1)

In one case, a participant included that understanding was not even necessary to write an essay:

> When you don't know what you're talking about and you use a scholarly article, you instantly forget what you just wrote. You can write it in your essay, but you won't understand what you just wrote, and . . . once your essay's submitted you probably won't even remember that. (O1)

Participants questioned the learning behind the essay process, but none demonstrated the same opinion about examinations. For exams, they were asked to discuss how they would advise someone to study for them. The most common

acknowledgement was that everyone is different and learning is individual. Four participants stated they would not recommend their processes of learning for exams. Even those students who would not recommend their own processes displayed awareness about their own learning, with one stating, "It's 'cause you gotta find what kind of learner you are, so you gotta find out whether you're visual, audio or the hands-on type of person" (N1).

Interestingly, only five participants would recommend studying in groups for exams, and two participants preferred to study individually:

> When you work in groups with people that are doing the same course with you, if there are holes in their argument [or] if there are holes in their understanding . . . you can fill them up . . . Then there's the fact that you . . . are all doing the same course . . . are all going through the same thing; it just adds to that whole collective—if you're struggling, I'm struggling, but we can do this together. (J1)

Seeking support from Pasifika academic support services such as Vaka Moana or the Tuākana programme also pointed towards participants believing communal support would be beneficial for learning for examinations. In addition, none of the participants mentioned learning for exams through memorisation. Three key learning techniques were mentioned repeatedly—drawing diagrams, practising from past exam papers and condensing notes—although responses in general focused on doing the readings and going over tutorial and lecture content. One participant included that they learned best when they had to teach someone else the content.

Interestingly, when discussing study skills, only two talanoa from the 15 focus groups and interviews did not identify time management as a significant aspect of their ability to learn and succeed at university. The majority of students identified being able to manage time as vital: "I think [time] management is a big one. I know a lot of students at the front [academically] who have a lot of outside commitments and so just being able to cope and maintain the workload [is important]" (F1). Participants recognised the need to balance academic commitments with responsibilities outside university, such as church and family.

Learning outside of university

Participants recognised their processes of learning outside university, discussing learning inside university and outside university as opposite. Often

learning at home or outside university was seen as practical, whereas learning at university was theoretical:

> At home . . . it's more of like practical work, it's not like the work we do outside where it's more theory where they give us what we have to learn and we have to learn it. Whereas practical work is when . . . they stand there and they teach you while doing it . . . We're so used to having a certain way of learning and our families understand the way we learn at home . . . but when you come to uni I think it's a totally different environment where they just give you the papers and you have to go study it yourself. (O1)

Participants joked about applying university tools of learning to what they learn at home or at church: "It's different, it's not like they have a PowerPoint to teach us what we have to do" (H2); "At church we don't write down notes" (H2). But these participants also pointed out that they learn something every day outside university, either at home or at church.

Participants identified providing examples and imitation as the way they learn at home. Most participants talked about what they learn from their parents and grandparents through observation and demonstration. According to participants, this way of learning encourages good work ethic, self-discipline, fa'aaloalo, using your initiative and multitasking:

> I feel like a lot of it wasn't even taught . . . you kind of grew up to know it . . . you see everything around you and . . . you're just expected to know that it's the way it is . . . [it's] much more informal, it's not like that whole, sit down I'm going to teach you about this, it's like . . . you should know this. You learn by seeing, it's not like . . . the theory part of learning, you have to see what's happening. I learnt what a si'i was through watching, I was not told what it was. (L2)

Participants also recognised similarities between learning at university and learning outside university. They identified three key similarities between learning in these different environments: both require initiative and multitasking, and encourage collective learning. Only one participant recognised that learning in the home can be the same as learning at university:

> I guess every Samoan can agree there is a saying vaai maka, faalogo kaliga, how to do chores at home, walk about, sit and eat. I guess that's the same with your university experiences or education in general—where [you] listen and see how things are done and take in what's been taught to you and how to do your assignments properly, just like how you do your chores at home. (G3)

While this participant recognised similarities between these learning environments, the majority regarded the way they learned in each environment as distinct: focused on Pasifika ways of learning in their home and church environments that centred on demonstration and imitation, and Western theoretical styles of learning at university.

Discussion

Learning as Pasifika peoples

Participant responses about their approach to learning and learning processes, inside and outside university, clearly indicate that Pasifika students think about learning, recognise their own learning processes, identify connections between learning and assessment, and can categorise different types of learning in different environments. This provides evidence that Pasifika students know how to learn and respond directly to the learning demands of university. The contradictory claim that Pasifika students need to *learn how to learn* seems to attribute blame elsewhere in the education system or even to the students themselves for their rates of achievement.

To promote Pasifika student success and reach equitable educational outcomes, educators need to recognise how Pasifika students learn and respond pedagogically. Although the majority of participants saw a difference between what they learned in university and what they learned outside university, a successful pedagogical model was evidenced outside university that helped participants learn every day—providing instruction through demonstration and encouraging imitation and practice. This is the way Pasifika peoples have learned and taught for millennia (Gegeo; Thaman, 1995). This research shows that Pasifika peoples still learn and teach this way today within their homes, churches and the community. These models of learning are not unrecognisable in education and are similar to active or experiential learning, but such models of teaching are not used regularly or effectively in universities. The dichotomy of theory-based learning at university and practical learning is an unhelpful division that is losing ground with the increased attention to student-centred teaching alongside constructivist and humanist theories of learning (Lea et al., 2003; Tangney, 2014). While

theoretical learning is the cornerstone of higher education, this does not preclude our ability as educators to use examples, imitation and practice to facilitate learning. Using pedagogic strategies that are familiar not only to Pasifika students but also to many students who have similar learning experiences outside of university would validate the value of this learning and potentially invoke more effective learning.

Learning to learn at university

Pasifika students are observant of their own learning processes when approaching essays and exams—key methods of learning assessment at university. Five of the 24 participants claimed they did not think about their learning, but then went on to discuss their learning approaches to assessments and could clearly articulate how they learned outside of university. Seventeen participants thought about their learning, reflected on the process and developed it through experience. It is significant that a number of participants discussed their learning as a development, and that they had various motivations to rethink the way they learned at university. Although effective learning is often the result of reflection and experience, students should be encouraged to focus on learning as a key aspect of their tertiary journey (Marouchou, 2012). Currently, the responsibility for learning development after secondary education is placed on the students alone, but this undervalues learning as an important process within the tertiary education system. While independent thinkers are valued in tertiary settings, becoming an independent thinker is not automatic for a first-year university student. Focus on learning and encouragement to reflect on the learning process will provide students with the tools to succeed in higher education.

Deciding to think about learning is often a development achieved through reflection. In this study, participants who developed awareness of their learning towards the end of their study displayed regret at not discovering this sooner, implying it would have made their early tertiary years easier. Participants who were motivated to think about their learning early in their tertiary study were led to it by courses that promoted it or by senior students, and while senior student role models are significant in Pasifika learning environments, this seems like a responsibility that should be placed instead on the university itself (Manuel et al., 2014). Emphasising reflection on learning in a culturally relevant way early in tertiary study could ease the strain of the first year of university and potentially bolster retention and completion rates.

Pasifika students, assessments and time

It is significant that students recognise that an essay, one of the major summative assessments they do in education, largely promotes skill-based learning rather than content-focused learning. Because the method of measuring academic success is through grades in tertiary education, assessments and the "how to" involved with completing them are a key focus. This was evident from participant responses when asked about learning in essays. While writing an essay involves many transferrable skills, the short-term surface learning that is done specifically to fulfil the assessment task undervalues the essay as a marker of knowledge acquisition. The objective and place of assessment should be considered in higher education, alongside the lack of emphasis on supporting students to reflect on their own learning processes.

While there is a place for surface learning dependent on the motivation for learning, there should be a greater emphasis on deep learning and knowledge transfer at university (Hattie & Donoghue, 2016). One method of exam learning that was discussed by participants is group learning, which is often assumed to be the preference for Pasifika students (Lesa, 1995). Only five participants included group learning as a learning technique for exam preparation, and two participants stated they preferred to study alone, which shows a variation of student preferences in line with the findings of Mugler and Landbeck (1997), who found both collaborative and individual learning preferences among the participants in their study. While discussing the communal learning emphasis in Vaka Moana workshops in the wider study data, participants expressed appreciation for the communal learning environment. However, it is significant that group learning was not a process participants saw as part of their own learning frameworks but rather one they participated in when attending workshops.

Time factored heavily in participant discussions about learning and assessment. The decision to think about learning was determined by the ability to have enough time to do it. The participants who thought about their learning later in their degree demonstrated that thinking about learning and developing processes takes time. The decision to either think about learning or to not think about learning was often linked by participants to the time pressure of assessments, which left them with little choice but to just do it. This pattern of students going from assessment to assessment is not new, but it should make us pause as educators to consider when students can find time to

learn and what the priority should be in tertiary education. Time pressures also determine a tendency towards surface, assessment-driven learning that sacrifices a student's ability to achieve deep learning. A culture of overassessing has been created in higher education, but when paired with the research-informed recognition that Pasifika students have multiple responsibilities outside university, what does this mean for Pasifika student success (Theodore et al., 2018)? If Pasifika student success is a priority, this becomes an urgent and unanswered question.

The impact of time-driven pressure needs to be considered if effective learning is the central goal in tertiary education. Pasifika concepts of time also imply there is a culture adjustment for many Pasifika students within the Aotearoa education system (Davidson-Toumu'a & Dunbar, 2009). While some of the Pasifika students in tertiary lecture theatres have been raised within a Western education system, this does not apply to all Pasifika students, so concepts of time and ability to manage time pressures vary. Additionally, the connection between Pasifika students and their island homes is often strong, and many live within their specific cultural frameworks when not at university (Allen et al., 2009). Therefore, the concept of time, use of time and time pressures can mean one thing inside the home within their cultural frameworks and something completely different outside the home in a Western-informed environment. Added to this are the recognised multiple obligations Pasifika students often have to juggle with their university study (Theodore et al., 2018). While the time constraints of university cannot change, Davidson-Toumu'a and Dunbar's (2009) call for awareness of this is certainly advisable and may go some way to preventing the rhetoric of disengagement that has historically been placed on Pasifika students.

Conclusion

This research project has put to rest the claim, often heard in my experience, that Pasifika students do not know how to learn or do not think about learning. Pasifika students think about learning, can identify how they learn and have frameworks for learning outside of university that are enduring. Learning is a developed process that requires attention, opportunity and time. We currently have an education system driven by time pressure that takes from students the ability to focus on effective learning. The impact of this pressure on learning needs to be recognised and acted upon by tertiary institutions and educators, especially for Pasifika students who have both different cultural frameworks of time outside of the education system and multiple responsibilities beyond their education. While *learning to learn* is not a Pasifika problem, there are barriers for Pasifika students within the Western-based university system that hinder effective learning. Traditional Indigenous ways of learning and teaching have applications within the university system that could go towards providing an answer to these problems.

Acknowledgements

Glossary

Māori

Aotearoa	New Zealand
manaaki	hospitality, generosity and care in a respectful and sustaining way
tautoko	support

Samoan

'aiga	extended family
fa'aaloalo	respect
fa'afetai tele lava	thank you very much
si'i	specific cultural practice of giving (in goods or monetary terms) for a family, church or cultural event
uce; uso	(colloquial) brother or sister (not to be used between genders)
vaai maka, faalogo kaliga	use your eyes, listen with your ears

Tongan

pikipiki hama kavaevae manava	ancient voyaging practice of lashing together vaka on the ocean to share food, information and resources

Pan-Pacific

talanoa	talk to or to speak to; within research, a culturally specific, reciprocal, authentic discussion

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GROWING THE FLEET; VIEWS OF THE MOANA

A Māori re-search-teina's perspective on Māori and Pasifika re-search relationality

Ashlea Gillon*

Abstract

He Vaka Moana is a strengths-based project framed by oceanic principles and methodologies that connect us as Māori and Pasifika to the ocean. The underpinning kaupapa and theoretical framework of He Vaka Moana is the Tongan proverb "pikipiki hama kae vaevae manava", which refers to our individual vaka coming together to support each other as we navigate the moana. He Vaka Moana operates through tuākana-tēina relationships, with Māori, Pasifika and Pākehā re-search fellows across disciplines working with experienced academics, professional staff and new and emerging re-searchers towards Māori and Pasifika student success. The ways in which these tuākana-tēina relationships enhance and support new and emerging Māori and Pasifika re-searchers are important to the success of "growing the fleet" and increasing Māori and Pasifika re-search capacity and capability. Through metaphors of the moana, this article takes a critically self-reflective approach to discuss being a re-search-teina. The experiences and conversations from "floating" through a relational space that can be understood as Moana Nui a Kiwa are explored in this article. Thoughts from the moana are shared as to how re-search tuākana-tēina relationships influence and support the growth of Māori and Pasifika re-searchers. The need for further oceanic projects that support and (re)centre Māori and Pasifika tuākana-tēina relationships and mentorship within westernised academia is also discussed.

Introduction

Ko wai au? He aha tēnei waka? Who am I? What is this waka?

Ko Pūtauaki te maunga, ko Rangitaiki te awa, ko Mataatua te waka, ko Ngā Maihi te hapū, ko Ngāti Awa te iwi. Tēnā tātou.

I am a Māori woman, a daughter and a sister, and the first in my family to attend university, to do postgraduate study, to complete a master's, to undertake doctoral studies, and to subsequently become a re-searcher. My experiences are shaped by those around me and my upbringing, and these interactions have great influence on who I am and the ways in which I understand and make sense of these experiences. As a Kaupapa Māori re-searcher, the ways in which I seek to re-search, re-tell, re-write and re-right our stories and our experiences are purposeful. In this sense, re-searching is a re-doing and re-acknowledging of the ways that we as Māori and Pasifika re-searchers can, and have the right to, re-present ourselves through our

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narratives, rather than reproducing colonial narratives of researching, redoing and reacknowledging. This means that we, as Indigenous peoples, are re-doing research in ways that re-place previous colonial research and reinterpretations of who we are (L. T. Smith, 2012). These purposeful praxes and language practices are illustrated through the hyphenations, capitalisations and discourse utilised within this article and in the He Vaka Moana project that serves as the context of this paper. He Vaka Moana is a strengths-based project funded by Ako Aotearoa within the University of Auckland that seeks to navigate Māori and Pasifika student success in tertiary education. The project operates through our connections as oceanic people to the moana, to each other and to our goals. The foundation of He Vaka Moana lies within the ocean itself and our ancestors who navigated the vast Pacific Ocean purposefully, using ancestral knowledges, pedagogy, understandings and methods to travel the vastness that is Moana Nui a Kiwa in order to reach their goals. That ancestral knowledge is within us as Māori and Pasifika peoples, and, through the He Vaka Moana project, it has been applied to goals within a tertiary setting. Māori and Pasifika students can conceptualise success in multiple, complex, interconnected ways. Entering higher education with the support and aspirations of their communities is one of these ways (Wolfgramm-Foliaki, 2016). He Vaka Moana seeks to re-define what Māori and Pasifika student success can mean from Māori and Pasifika perspectives.

However, it is important to understand that westernisation and colonial influences on education are not strictly restricted to the "West" or western education. They influence globally. Often westernised educational environments can re-classify Māori and Pasifika students as deficit and at risk, despite the reality that colonisation and westernisation are the problem (McAllister et al., 2019; Pihama et al., 2019; Wolfgramm-Foliaki, 2016). He Vaka Moana centres around the Tongan proverb "pikipiki hama kae vaevae manava". Pikipiki hama means to bind or lash together to the outrigger of a vaka moana, vaevae means to share, and manava is a complex term and concept that reflects Pasifika expressions for the heart, centre, womb and breath, similar to that of manawa in te reo Māori (Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Taisi Efi, 2003). Central to the project is the importance of this relationality between Māori and Pasifika peoples. As kaihana we can share cultural nuances, knowledges and resources in ways that benefit us and our relationships.

This conceptualisation of what He Vaka Moana stands for and seeks to do illustrates the ways in which those working in academia, particularly Māori and Pasifika but also Pākehā and tauiwi, can work together on separate vaka through sharing resources and knowledges before unlashing and continuing on our journeys.

Within re-search teams, we are re-negotiating spaces and relationships often. Within this team, as with others, there is a mixture of experienced, early career and new and emerging academics and scholars.

From a Kaupapa Māori understanding, these relationships and mix of experiences can be understood as tuākana-tēina relationships, as opposed to westernised notions of research fellow/principal investigator and research assistant relationships. This article discusses the importance of developing Māori and Pasifika tuākana-tēina relationships throughout re-search and within westernised academia that provide academic support, as well as personal, professional and pedagogical growth through a critically reflective discussion of key learnings.

Tuākana-tēina: He aha ēnei mea?

Part of what we as Māori and Pasifika know to be crucial to our educational success is people, place, practices, pedagogies (Alkema, 2014) and an understanding of spirit, space and stewardship (Matapo, 2018). He Vaka Moana has been able to successfully implement a Māori and Pasifika educational project that creates and maintains a Vā, a relational space (Anae, 2016) between Māori and Pasifika re-searchers and staff within academia. In particular, the ways in which this relational space has been understood illustrate how seeking to foster and re-create knowledge through re-connection and renavigation of ancestral knowledges and pathways supports Māori and Pasifika students. I argue that these spaces can be realised within tuākana-tēina relationships.

Tuākana-tēina relationships from a Te Ao Māori and Kaupapa Māori understanding encompass notions of kinship and relationality, specifically between older siblings (tuākana) and younger siblings (tēina). The focus of these tuākana-tēina relationships lies with foundational principles of reciprocity, manaakitanga and whanaungatanga (Nepe, 1991). A tuakana is typically understood as an older or more experienced person. The role of a tuakana is usually as an overseer or kaitiaki and as someone who has experience and the ability to make decisions. A teina is often seen as a younger or less experienced "relation" and is often given

different tasks than a tuakana, which arguably may be considered more menial tasks (Hook et al., 2007; Nepe, 1991). However, I would suggest these tasks are complementary to each other, as are the relationships.

Tuākana-tēina relationships carry more than connotations of tutorship or mentorship; these relationships illustrate the responsibilities and rights of tuākana-tēina in order to have thriving, reciprocal, lasting whanaungatanga (Berryman et al., 1995). What is important to understand about these tuākana-tēina roles is that they are not fixed; they are fluid and interchangeable depending on the context. Often tuākana-tēina relationships can be understood as a pedagogy that has foundations within Te Ao Māori (Winitana, 2012). What was traditionally a whānau relationship often based on mana and whakapapa between siblings has become a relationship of social status, structured through both reciprocal and kin relations (Mead, 2003; Winitana, 2012). Māori scholar Mei Winitana (2012) considers tuākana-tēina pedagogy within tertiary education contexts and notes that from a "Māori worldview, the tuakana vocational tutor will always hold the mana of the selected vocational field. . . . Māori pedagogy can be utilised to exemplify the mana of the tuakana (tutor) with the teina (apprentice) in mutually beneficial ways that uplift the mana of both tuakana and teina" (p. 32). Similarly, within He Vaka Moana these reciprocal relationships, and subsequently complementary tasks, have been foundational to the project.

Through Kaupapa Māori understandings of tuākana-tēina relationships, an emphasis on whanaungatanga occurs. Whanaungatanga centres around relationality and whānau as foundational to these extended familial relationships. Whānau can be understood both literally and metaphorically to represent the complex relationships between individuals that prioritise individual and collective flourishing, rights and responsibilities of the group centred through aroha, āwhina, manaakitanga and kaitiakitanga (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Bishop et al., 2014). In educational contexts, whanaungatanga is often privileged within Kaupapa Māori environments. This privileging ensures that relationships and subsequently people are centred, and, thus, mutual flourishing can occur. Bishop (1996) emphasises the importance of collaboration and culturally appropriate actions such as whakawhanaungatanga as a "metaphor for conducting Kaupapa Māori research" (p. 215). The importance of relationality within re-search contexts is paramount among Indigenous peoples,

and involves recognising how our positions as whanaunga can influence not only re-search participants or partners, but also those within our project teams, as we are often seen as "advocates, and sometimes therapists, guidance counsellors, and facilitators of change" (C. Smith, 2013, p. 95; Bishop, 2005; Kensington-Miller & Ratima, 2015; Sunseri, 2007; Webber & O'Connor, 2019). Within the He Vaka Moana project, re-search-tēina were viewed in these ways—as re-searchers and more.

Tuākana-tēina pedagogies have been employed within educational contexts to enhance and shift energies within (westernised) institutions. These ways of teaching and being are often understood to provide culturally relevant, safe and rewarding ways of engaging in education and re-search contexts for both tuākana and tēina (Kensington-Miller & Ratima, 2015; Winitana, 2012). Critical questions are posed around the nature of these relationships. Similarly to Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (2012) development of critical re-search questions, Winitana (2012) also poses questions that explore tuākana-tēina relationships and pedagogies, such as "How it is done? Who does it? Why? At what levels of the training organisation? Who benefits?" (p. 33).

These questions seek to explore, challenge and re-negotiate the underlying values, influences and purposes of these relationships in ways that strengthen, foster and support space for relationships to grow (Winitana, 2012). Tuākana-tēina relationships are a culturally safe way to reinforce the development of spaces that are whānau centred, and that support the reciprocity and enhancement of tuākana and tēina as well as (whaka) whanaungatanga (Bishop, 2005; Kensington-Miller & Ratima, 2015; Webber & Macfarlane, 2019; Winitana, 2012).

With these conceptualisations of tuākana-tēina relationality, differences between a research assistant and a re-search-teina can be identified. The space that is nurtured in order to enable and place emphasis on Indigenous relationality is crucial to having an empowering tuākana-tēina relationship. Such a space encourages, nurtures, and seeks to manaaki, support, grow and nourish these re-search relationships, in particular re-search-tēinatanga. This article focuses on my experiences as a re-search-teina, with an emphasis on Indigenous relationships and capacity building. In contrast to other, often non-Māori and non-Pasifika research project spaces, re-search-tuākana-tēina spaces emphasise relationality and are environments that seek to support, encourage and manaaki each other within the re-search (Kensington-Miller &

Ratima, 2015). This aligns with wider Kaupapa Māori aspirations that seek to "grow the fleet" in terms of Māori and Indigenous flourishing.

Hoea te waka: Positioning and epistemology

As mentioned previously, positionality is essential in understanding how Māori and Pasifika-centred spaces such as He Vaka Moana encourage re-search-tēina to flourish as more than assistants in the re-search process. Within Tāngata o Te Moana are relationalities that shape our inter-actions and how we make sense of the world through theoretical and methodological para-digms (Bishop, 1996, 2005, 2012). The multiple Māori and Pasifika theoretical and methodological frameworks employed within the He Vaka Moana re-search fellowship are extensive; however, a commonality within these spaces has been the focus on our peoples and providing strengths-based narratives that counter the westernised perceptions of Māori and Pasifika within academia (Pihama et al., 2019; Webber & O'Connor, 2019). As a Kaupapa Māori re-searcher, criticality and relationality are central to my praxis, and within He Vaka Moana these values and worldviews are privileged. I interpret, comprehend and apply the knowledge gained through my experience as a re-search-teina through a Kaupapa Māori lens as a Kaupapa Māori re-searcher.

Kaupapa Māori theorising is not a recent development; nor did it occur as an accident—its foundations are present in historical concepts, and it is a natural process for Māori (Pihama, 2001; Pihama et al., 2004; G. H. Smith, 1997; Taki, 1996). Linda Tuhiwai Smith reinforces Pihama (2005) in saying that Māori have always been theorists and re-searchers and have always done research:

> The legacy of our ancestors is actually a legacy of a people who thought, who valued knowledge, and who actually did research. They valued research enough to navigate the greatest waterways in the world, the Pacific Ocean, and they did it purpose-fully. (Graduate Center, CUNY, 2013, 20.38)

As a re-search methodology, Kaupapa Māori re-search embodies Kaupapa Māori theory and being Māori; it is explicitly transformative, anti-colonial, inclusive, critical and purposeful as Cherryl Smith (2013) elaborates:

> Kaupapa Māori research is often more complex than other forms of research because we dare to try

to consider both the structural and cultural issues. We dare to have a preset agenda of attempting to make positive changes within communities because we believe in the wisdom and strengths of our own people. (p. 96)

Consequently, my own Kaupapa Māori theoretical and re-search approach has been, and continues to be, shaped by my own experiences, like those I have had as a re-search-teina, and by numerous Māori theorists and their seminal work (see, e.g., Pihama, 2001, 2005, 2010; C. Smith, 2013; G. H. Smith, 1997, 2012; L. T. Smith, 2005, 2006, 2011, 2012, 2013; Walker, 1996; Webber, 2009).

My perception of how Kaupapa Māori informs my understandings of the world—how I "traverse the moana" and my relationality within Aotearoa with whanaunga of Moana Nui a Kiwa—is encap-sulated by Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (2011) simple yet eloquent explanation of Kaupapa Māori:

> When I think about Kaupapa Māori research, I see it really simply: it's a plan; it's a programme; it's an approach; it's a way of being; it's a way of knowing; it's a way of seeing; it's a way of making meaning; it's a way of being Māori; it's a way of thinking; it's a thought process; it's a practice; it's a set of things you want to do. It is a kaupapa and that's why I think it is bigger than a methodology. (p. 10)

Drawing on these epistemological, methodologi-cal and theoretical frameworks to make sense of my experiences as a re-search-teina provides a means to articulate the importance of Indigenous-centred re-search, of decolonising re-search and of Indigenous relationality. Through a Mana Wāhine lens—a re-prioritisation of Indigenous women—our knowledges and our ontologies can be understood in our re-search praxis (Pihama, 2001, 2005, 2010; Pihama et al., 2019; Simmonds, 2009, 2011; L. T. Smith, 1992, 2012; Yates-Smith, 1998). This re-prioritisation of Indigenous women as authentic "knowers" and beings actively chal-lenges dominant Eurocentric discourses and ongoing acts of colonisation through the re-search process by utilising and reinforcing notions of kaitiakitanga, rangatiratanga and manaakitanga through decolonising re-search praxes (Pihama, 2001, 2005, 2010; Pihama et al., 2019; Simmonds, 2009, 2011; L. T. Smith, 1992, 2012; Yates-Smith, 1998).

My understanding of working with Indigenous re-searchers of Moana Nui a Kiwa is based on these foundational concepts, epistemologies, ontologies and Kaupapa Māori conceptualisations

of relational space. The space I create quite simply seeks to re-prioritise and re-vitalise all things Māori and Pasifika, particularly success, and to critique colonial power inequities, often through "a calculated and deliberate attempt to position Māori research with an alternative worldview" (Ford, 2013, p. 93). Part of this worldview involves purposeful praxis as a re-searcher, particularly around the language that is used as we re-search, re-write and re-right our narratives (L. T. Smith, 2012). As noted previously, Indigenous peoples have always been re-searchers (L. T. Smith, 2012). These worldviews are alternatives to the "dominant" western epistemologies that re-present Indigenous peoples in ways that fail to acknowledge the value in our "culturally framed resources, programmes and pedagogical approaches" (Pihama et al., 2019; Webber & O'Connor, 2019).

My critical self-reflective approach explores understandings of tuākana-tēina re-search relationships and, in line with these Indigenous knowledges, the ontological and epistemological positionings and purposeful praxis within which re-search-tēina engage with Indigenous re-search(ers). This critical self-reflective examination is utilised to capture embodied experiences of relationality (Matapo, 2018).

Navigating the Vā(-kā): Māori and Pasifika relationality

Our relationships are central to our ways of being as Tāngata o Te Moana, of the Moana Nui a Kiwa which encompasses Māori and Pasifika peoples. Part of this relationality is thinking about how we as Māori re-searchers engage with our Pasifika whanaunga and kaihana.

One of the ways in which this occurs is through navigating and nurturing the Vā. It is important to note that while I am describing this as "the" Vā, my use of Vā is plural. The Vā is similar to Māori conceptualisations of wā(tea), and centres and promotes relationality. As a Māori re-search-teina, my understanding of the Vā as a fluid, spatio-relational space; as a space of betweenness that separates and holds space for each of us; as a space that requires valuing, nurturing and maintaining comes from my experiences of seeing it within Pacific contexts and working with Pasifika re-search-tuākana, as well as from the literature of Pasifika academics (Anae, 2016; Ka'ili, 2005; Māhina, 2010; Wendt, 1996, as cited in Refiti, 2002).

What is noteworthy about the ways in which a relational space has been nurtured within this context is its connection, and subsequently our connection as Indigenous peoples to the moana. Under this conceptualisation, what is apparent to me as a re-search-teina are the ways in which the Vā operates as a relational space that can prioritise relational ethics, much like tikanga Māori, which can include the ways in which actions are carried out, and the ways in which the sacredness of this lived space operates (Anae, 2016). In this sense, the Vā allows for space that centres relationships and simultaneously enhances the building, maintaining and growing of those relationships.

Within Māori contexts, the words ka and kā have various meanings. Kā as utilised in this article revolves around notions of being ignited, being lit and allowing to burn. Ka illustrates notions of commencement, particularly of new actions (Smith & Wolfgramm-Foliaki, 2020); in this context the (re)igniting of a relational space and the commencement of He Vaka Moana has been a site for tuākana-tēina (re-search) relationships to spark and ignite, to develop and be nurtured between Indigenous peoples.

Paddling and floating between vaka: Waves and praxis

Within He Vaka Moana, and Māori and Pasifika re-search more broadly, there have been many opportunities for re-search-tēina to engage and collaborate with re-search-tuākana. Stories from He Vaka Moana are shared here to elaborate the re-search tuākana-tēina relationships and the importance of these for Māori and Pasifika re-search-tēina like myself, particularly the relationships with Māori and Pasifika women that have sought to "grow the fleet". As a re-search-teina, I worked with the various fellows of the He Vaka Moana project, "floating" between their own projects.

Talatalanoa

Talatalanoa were a key component of one of the He Vaka Moana fellows' re-search project. Talatalanoa were events that centred Pacific ways of knowing and relating to discuss Māori and Pasifika student success. They provided a forum for discussion and conversations to be built, as well as relationships (see Fonua, 2019). A "pikipiki hama kae vaevae manava" approach encouraged connection and sharing opportunities. These particular events were run by a Pākehā He Vaka Moana fellow, with the support of the He Vaka Moana re-search project team, for primarily tauiwi science educators to participate in a reflective process. Ultimately these talatalanoa were about having open discussions and sharing space, and

accumulated interested audiences of 150 academic and professional staff.

Being present at these talatalanoa reinforced my understanding of holding and maintaining relational space (Anae, 2016) in order to enable others to engage in and support Māori and Pasifika student success. Having an open space for tauiwi to openly share their experiences and the gaps in their knowledge around Māori and Pasifika values, culture and knowledge, and to critically reflect on their praxis (Fonua, 2018) can be seen as beneficial to the overall re-Indigenising and decolonising goals of He Vaka Moana. Having this space created by Pākehā for tauiwi to have these discussions can be understood as an effective way to discuss the institutional challenges that affect Māori and Pasifika student success (DiAngelo, 2018; Wikaire, 2015) and the ways in which educators can engage in critical self-reflection.

This experience highlighted the importance of Māori and Pasifika relationality as a means to find good allies in the overall kaupapa of Māori and Pasifika student success, as well as enhancement of Māori and Pasifika re-search-tuākana-tēina relationships. As the "floating" re-search-teina, I was involved in assisting with and supporting several of these events. Paddling between projects meant that as a re-searcher my roles varied, and the methodological practices I was exposed to varied also.

Wayfinding and shell maps

Another event that I supported as a re-search-teina was an exhibition of shell maps as wayfinding tools (see Matapo & Baice, 2019). Shell maps were understood as a tool for guidance and navigation (Spiller et al., 2015), as well as a means for mapping Pasifika student success. This event sought to create dialogue and discussions around what guides Pasifika student success. Through the creation and exhibition of shell maps, a space for dialogue was generated around Pasifika success, specifically from Pasifika student and staff perspectives, for re-claiming ways that our ancestors traversed the moana purposefully, utilising epistemological knowledge and Indigenous ontologies to seek out new futures. Being a re-search-teina meant I had the opportunity to see these shell maps displayed with the images of those who created them in ways that (re)tell Indigenous stories (Bishop, 1996; Sunseri, 2007) of traversing (often westernised) education (Matapo, 2018). Being a part of this project has meant building relationships with academics across departments, faculties and disciplines. Part of this relationship building

is the re-searching and analysing, and another part is being present, being kanohi kitea in the support and whanaungatanga that we show each other within our re-search teams as well as outside of them (G. H. Smith, 1997; L. T. Smith, 2012).

"Floaters" and reminders

Whilst there are re-search-related instances of whanaungatanga, it is also important to note the non-specific interactions that support re-search-tuākana-tēina relationships to flourish and that help guide re-search-tēina through westernised institutions and processes (Kensington-Miller & Ratima, 2015; Pihama et al., 2019). While these cannot be explored in depth in this article, they are mentioned here to highlight the importance of whanaungatanga between Māori and Pasifika re-searchers and the influence this can have. For student re-search-tēina with limited access to funding, simple things such as attending conferences and seeing familiar faces allows us to strengthen and build whanaungatanga within these Indigenous re-search spaces.

Quick, five-minute, bump-into-each-other catch-ups and having relationships across campuses and disciplines are key elements of building Māori and Pasifika re-search-tuākana-tēina relationships. Exposure to multiple and transdisciplinary re-searchers is not always available to re-search-tēina (Kensington-Miller & Ratima, 2015), and being a re-search-teina in this space has also meant being sought after for other re-search roles through this relationality. Being seen as a valuable and coveted member of projects demonstrates not only the strength of the relationship, but the need for Indigenous re-search capacity building (Kensington-Miller & Ratima, 2015; McAllister et al., 2019; Pihama et al., 2019).

The ways in which re-search-tuākana have been supportive of me as a re-search-teina are numerous and include prioritising time to guide me through new re-search processes; including me in wider project decision making; reinforcing and nurturing a Vā that welcomes me and acknowledges my life circumstances; and asking how work can be structured around my schedule and my studies in ways that prioritise my development as a re-search-tuakana, rather than reinforce power differentials. Whilst these may seem like the norm within Kaupapa Māori and Pasifika re-search spaces, they are not the norm within westernised academia. Being able to work with Māori and Pasifika tuākana within academia may seem like the norm for those of us in those spaces, but unfortunately within westernised educational

contexts access to this can be restricted due to institutional racism and oppression of Indigenous peoples through the normalisation of racist policies that restrict access to academia for Māori and Pasifika (McAllister et al., 2019; Naepi, 2019).

These experiences and spaces have highlighted the differences between working within Indigenous-led and -focused re-search spaces and some westernised research spaces (L. T. Smith, 2012).

Kaiurungi tuākana rānei?

Throughout this project, as with many re-search projects, interactions within the project team took place. As the re-search-teina, I was guided by the two principal investigators of the project. While there have been numerous occasions of support, of learning and of teaching, I wish to highlight some of those instances and conversations, however small they may seem, that have reinforced the importance of whanaungatanga to me and my understanding myself as a re-search-teina.

The value of space is something I have learnt as a re-search-teina (Anae, 2016). The importance of recognising my own autonomy and my own worth within academia has been highlighted to me often within the He Vaka Moana fellowship. The ways in which my re-search-tuākana have valued not only my input as a re-searcher but also my value as a whole person are numerous. However, this has not been the case in every academic or research setting that I have experienced, and it can be difficult to gain access to working with Māori and Pasifika within westernised academia because of the ways in which racist policy restricts our access to formal positions (McAllister et al., 2019; Naepi, 2019). The focus on relationships and reinforcement of my holistic value as a person as well as a Kaupapa Māori re-searcher emphasised the types of spaces I could choose to be a part of as a teina that are not readily available to all re-search-tēina in academia. The emphasis placed on my overall abilities and hauora during this project, rather than pure productivity, has reinforced my understanding of the type of re-search environments I want to be in, the relationships I want to be a part of, and the value I bring with my Kaupapa Māori lens.

The focus on developing my capacity as more than a research assistant has been, and continues to be, more than apparent:

> We've been really fortunate to get you, we've been really lucky. It's not easy, the system makes it very difficult. . . . Some people think if you're an RA [research assistant], you're forever gonna be an RA,

but I think in our space there is that desire to see people develop and build capacity so that you get to be self-determining and we're drawing on our own knowledge to help us navigate this western space in ways that can benefit us. ('E. Wolfgramm-Foliaki, personal communication, June 12, 2019)

The re-thinking of re-search relationships also reinforced the importance of focusing on "growing the fleet" and the ways in which relationality can support wider Indigenous goals through both re-Indigenising and decolonising (McAllister, et al., 2019; Pihama et al., 2019; Smith & Webber, 2019; Webber & O'Connor, 2019). The focus on development and enhancement and re-thinking what success looks like has been crucial not only to He Vaka Moana, but to our tuākana-tēina relationships:

> Developing emerging researchers, research-teina, however it is, I've never really thought of you as a research assistant, you're part of the research team, the project team. . . . It's about that support and developing and nurturing of the next set of vaka to come alongside, because we are working into a much bigger agenda. It's not just a project, it's not just the university, it's developing Indigenous research. Developing Indigenous research capacity, Māori and Pasifika research capacity, Indigenous women's research capacity. (H. Smith, personal communication, June 12, 2019)

> It's a decolonising way of working. ('E. Wolfgramm-Foliaki, personal communication, June 12, 2019)

Being a re-search-teina is a privilege that has re-shaped the way I understand Indigenous relationality within westernised academic settings. Through the supportive relationships of tuākana-tēinatanga within re-search, moments of discomfort have allowed for growth and resolution. As a re-search-teina it can be difficult at times to voice concern or suggestions in westernised academia, but centring relationships has made that process easier and allowed for confidence building as well. While there is still discomfort, it is re-defined as a way to grow and develop further, rather than seen as a negative. Re-search-tuākana-tēinatanga has enabled me to identify what is able to enhance my skills as a re-search-teina and to align with my positionality as a Kaupapa Māori re-searcher in ways that reinforce my tino rangatiratanga and desire to decolonise research and academia (McAllister et al., 2019; Pihama et al., 2019; Smith, 2012). The ways in which

relationality centres a continuation of Māori and Indigenous re-search excellence reiterate that individual projects, frameworks or initiatives should not be siloed (G. H. Smith & Webber, 2019)

Wayfinding, finding the ways: Concluding comments

Tuākana-tēina relationships are paramount within Te Ao Māori (Hook et al., 2007; Mead, 2003; Nepe, 1991; Winitana, 2012). They provide a foundation for developing and enhancing skills, whanaungatanga and overall wellness. Within westernised institutions, prioritising Indigenous relationality is crucial to the continuation of Indigenous re-search(ers). This, however, is an area in which westernised institutions have been failing (Amundsen, 2019; Hall et al., 2013; McAllister et al., 2019; Nikora et al., 2002; Pihama et al., 2019). In order to grow the fleet, tertiary institutions must prioritise access to Indigenous re-search-tuākana-tēina opportunities for Māori and Pasifika re-searchers to be mentored and nurtured by Māori and Pasifika. Tuākana-tēina (re-search and academic) relationships with Māori and Pasifika are enabling and reinforce autonomy, as well as support teaching and learning in Indigenous-centric ways through Kaupapa Māori and Indigenous methodologies (Amundsen, 2019; Hohapata, 2011; Mete, 2013; Pihama, 2001, 2005, 2010; Simmonds, 2009, 2011; L. T. Smith, 1992, 2012; Tomoana, 2012; Yates-Smith, 1998).

Through a prioritisation of Indigenous relationality and Indigenous values, re-search-tuākana-tēina relationships can be built and enabled to flourish. (Re-)centring relationships and acknowledging the value that re-search-tēina bring to re-search spaces can further enable tuākana-tēinatanga to become effective praxis within westernised institutions and (Indigenous) re-search spaces. Being a re-search-teina within Indigenous re-search projects is a position of privilege. Having access to our ontologies and our epistemologies through relationships with Indigenous academics, even within westernised institutions, is a privilege not all have access to. Being a re-search-teina means being in spaces that re-prioritise whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, kaupapa and kaitiakitanga. As Indigenous peoples, our goal is to pikipiki hama kae vaevae manava; however, within westernised tertiary institutions accessing our ways of being and re-claiming re-search can be challenging (Pihama et al., 2019; L. T. Smith, 2012). McAllister et al. (2019) suggest the need for a shift from the colonial, singular, neoliberal focus of tertiary education to one of plurality, (re-)Indigenising

and decolonising. Projects like He Vaka Moana are an opportunity to acknowledge and support Indigenous re-search. This re-prioritisation of Indigenous re-searching opportunities seeks to transform re-search relationality and the ways in which re-search-tuākana-tēinatanga can be emphasised and supported. Being a re-search-teina put me in a position to pose these critical, purposeful questions (L. T. Smith, 2012; Winitana, 2012) in order to be a good (re-search-)tuakana for those tēina and relationships to come. Ultimately, being a re-search-teina is simultaneously being a re-search-tuakana and working towards creating and nurturing space in order to grow the fleet.

Acknowledgements

Glossary

Māori

aroha	love, compassion, affection
Atua	ancestors, gods, supernatural beings
āwhina	help, support, assistance
hauora	wellness, wellbeing
He aha ēnei mea?	What are these things?
hoea te waka	paddle the waka
ka	particle used before verbs to indicate the start of a new action
kā	to burn, glow; be alight, burning, ablaze
kaihana	cousin
kaitiaki	guardian, minder, custodian
kaitiakitanga	guardianship, looking after, stewardship
Kaiurungi tuākana rānei?	Navigators or tuākana?

kanohi kitea	seen face, being present (physically)
kaupapa	agenda, an ideology, theory, methodology, epistemology
Kaupapa Māori	Māori approach, Māori principles, Māori agenda, an ideology, theory, methodology and epistemology
kōrero	speak, talk, discuss; discussion
mana	power, spiritual power, authority, control, enduring indestructible power in all things from Atua
manaaki	to support, take care of, protect, show generosity, respect and care
manaakitanga	hospitality, kindness, generosity, support
manawa	heart (of a person)
Māori	Indigenous peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand
moana	ocean, sea
Moana Nui a Kiwa	Pacific Ocean
Pākehā	New Zealand European
Pasifika	peoples of the Pacific Ocean located in Aotearoa New Zealand
rānei	or
tāngata	peoples
Tāngata o Te Moana	peoples of the ocean
tauiwi	foreigners, non-Māori, Pākehā
tautoko	support, advocate for
Te Ao Māori	Māori worldview
teina/tēina	younger sibling/s, less experienced relation/s
te reo Māori	the Māori language
tikanga	practice, plan, protocol, systems of values, customs and practices
tino rangatiratanga	sovereignty, self-determination, autonomy
tuakana/tuākana	older sibling/s, more experienced relation/s
tuākana-tēinatanga	relationships between experienced and new and emerging peoples; the conceptualisation of the tuākana-tēina relationship

wāhine	women
waka	seafaring vessel
wātea	to be free, unrestricted open space
whakapapa	genealogy, ancestry, familial relationships
whakawhanaungatanga	building relationships, relating well with others
whānau	familial group, family, extended family
whanaunga	relation, relative, kin
whanaungatanga	relationships, kinships, familial connections, friendships, reciprocal connections

Tongan

pikipiki hama kae vaevae manava	to bind or lash together the outriggers of vaka moana; share resources
talatalanoa	sharing stories, creating dialogue within an inclusive, receptive space; specific project-related examples

Pan-Pacific

Vā	space between, relational space
vaka moana	ocean-going canoe

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BOOK REVIEW

Decolonizing Research: Indigenous Storywork as Methodology. Edited by Jo-Ann Archibald, Jenny Lee-Morgan and Jason De Santolo with a Foreword by Linda Tuhiwai Smith.

I was in high school in the 2000s when I first learnt the kupu "pūrākau" in my Māori class. Often translated as "myth", but meaning far more, I understood, even then, the importance of stories, of legends, of whakapapa and building those relationships through storying. Pūrākau is a word, or more importantly a concept and practice that I have clung too into my career as a re-search teina, and as a new and emerging Kaupapa Māori researcher. Finding ways of undertaking research, of talking about our Indigenous stories, of creating and re-creating, of writing and re-writing and re-righting our pūrākau, has become a central feature of what I want to do and how I undertake my re-search praxis.

Storywork, in its various forms of Indigenous relationality, provides a platform for re-thinking and re-prioritising Indigenous ways of being and making sense of the world. Whilst these praxes are not new to Indigenous peoples, within westernised academia, they offer a decolonising alternative to dominant, hegemonic narratives that have often re-presented and re-positioned Indigenous stories through western lenses (Smith, 2012). Storywork has become a method of decolonising and re-Indigenising within research.

Decolonizing Research: Indigenous Storywork as Methodology explores the various ways Indigenous people utilise narratives as pedagogy, as learnings and as expressions of our languages, our cultures and our identities. This body of work brings together Indigenous researchers from Aotearoa New Zealand, Canada and Australia to forward Indigenous Storywork as research methodology. Jo-Ann Archibald Q'um Q'um Xiiem coined the term "Indigenous storywork" to enable space where "storytellers, story listeners/learners, researchers, and educators can pay better attention to and engage with Indigenous stories for

meaningful education and research" (Archibald, Lee-Morgan & De Santolo, 2019, p. 1).

Archibald, Lee-Morgan and De Santolo's collaboration provides a platform for critical, transformative, decolonial, re-Indigenising storywork to be had and as such they pose a challenge for us, as Indigenous peoples, to expand our thinking and ultimately our storyworlds. This book challenges 'dominant' westernised theories via Indigenous understandings of meaning making by traversing new relationships through stories.

Archibald, Lee-Morgan and De Santolo bring together storytellers, story-listeners, academics and researchers to talk story. The book is written in three each exploring the storywork of three distance geographical settings. The first section explores storywork in Canada through Jo-ann Archibald's seminal conceptualisation of storywork and Indigenous ethical praxes as expressed by Canadian scholars who have contributed chapters. Dorothy Christian explores the importance of re-visualising our narratives from multiple Indigenous perspectives and re-prioritising knowledge holders expertise and influence on our research. Georgina Martin and Elder Jean William's chapter discusses how Archibald's principles of respect, reverence, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy relate to healing from historical trauma and the maintenance of cultural identities. Archibald's principles are explored further in her chapter with Cynthia Nicol and Joanne Yovanovich around Indigenous storywork as methodology within transformative mathematics education.

Moving to Aotearoa, Jenny Bol Jun Lee-Morgan discusses her seminal conceptualisation of pūrākau as methodology. Contributing author Hayley Marama Cavino explores notions of gender and power through Māori Land Court and explores closely held purakau that challenge

dominant heteronormative imposed narratives. Extending our understanding of pūrākau in legal settings, Carwyn Jones discusses the importance of pūrākau as cultural expressions in Māori law and the legal issues experienced by Indigenous peoples broadly. Leonie Pihama, Donna Campbell and Hineitimoana Greensill's collaborative contribution centres relationships, relationality, and whanaungatanga , delving into the Indigenous pedagogies of pūrākau and storying in reconnecting with Indigenous value systems that centre mokopuna. Lee-Morgan concludes this section of the book, discussing te pū o te rākau, where she emphasises the importance of (re-)creating spaces where Indigenous ways of being are transformative and healing.

Finally Australian scholar Jason De Santolo explains the role of storytelling in transformational research for Aboriginal peoples. In a legal context, Larissa Behrendy explores storytelling and relational responsibilities as ways to challenge colonisation and colonial violence by providing a platform for Indigenous voices to share and indeed heal from trauma. Evelyn Araluen Corr's work discusses the limitations of western literary theories and positioning Indigenous storywork as restorative, combative recovery and praxis. This is followed by Nerida Blair's work on ethics within the academy utilising metaphor and philosophy to re-privilege Indigenous knowing. Finally Jason De Santolo's work on Indigenous homelands explores talking and storying, video practice and how this relates to Indigenous Kaupapa and methodologies for working with relations, researchers, creatives, activists and water protectors who move in Indigenous knowledge and relational spaces.

Decolonizing Research: Indigenous Storywork as Methodology demonstrates the importance and potential of (re-)establishing relationships with Indigenous peoples. Where I believe there is space to expand upon in its next form is through the inclusion of storywork from wider Indigenous peoples, such as our Pasifika relations. Talking story with Kānaka 'Ōiwi, talanoa with Sāmoan and Tongan relations, talanga with Tongan whanaunga, Cook Island metaphor and storying in tivaevae, for example, are happening within these spaces as well as the diaspora. Further considerations for this crucial storywork could be the place of Pasifika storywork in this field of decolonising and re-Indigenising research—is this a space that converses with/about peoples who were colonised differently and includes whakawhanaungatanga with these whanaunga? Re-conceptualising the ways in which we make meaning of Indigenous storywork as sites of knowledge (re)production, knowledge restoration and knowledge continuation requires continued critical reflection and incorporation of our various storying methods and methodologies from all our Indigenous relations.

This book provides a space for a critical re-thinking, re-doing and re-claiming of how we relate to each other and to our stories. I look forward to the next set of pūrākau we right, write, listen to and share.

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