

Barriers and enablers to innovation and participation by Māori in Tertiary Education

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Government responsiveness to Māori tertiary Education (1997-2016)

In the closing years of the 20th century, Māori innovation in education happened at the flax roots of Te Ao Māori and outside of the formal state education system, largely driven as a result of Māori disillusionment with the outcomes of state schooling. The revolutionary innovations of kohanga reo, kura kaupapa Māori, wharekura and wānanga evolved as expressions of tino rangatiratanga – the principle of “for Māori by Māori”. The results were an unprecedented increase in the participation of Māori at all levels of a parallel kaupapa Māori system of education where Māori language, culture and people are at the centre, and where te reo Māori knowledge and customs are ‘taken for granted norms’. Te Kōhanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa Māori received no State funding until 1988, when the ‘Picot Report’¹ recommended the State provide an opportunity for Māori children to be educated in the medium of te reo Māori, and within an appropriate environment for the transmission of Māori knowledge. This policy was considered “revolutionary and transformative”,² signalling a change in how education policy for Māori would be considered by the State¹ (Tomlins-Jahnke & Warren, 2011).

At the tertiary level, Māori innovation was evident from the mid 1970’s and manifest in the tribal aspirations of Ngāti Raukawa who had begun to focus on consolidating tribal aspirations, preparing for the twenty-first century and tribal language preservation through their experimental programme Whakatupuranga Rua Mano: Generation 2000 (Winiata, 1979). Education was the key and by 1981 Ngāti Raukawa had moved to establish a new tertiary institution named Te Wānanga o Raukawa (Waaka, Hapeta, Kuiti, & Royal, 200: Walsh-Tapiata 1997: 85).

Over the past 20 years the Government response to address Māori success at the tertiary level has focussed on participation strategies and achievement. The elimination of the disparities and gaps in participation and achievement in education were identified as key issues to address NZ’s economic and social development. Improving education results for Māori students was seen as a priority.

¹ Tomlins-Jahnke, H. & Warren, K.T. (2011). ‘Full exclusive and undisturbed possession: Māori education and the Treaty’. In V. Tawhai & K. Sharp-Gray (Eds). *Always speaking: public policy and the Treaty of Waitangi*. Wellington: Huia Publishers.

In 1997 a month long series of consultative meetings with families, parents and communities was held across the country. Information gathered from these initial meetings provided an indicative framework for the Māori Tertiary Reference Group (MTRG) which was established in 2001. The MTRG began advising the Minister of Education on Māori tertiary education issues, while continuing its consultation with Māori communities (face to face & written submissions). All information gathered was combined to shape the Government's Māori Tertiary Education Framework (MTEF)². Significantly, as starting points for continued discussion by tertiary providers with their communities the MTEF offered 5 guiding principles - Whakanui (respect/inclusiveness), Toi Te Mana (influence/empowerment), Ngā Kawenga (responsibility), Ngā Kawanatanga (contribution/partnership) and Tino Rangatiratanga (authority/self-determination). Seven priorities identified were lifelong learning pathways; kaupapa Māori provision; learning environments; advancement of whānau, hapū and iwi; Māori centred knowledge creation; Māori leadership and Māori as sustainable wealth creators. These principles and priorities combined to offer a community engagement focussed framework for tertiary provision.

Since that time numerous reports and strategies³ have provided strategic directions that have identified barriers for Māori learners, common enablers, and components to success. Such components include effective teaching; cultural relevance; strategic relationships with iwi, industry collaboration, and effective Senior Leadership. In terms of the latter component, the evidence suggested that where Senior Leadership is resistant to change it is unlikely that Māori innovation and participation will flourish.⁴

Despite the strategies and frameworks developed over time, participation and achievement rates for Māori in mainstream tertiary education organisations, remain lower than anticipated. Therefore the Government must engage with Māori in tertiary education to encourage innovation and participation from a Treaty partnership perspective rather than as an equity imperative. In fact there appears a growing trend towards reconceptualising Equity with the discourse of Diversity thereby further diluting any particular emphasis on Treaty relationships.

New Zealand's founding document is Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Signed in 1840 by representatives of Queen Victoria and numerous Māori tribal leaders, the Treaty forms a partnership between the Crown/Government and Māori. New Zealand was a meeting place of two strong cultures, and the Treaty marked the beginning of this bi-cultural nation. Māori have lived here for over 1,000 years, and this is the only country in the World in which the Māori language is spoken and customs practiced. In brief, the Treaty provides for:

1. **Partnership** between the Government and Māori
2. Full **participation** of Māori in NZ society, and the
3. Active **protection** of Māori knowledge, language, interests, values and other taonga (treasures). Māori language, for example, is an official language of NZ.

² Māori Tertiary Education Framework: A Report by the Māori Tertiary Reference Group – November 2003

³ Ka Hikitia Managing for Success, Māori Education strategy 2008; 2012 Doing Better for Māori in Tertiary Settings; 2013 Ka Hikitia Accelerating Success 2013- - 2017

⁴ 2012 Doing Better for Māori in Tertiary Settings.

Over time, people from other countries have settled in this country and contributed their cultural norms and practices to the nation. New Zealand now has a growing multi-cultural population founded upon, and shaped by, its bi-cultural history and promise.

Within a democracy the majority rules. There is, however, an assumption that the participation of Māori in universities occurs on a level playing field. In reality, participation requires more resources and effort to maintain and grow and Māori are supported to complete qualifications and/or to follow an academic career trajectory. Government insistence of funding degree completions is detrimental to Māori participation because the imperative is on the fiscal returns rather than on the strategic importance for Māori as tangata whenua as well as the wider societal good.

Barriers to Innovation & Participation

1. Reduction in Māori Staffing

Each of the barriers identified align with the findings of the national study on 'Māori Scholars & the University' by Kidman, Chu, Fernandez and Abella (2015) and the 'Tātou Tātou; Success for all: Improving Māori student success Project' (Curtis et al, 2012). These barriers include but are not limited to the following:

- The reduction of Māori staff numbers at Massey in the past five years, particularly at the professorial and senior lecturer levels has been significant. Some of these positions have either been left unfilled or casualised with short term contracts at the level of tutor or senior tutor. The consequences of this reduction have been a loss of some Māori-centred papers and/or a transfer of these papers to their colleagues; an erosion of a critical mass of staff able to engage effectively in University-wide academic service; and a reduction in a critical set of cultural skills. In turn, this has impacted adversely on the ability of Māori staff to remain competitive in promotions, career advancement, research/PBRF activity and the pursuit of an academic career trajectory.
- Further, low numbers of Māori academic staff members in permanent positions impacts negatively on 1) teaching and learning, including post graduate and doctoral supervision; 2) the long term viability of Māori focussed programmes; and 3) the recruitment and retention of Māori students.
- Conversely, the lack of dedicated Māori focussed professional staff positions has negative consequences for Māori student achievement and success at all levels. As findings from Curtis et al study suggest, there is a need for, "*...tertiary institutions to provide additional Māori student support services with a particular focus on fostering cultural bonding between students and their peers...*"⁵ White-streaming to a centralised system of the successful Te

⁵ Tatou, tatou – success for all: Improving Māori student success by Curtis, Wikaire, Lualua-Aati, kool, Nepia, Ruka, Honey, Kelly & Poole. March 2012. <http://akoaoatearoa.ac.nz//tatou-tatou>.

Rau Whakaara Programme at Massey, for example, has left a significant gap in dedicated and appropriate Māori student support services (Potter & Cooper, 2016)⁶.

- There are few academic positions available for Māori doctoral graduates of Massey
- Reduced staffing numbers means there are often conflicting pressures for Māori staff members eg. as kaitiaki vs academic work. The onus is often placed on the very limited number of Māori academic and professional staff across Massey's three campuses to make Māori cultural decisions irrespective of context (recruitment, cultural protocols, advice, input into other programmes, assistance for non-Māori etc.).

Recommendation

- That the Government offers realistic incentives to increase the participation of Māori within all areas of the tertiary sector workforce to address impediments to Māori innovation.

2. Systems, processes and structures

There are a myriad of structures and processes that can and do serve to impede Māori innovation and participation at all levels and in all contexts- senior management, senior leadership, teaching & learning environments, governance systems, student/university interface - that require a level of vigilance to overcome a Eurocentric omnipresence. Some examples of barriers related to teaching and learning include:

- Limited opportunities to endorse Māori centred evaluation models in College programmes. A Eurocentric university wide appraisal system requires the recognition of Māori priorities in teaching, learning, research and service in order for innovation and participation to evolve. An exemplar is the Ako Aotearoa rubric designed specifically for the evaluation of Māori focussed projects. A model such as this can be used to inform the design of more appropriate and effective Māori centred evaluation models.
- Little or no account is taken of Māori perspectives in the design, development and implementation of university programmes and courses. Of significance is the correlation between Māori conceptual frameworks that constitute the basis of Māori centred programmes, and successful completions from undergraduate to doctoral levels.
- A major barrier to Māori innovation is the University's programme approval processes through to CUAP. This is a long and arduous process that can take up to two years for a programme to be approved and delivered. Feedback via CUAP from peer institutions about a new programme demonstrates that they lack informed critique, and that information provided tends to be superficial in nature and not helpful given the length and complexity of the process. What is required is to dispense with CUAP and introduce an agile and robust process where universities stand or fall on their own reputation, as is currently the practice in Australian Universities.

⁶ The impacts of white streaming, that is replacing specialist Māori jobs and services with generalist ones, have been overwhelming negative is a key finding of the study by Potter & Cooper entitled Project Whitestreaming: A report on the generalising of Māori specialist Māori positions in the tertiary education sector. Prepared for the Tertiary Education Union, March 2016.

- At Massey, innovative Māori centred programmes include:
 - Te Aho Paerewa Post Graduate Diploma Māori Medium Teaching & Learning
 - Te Aho Tātairangi Bachelor of Teaching Māori Medium/Diploma Māori Education
 - BMVA Bachelor Maori Visual Arts
 - MMVA Masters Maori Visual Arts
 - PGDip MVA Post Graduate Diploma Maori Visual Arts.

In Initial Teacher Education, alternative partnership models such as the partnership with Te Rūnanganui o Nga Kura Kaupapa Māori in the delivery of Te Aho Paerewa and Te Aho Tātairangi enable Massey to work with the community to address the sector's teacher supply issue. Both of these programmes are community driven. On the wider front the challenge for institutions in terms of Māori centred programmes is the competing tension between fiscal imperatives of courses that do not attract large numbers of students and their strategic importance and contribution to the greater societal good.

Massey has also entered into an innovative collaboration with five NZ universities in the provision of a shared qualification in Māori and Business administration. The Masters degree, with exit points at Postgraduate Certificate and Diploma, is a post experience distance taught programme. The content of the programme has evolved from consultation with whānau, hapū and iwi, community and corporate leaders, and has received overwhelming support from stakeholders. The programme aims to equip Māori and those involved in Māori and Indigenous business education for senior leadership roles.

A further challenge is how to innovate in mainstream programmes where there are competing tensions. To overcome this requires a commitment at all levels of the university leadership. One exemplar for Massey is the current model of provision of the Māori Visual Arts programmes – Toi Oho Ki Āpiti - in the College of Creative Arts (COCA). Toi Oho is located within a mainstream visual arts department but operates and delivers MVA programmes sometimes using systems and processes that are more aligned to a kaupapa Māori pedagogy and practice in the visual arts. This is supported by the Senior leadership of the College including the recognition of Māori expertise and knowledge through the promotion of relevant staff to senior appointments at the associate professor level. There is also a purposeful policy of inclusion of Māori kaupapa throughout COCA's systems again supported and actively encouraged by the Senior Leadership. This proactive approach to increasing Māori capacity in the College has resulted in a critical mass of Māori academic staff. COCA also demonstrates its commitment to the Treaty through their mainstream programme -Bachelor of Design (Hons) which incorporates Māori perspectives into its design, development and implementation.

Recommendations

- That Government provides incentives to Universities to actively demonstrate and measure their obligations as partners to the Treaty of Waitangi and their commitment to increasing Māori academic capacity.

- That Government offers incentives to Universities to enable and measure an investment in Māori centred programmes based on societal good and strategic importance to determine direction.
- That Government offers incentives, and measures the impact of Community driven partnerships and collaborations in the provision of tertiary education
- That Government increase the EFTs value of all total immersion te reo Māori Initial Teacher Education Programmes. Te reo Māori is an official language that is currently endangered, and is protected as a taonga in the Treaty of Waitangi (TOW Te Reo Claim).
- That Government expectations (Tertiary Education Commission) of universities is that their responses to the aspirations of community (hapu, iwi) are prioritised as a 'community impact factor' within the teaching/research (PBRF) nexus.
- That Government legislates to enable universities to approve their own programmes for delivery, in line with programme approval strategies undertaken by Australian Universities.

3. Demographics

Māori students at Massey comprise those who study on campus, by block course and via distance. The majority are mature age distance students who enrol through the adult entry provision (as opposed to having University Entrance or an equivalent). Although every student, including high achievers, will require some form of additional support during their time at Massey, it is those Māori students who are new to Massey and studying by distance who face the most significant barriers. These include:

- **Financial hardship.** Mature students are not eligible for the same amount of financial support as younger students.
- **Geographical isolation.** Students may be the only one in their family or indeed their community, who is engaged in university study.
- **Past educational experiences.** Many mature age students have had negative experiences of compulsory schooling that resulted in failure and leaving school prematurely at an early age. The length of time between leaving formal secondary education and enrolling at university may be many years.
- **No or little experience of studying at a university.** Often mature age students are the first in their family to study at a tertiary level
- **Lack of familiarity** with what is involved in studying by distance at Massey. Like many students Māori can find the experience of studying by distance much more challenging than they anticipated. Unlike Pakeha students though, Māori do not bring the same cultural capital to their study and often the challenge of getting to the same starting point as others is very demanding.
- **Inadequate, often inappropriate course advice.** This is of particular concern to those studying by distance as there is no requirement for these students to speak to any advisor. In general Māori students find a stronger connection to Māori staff members and are thus able to relate better regarding their interests and reasons for engaging in university programmes.

- **Lack of Māori focussed academic support.** At Massey, this is now left to the Colleges and results in patchy service depending on the course(s) and programme in which students are enrolled.

Of note in the area of dedicated Māori focussed advice and support, and lack thereof, is the disestablishment of the Te Rau Whakaara (TRW) advisors. These advisors had previously worked across the study life-cycle, from initial engagement to graduation, with prospective students and with new and returning students from all study modes. Each advisor worked in both recruitment and retention, though some spent more time in one or the other. In 2014, following the disestablishment of TRW, staff were moved out of the Māori centred advisory roles and redeployed (white-streamed) to the mainstream Student Recruitment, External Relations, to focus solely on Māori student recruitment. To disestablish this innovation without reviewing the programme or a viable justification is difficult to understand. The decision to white-stream appears to have been made without an understanding of the advantages of seamless transitions in Māori student retention and completion.

The impact of the demographic of Māori students at Massey is also highlighted in specific courses such as Te Aho Paerewa (an ITE programme) where students are not eligible for TeachNZ scholarships. Potential students for Māori centred education programmes are often faced with the unenviable choice of enrolling and encountering financial difficulties, or not enrolling at all. As noted earlier in this submission, once the numbers of students fall below a given number the programme is at risk.

Recommendations

- That both Government and Universities take account of the Māori demographic and remove the barriers faced by mature aged students.
- That Government take account of the congruence, or lack thereof, between Government initiatives and the Māori demographic and implement appropriate strategies to remedy the situation.
- That Government offers incentives to universities to establish appropriate structures to support dedicated Māori focussed academic advice and support positions/services.
- That Government support specialisation in Māori tertiary provision by locating specialist Māori programmes at a dedicated university rather than at multiple locations.

4. Institutional Racism

All universities in Aotearoa have processes and practices that adversely affect both Māori staff and students (Kidman et al, 2015; Curtis et al, 2012; Potter & Cooper, 2016). For example, as noted earlier in this submission, there are a disproportionate number of Māori staff appointed in universities on low salary levels and on short term or casual contracts. The casualization of employment of Māori combined with the practice of whitestreaming has meant a reduction in both staff and student numbers and in the services provided for Māori students to succeed.

- In terms of participation and innovation, white-streaming is a major impediment, and at Massey, as noted previously, involved the disestablishment of a successful academic, cultural and learning support programme and repositioning as mainstream.
- Coupled with the unrealistic and inequitable expectations of Māori staff (also noted earlier), and the lack of facilitated learning and career enhancement programmes for Māori staff, morale has been negatively affected. .
- At Massey, Māori students are not offered a Māori graduation ceremony option. They are instead invited to attend a Māori celebration event to honour them as graduates. Staff who attend this ceremony are instructed not to wear their full academic regalia thereby signalling the University's underwhelming response to celebrating Māori academic success.
- This culturally inappropriate practice is one of the most visible (to staff, students, whanau, iwi, hapu) forms of institutional racism. Universities need to find ways of talking about what is happening in their institutions in terms of racism and how it affects the lives of those students and staff who inhabit their campuses within the physical and virtual spaces.
- Māori language is constantly undermined through processes whereby the language is shortened to account for administrative convenience. Structures that undermine Te Reo include university regulations that require new suites of Māori language courses be offered **only** in programmes where te reo specialisation is offered. In other words, the same suite of Māori language papers cannot be offered in two separated programmes. Such regulations have serious implications for pedagogy, practice and staff workloads where resources are severely limited.

All of these practices have disadvantaged staff and students and discouraged innovation and participation.

Recommendations

- That Government investigates what a Māori friendly mainstream university might look like and universities are enabled by the Government to implement recommendations arising out of the investigations.
- That Government take account of the fact that Māori students do not often enter university with the same cultural capital as other students and that this has ramifications for universities.
- That Government require Universities, as part of their Treaty obligation, to implement culturally appropriate and robust strategies to ensure Māori students have equitable opportunities to succeed.
- That Government incentivises Universities, as Treaty partners, to increase Māori participation (professional and academic).
- That Government actively support Universities, as Treaty partners, to broaden their Eurocentric perspectives on tertiary education and to develop and to implement pedagogical practice that is more inclusive of, and appropriate for, Māori.

In summary, the recommendations are that Government:

- Offers realistic incentives to increase the participation of Māori within all areas of the tertiary sector workforce to address impediments to Māori innovation.
- Provides incentives to universities to actively demonstrate their obligations as a partner to the Treaty of Waitangi and their commitment to increasing Māori academic capacity.
- Offers incentives to universities to enable and measure an investment in Māori centred programmes based on societal good and strategic importance to determine direction.
- Offers incentives, and measures the impact of Community driven partnerships and collaborations in the provision of tertiary education.
- Increase the EFTs value of all total immersion te reo Māori Initial Teacher Education Programmes. Te reo Māori is an official language that is currently endangered, and is protected as a taonga in the Treaty of Waitangi (TOW Te Reo Claim).
- Expectations (Tertiary Education Commission) of universities is that their responses to the aspirations of community (hapu, iwi) are prioritised as a 'community impact factor' within the teaching/research (PBRF) nexus.
- Legislates to enable universities to approve their own programmes for delivery in line with programme approval strategies undertaken by Australian universities.
- Along with Universities, take account Maori demographic and remove the barriers faced by mature aged students.
- Take account of the congruence, or lack thereof, between Government initiatives and the Māori demographic and implement appropriate strategies to remedy the situation.
- Offers incentives to universities to establish appropriate structures to support dedicated Māori focussed academic advice and support positions/services.
- Supports specialisation in Māori tertiary provision by locating specialist Māori programmes at a dedicated university rather than at multiple locations.
- Investigates what a Māori friendly mainstream university might look like and universities are enabled by the Government to implement recommendations arising out of the investigations.
- Take account of the fact that Māori students do not often enter university with the same cultural capital as other students and that this has ramifications for universities.
- Require Universities, as part of their Treaty obligation, to implement culturally appropriate and robust strategies to ensure Māori students have equitable opportunities to succeed.
- Incentivises Universities, as Treaty partners, to increase Māori participation (professional and academic).
- Actively support Universities, as Treaty partners, to broaden their Eurocentric perspectives on tertiary education and to develop and to implement pedagogical practice that is more inclusive of, and appropriate for, Māori.

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