Northern Regional Hub-funded project

Project Report

Using cultural concepts to teach aspects of academic writing

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AKO
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TE WHARE WĀNANGA O
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Executive Summary

In spite of considerable investment, many Māori students still struggle to adapt to a tertiary environment. The reasons for this are complex, but not helped by the fact that their level of essay writing proficiency is often well below the expected standard. Raising their ability to better prepare and construct essays will have a measurable impact on their achievement and success.

The project sought to examine how to bring together well-known concepts of Māori culture to teach essay writing skills. The familiar process of discussion within a hui (meeting) were used to connect the concept of pōwhiri (a ritualised ceremony of engagement) with the academic skill of writing thus positioning Māori knowledge and experience as a central tenet. The key research question is ...*How can the concept of pōwhiri be used to teach essay writing skills?* The use of multiple cultural concepts could be linked to teach a range of academic skills, so the question could be more generically posed as "how can *cultural icons* (familiar cultural concepts) be used to teach academic skills"?

Other aims of the study include:

- to identify what other cultural concepts can be used to scaffold workshop content to make it more accessible to Māori students, *and*

- produce permanent online resources that make sense to Māori students developing their academic skills.

The project organised a focus group, delivered three workshops and produced five online resources. A focus group scoped student experiences of academic workshops and informed the topics for the project workshops. Consequently, the workshop discussions provided the content for three online videos embedded within a blog to ensure it was more searchable online.

The first two workshops fell at a time of a national rugby event. Rugby is recognised as closely associated to New Zealanders cultural identity so a mock APA reference was created to reference to the cultural icon of a rugby game. The 'reference' provided the information to know the details of that specific event including players, date, and time. This quirky approach was to initiate the discussion to show how a referencing system provides specificity. Workshop Three was a smaller group using dialogic interventions to draw out the expert knowledge of the students linking the processes of a pōwhiri to the structure of an essay. This session became a synergistic creative exercise where the students dialogued about the 'contemplative kaumātua'; the elder who role models deep critical thinking resulting in a well-structured argument.

The use of cultural icons scaffolded to learning academic skills allows Māori students make a lasting connection that is permanently retrievable for use in their tertiary studies. Thus, the delivery of workshops design designed for the unique needs of Māori learners are integral to raising the Māori learner success rates. As a teaching technique it requires teachers to surrender their position as expert and instead engage in a shared dialogue as equals with their students.

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Introduction

Learning support programmes containing Māori-specific content contribute to the success rates of Māori in tertiary studies (Nikora, Levy, Henry, & Whangapirita, 2002; Ross, 2008; Marat, Postlethwaite, Pelling, Qi, & Chand, 2008; van der Meer, Scott & Neha, 2010; Pukepuke & Dawe, 2013). These initiatives and many more like them with a recognisable Māori teaching style provide Māori students the 'know-how' to success in western dominated settings. Less common in teaching is drawing on the considerable resources of the innate students' lived experiences to facilitate learning.

Māori learners can sensibly claim a lived experience as Māori, thus they are experts in their own lives with a deep understanding of what it means to be Māori in the education context. By recognising Māori as experts also recognises these learners as holding prominent Māori authority within the tertiary teaching environment. Māori learners who learn within a more equitable teaching setting signals an opportunity to permanently embed learners themselves as accessible teaching resources (Allen, 2015). Learners who are able to have intrinsic resources have a permanent fail-safe access to the means to improve their study skills.

Concurrently, a paradigm shift is required for teachers to re-evaluate holding sole academic (teaching) authority to instead allow a more equitable distribution of the dialogue (Gómez, Racionero & Sordé, 2010). More traditionally, academic workshops focus on the teacher as expert while the student performs as a passive learner (Pukepuke & Dawe, 2013). Thus, workshops with teacher-as-expert gives priority to the teacher who has significant talk time and has a predetermined lesson plan. This teaching model requires the students to self-manage their attention to fit with the teacher-led sessions, and to accept the workshop curriculum with little critique. When asked, students may provide feedback that these workshops are necessary and helpful, while also reporting that these are uninteresting and do not match the student expectations or study needs (Pukepuke & Dawe, 2013).

This project seeks to harness the rich innate cultural expertise of the Māori learner to improve the recall of needed academic skills. A focus on teaching essay writing skills links the protocols of a pōwhiri (a ritualised ceremony of engagement) with the specific components of an essay. For the purposes of this project, the term *cultural icons* refers to well-known cultural concepts from te ao Māori (the world of Māori) or from Kiwiana (quirky identity markers of the New Zealand experience). Initially, the project examines how the concept of pōwhiri be effectively harnessed to teach essay writing yet keeps in mind there are multiple cultural icons that can be coupled to teaching essay writing or other academic skills. While it could be argued students need a traditional structured lesson plan to learn essay writing (or another other academic skill) this project offers a more challenging teaching premise that a true student-led approach can be an effective teaching tool.

Māori learners hold a unique cultural distinction of understanding their own academic needs in the context of being Māori, and so can play an integral role in self-teaching. Under this teaching paradigm the teacher-authority is transferred to the student, or in teaching terms there is a shift from student-centred to student-led pedagogy. Of course, difficulties will arise when teachers want to assert their legitimised academic prowess that has been the mainstay of teaching models. Such entrenched teacher priorities create barriers to the formation of a teaching concept where students have an innate capability to learn academic skills in tandem with the knowledge drawn from their known lives. There must be a relearning for teachers. Teaching in this project context means teachers must put aside their previous held beliefs of evidence-based teaching resources, instead

simultaneously engaging both teacher- and learner- expertise to organically improve the lesson design.

Extracting the expertise of Māori learners requires a dialogic engagement in the classroom. Learner dialogues are brought to the forefront of the class with encouraged to actively engage in talking about their known worlds and their understanding of the lesson content. At times these discussions provide counter narratives that help learners better connect with what they know, what they need to know, and in ways that make sense to them (Mayeda, Dutton, Ofamo'oni, & Keil, 2014). Classroom relationships founded on egalitarian principles are required so teachers and learners alike can share freely and make meaning together of the woven threads of their narratives (Flecha & Soler, 2013). Dialogic gatherings of both learners and teachers supposes that the stronger argument, rather than seniority or academic position of a participant, can influence the group to uphold a shared view.

In arguing that learners don't know the content and they can't teach themselves skills belies the importance of teaching in a cultural context. If we assert the importance of culture (things Māori) as central to the concepts of effective teaching practice, then knowledge coupled with experience is prioritised for effective teaching of Māori learners.

The project sought to examine how known cultural icons and the use of dialogic gatherings, can enhance teaching and learning of academic skills, namely essay writing. The project question is ...*How can the concept of pōwhiri be used to teach essay writing skills?* The question could be generically extended to include all types of student support skills, so could also be posed as "how can *cultural icons* be used to teach academic skills"?

Other aims of the study include:

- what other cultural concepts can scaffold workshop content to make content more accessible to Māori students, *and*
- what would be effective permanent online resources?

Literature Review

A broad scoping of the literature has taken place in regards to Māori tertiary participation, retention and success. A focus on Māori tertiary student support exemplars highlights the success of programmes about the country in support Māori learners with academic success. Pedagogical approaches to Māori learning incorporating te ao Māori cultural principles are acknowledged although it is noted there is limited literature on the direct use of cultural icons in teaching. A lack of literature in this area cannot assume lack of use of Māori concepts in teaching; instead these teaching ideas may not have been published, or there is no direct reference when employed within a broader student programme. This section covers the tensions arising for Māori tertiary learners, exemplars of cultural icons used in teaching, and discussion of student-led workshops.

Tensions for Māori learners

Teaching Māori learners in a tertiary setting presents an opportunity to strengthen the interface of the academy with indigenous communities. McKinley and Grant[1], Middleton, Irwin & Williams (2011) research on Māori doctoral student study experiences notes the alienating tensions arising from the production, ownership and use of knowledge (p. 116).

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[1] Denotes shared first authorship

Conversely then, when Māori learners are recognised as experts of their own knowledge with a mandate to manage their learning environments, the tensions can be reduced.

The theoretical foundations of learning progressions are set by teachers. Curriculum design of academic skill development presumes a teacher holds the expert knowledge on student learning needs, and the ability to convey this knowledge to students so they can apply it to their assessments. One visual metaphor of the learning progressions is of a first small 'cloud' representing skill development, aptly described by Wilson (2009). As a student progresses through their studies and furthered learning of skills additional 'clouds' – larger than the last – shows the progression of knowledge acquisition. The premise of this progression starts with learners having limited knowledge of the subject area (borne about by poor grades) and that through the lineal teaching of skills students cumulatively add to their repertoire of skills. In contrast, a learner support programme at a Polytechnic noted students dismissed a lineal model of learning, instead prioritising the timing and topics of workshops with their immediate needs for upcoming assessments resulting in higher attendance and student satisfaction (Pukepuke & Dawe, 2013).

Students' skill acquisition is affected by participation level of each student. As an indicator of student classroom equity, the engagement and motivation in study does not greatly differ for Māori learners and other students (Lillis, Fiso, Henrickson & Storz, 2015) although Māori students value regular contact with amiable peers (Ross, 2008; Nikora et al., 2002; Ngawati, 2015) with student agency related to student self-efficacy (Marat, Postlethwaite, Pelling, Qi & Chand, 2008). The peer group model, as an expression of whanaungatanga (engaging in authentic ways) is a strong component of many of the tertiary based Maori student support programmes; Te Rau Puawai at Massey University (Nikora et al., 2002), The Maori Centre at Otago University (as mentioned by van der Meer, Scott & Neha, 2010), MAIA at Unitec (see Unitec research bank), Tuakana programme at The University of Auckland (as mentioned by Mayeda, Dutton, Ofamo'oni & Keil, 2014) and other tertiary institutes.

Cultural icons as teaching tools

This project identifies a teaching tool that links cultural icons (concepts familiar to the Māori students) to the development of academic skill acquisition. Drawing on Vygotsky's (1978) notion of 'scaffolding' – te ao Māori concepts such as *pōwhiri* are presented to the learner as a familiar *cultural icon* that acts as a structure attached to a disparate object. In this case pōwhiri and essay writing are conceptually linked. As the Māori learner has a deep understanding of one structure (pōwhiri) then their recall of the lesson can be more easily recalled. Scaffolding of this nature removes the need for learners to rote learn unfamiliar workshop content, and instead gain confidence with the vivid imagery and emotional connections inspired by their own experiences. Vygotsky's term of scaffolding indicates that the supporting structure is eventually removed as the students gain academic competence, however in this context the 'scaffold' cannot be removed as it is innate and therefore permanent.

The table below gives some examples of pōwhiri and essay writing. In this example the pōwhiri process at the point of hui is examined, however it is acknowledged there are many other components that could be explored:

Pōwhiri	Essay structure
At the first call or karanga the stakeholders and the purpose of the hui are relayed.	Can indicate a Title/Authors Acknowledgements Preface
The initial recitation by a kaumātua of the history related to the meeting, the people involved, the nature of today's hui, and the rollout of the day's events	Introduction
In the course of a hui people may stand and give their point of view, they may support or refute other discussions of the day	Paragraphs and critical argument
At the end of a session a kaumātua will remind the audience of the purpose of the day, acknowledge key points of view, and opposing arguments. This time concludes with a summary of 'what this means' and what might happen from here	Conclusion, and sometimes Recommendations

Programmes offering learning support to Māori underpin their teaching practice with principles such as; whanaungatanga (engaging in authentic ways), manaakitanga (mana building, care), ako (teaching and learning), tuakana-teina (reciprocal mentorship), rangatiratanga (student agency) and values of tika, pono and aroha (the right way, honesty and deep caring) (Nikora et al, 2014; Ngawati, 2015; Ross, 2008). Pākeha academic Alison Jones has for many years delivered writing workshops to tertiary learners noting the principle of aroha (positive feelings) as central to her teaching methods (Ako Aotearoa, 2014). McCaw (2014) identifies three practices for an enhanced learning environment for Māori learners that resonate with student-led, collaborative, dialogic gatherings:

1. Encouraging students to keep culture central to their learning
2. Encourage students to maintain a group approach in learning, and
3. Valuing the importance of students' own identities (McCaw et al 2002, as cited in McCaw 2014).

The use of Māori concepts as a teaching tool has previously been used in tertiary teaching. Both the concept of pōwhiri, as well as the deconstructed components of this ritualised engagement, have been used to scaffold teaching ideas. Stewart (2007) and Allen (2015) draw on concepts including pōwhiri when navigating their work on the intersection of science, education and culture. Stuart (2006) tackles the teaching of essay writing along with the concept of whakapapa (genealogy) and whaikōrero (speech making) to structure essays, and kawa (protocols) akin to academic requirements for assessments. Somerville (2014) accepts a connection between Māori traditions such as speechmaking converging with more modern western writing techniques though highlights there is not a perfect meld between traditional forms of a *cultural icon* such as speechmaking and their use as a teaching tool. Despite this cautionary note, the traditional mediums of oratory (contained within the pōwhiri process) has some application to essay writing.

Pūrākau as a *cultural icon* asserts that disparate concepts and multiple knowledges can occupy the same space. Lee (2007) examines the use of pūrākau (indigenous narratives, storytelling) as a culturally robust method of layering multiple knowledges rather than asserting a single dominant narrative. Lee's work (2007) indicates how the dominant discourses that de-centre Māori experiences (p.13) can instead be turned around by pūrākau to champion te ao Māori in ways that resonate with learners. Pūrākau as a perspective asserts the expert knowledges of teachers *and* the expertise of the lived experience of Māori learners can concurrently co-exist within a lesson.

Student-led workshops

Student-led teaching practices privileges the student. A student-led approach differs from student-centric practices in that the student is involved from the beginning and at all levels of the workshop design. Allen's work (2015) with compulsory school-aged mathematics learners designs student-led tasks in a reciprocal guessing game (pp. 62-63), demonstrating a non-traditional power differential as the learner has mandate to challenge the feedback of the facilitator (teacher). One study of tertiary student workshops encouraged learners in the design and delivery of academic workshops under the acronym TATT[2] (Pukepuke & Dawe, 2013). TATT tutors asked for student recommendations of workshop topics, and the subsequent timing of these workshops. By designing workshop content based on student-led suggestions the students reported it helped their study borne out by the high attendance to these voluntary workshops. These two teaching exemplars employ a student-led focus coupled with a dialogic approach.

Belief in the student's ability to learn is central to a dialogic approach. Student-centric work places an emphasis on what is required for the students, where-as student-led teaching initiatives require the teacher to believe the students have equal weighting of ability to pose an argument *and* a forum that has a focus on participant equality (Gómez, Racionero & Sordé, 2010). To ensure the success of teaching and learning strategies there must be the belief by the teacher that all students have the ability to achieve (Tomoana, 2012). Equitable teaching forums that further student potential have a chance to flourish when teachers combine dialogic gatherings with student expertise.

In conclusion, there has been considerable work to strengthen the interface between Māori students and the institution. Predominantly the institutions have relied on the acculturation of Māori students to the western academic norms that displaces the unique ethnic markers of Māori identity in the pursuit of retention and completion. Much of the teaching follows lineal progressions of learning that builds a series of academic stepping stones rather than a holistic inter-related process more sensible for the Māori learner. Last, students are expected to be proactive in the engagement of academic learning services while being passive learners. This project re-engages learning techniques that champion Māori student identity as a core component of an innovative holistic teaching style.

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[2] Tutorial Assistant Teaching Team

Method

The project organised a focus group, delivered three workshops and produced four online resources. A focus group scoped student experiences of academic workshops and informed the topics for the project workshops. Consequently, the workshop discussions provided key themes that were developed into content for three online videos. The videos were then embedded together within a blog for students.

The focus group

The focus group was used to reveal priority academic needs of students. A focus group of architecture students (*n5*) including two Māori revealed they particularly want to learn how to structure assignments; as an essay or a report. While reported they needed to improve their referencing skills yet would not attend such a workshop, with no clear reason for non-attendance. They joked their non-attendance at some workshops were due to boredom, though some admitted they only wanted to attend workshop with content that seemed relevant to their current assessments.

They did admit that a workshop was based on a *cultural icon* might be ensure their attendance. The group suggested a 'rugby' workshop on referencing might appeal that led to the content of the first two workshops. While the focus group was small and not representative of a wide Maori student voice, it seeded the first teaching innovation using the national cultural icon related to rugby.

The workshops

The workshops were used to test the premise of using cultural icons to teach academic skills. The first two workshops (both *n*30 approx.) were held on the campus of a large university near the end of the second semester. The students were predominantly sport and exercise undergraduate student-teachers, with a notable number of Māori and Pasifika students. Their demographic details were not captured. The sessions captured a single class of students broken into two workshops, respectively. Workshops one and two first assessed the student's competency with APA, and called for all their 'APA questions' that were written on a whiteboard. The students were introduced to the idea of using the generic *cultural icon*, the New Zealand test rugby, as a way to hopefully excite an interest in APA. While they were not overly excited they agreed to try it. A recent rugby game was identified and the components of the game including team names, the game name, venue and dates and times. These were translated into an APA reference, then linked to how such specificity in referencing allows readers to retrieve the original source.

Workshop three was a dialogic gathering aimed at using the concept of pōwhiri to teach essay writing skills. There were five Māori students. It was held in a shared student/staff space that had a lot of unplanned activity occurring around the group during the session resulting in a lot of noise. Despite these distractions the students remained focus on the workshop tasks as they rapidly saw the benefits of the discussions to help with their essay writing. The discussions covered mind maps, critical thinking skills, and APA referencing.

The videos

The results of the student discussions and evaluations led to the development of three videos. These captured some of the key ideas exciting to the students that had recognisable connection to essay writing in terms of visual tools, analysing, and referencing:

Video One: Drawing and mind maps as visual prompts. This video discusses how using visual techniques such as drawing and mind mapping can help to order thoughts and create an essay structure.

Video Two: Kaumātua and deep thinking. This video discusses how a kaumātua role models quiet thinking that results in deep analytical thinking, and contributes to the structure of an essay and the clear articulation of thoughts as separate paragraphs.

Video Three: APA referencing and mana. This video encourages the student to consider the chore of correct APA referencing as a form of respect of the author/s who have made considerable effort to produce the work. This relates to the Māori concept of mana (respect), and therefore referencing is a form of mana enhancing.

The blog and a lesson plan

The three videos provided stand-alone information on brainstorm techniques, critical thinking, and APA referencing respectively. However, the stand-alone videos lacked a coherent link to one another, and how to best apply this to academic skill development. Consequently, a blog was created to draw together the information in the video with explanatory text and other resources, and a lesson plan of APA sessions used in Workshop One and Two:

The Blog: Use ideas from pōwhiri to write your essay (see Appendix One)

The blog is aimed at students with a straightforward title that could be easily searched online. The blog can found on the author's TeporaTeach Wordpress site.

Lesson Plan: APA rugby style (see Appendix Two)

This lesson plan provides the progression of learning for teaching APA using a cultural icon. It identifies timeframes, key activities, key objectives, and resources required throughout the session. It would be a good guide for developing further lessons using cultural icons.

Project approach

The project sought to include the Māori learner's personal lived experience in the workshop processes thus acknowledging Māori knowledge and experience as a central priority (Smith, 1999). The participants were recruited through social and personal networks. Face to face, social media and emails were all used to invite participants, and at times there was the snowball technique as participants used their own networks to extend invitation to their associates. The focus group participants were all known to me, and friends with one another, and accepted an invitation to discuss academic workshops. Workshops One and Two were a class group where I was invited to facilitate an APA session, the course organiser gave permission for me to trial the *cultural icon.* Workshop Three was recruited through face to face in classroom time, and subsequently through a student facebook chat group. All workshop participants were enrolled students at a large university and all were studying at undergraduate level in health, sport and/or education. The students were advised of the project either face to face or via social media.

Dialogic learning as a method of instruction

The project engages critical communicative methodology privileging the voices of participants as understandings are constructed through dialogic interventions and subsequent shared meaning (Latorre & Gómez, 2005; Gómez, Racionero & Sorde, 2010). More sensibly, dialogic interventions are discussions commonly used within Māori forums such as hui (meetings). Communicative methodology aims to bring about positive social

transformation within the student space. A large-scale project INCLUDE-ED[3] identified a number of interventions, termed Successful Education Actions (SEAs) that have improved educational outcomes for learners in Europe (Flecha & Soler, 2013) and brought transformative change to that community. Dialogic interactive gatherings are essential SEAs, bringing together learners to discuss topics of importance while engaging with peers, teaching staff, whānau and the wider community (Flecha & Soler, 2013). Such learner groups debate and enjoy knowledge usually held by the 'elite culture' (Soler, 2015, p. 839) where the strength of an argument is valued and diverse points of view are held as valid (Flecha & Soler, 2013; Flecha, 2009). Positioning the dialogic group members as equals encourages contributions that create both collective meaning that allows the sharing of knowledge that can transform the lives of individuals and the wider community (Soler, 2015). Dialogic gathering interaction transforms the learning environment from positioning the teacher (academic) the authority of knowledge, instead the group seeks to interpret meanings together through their shared discussion times.

Emerging issues, challenges and highlights

The preliminary project shows a level of student enthusiasm in the project goals. Key to the project success was informing stakeholders (students and staff) of the project to facilitate the recruitment to the projects. Recruitment for Workshop One and Two was partly circumvented when an invitation was made to teach APA to a class group, and so these sessions were used toward this project. The recruitment and delivery of workshops was timed to the best availability of students by avoiding heavy study times for exams, big assessment, multiple assessment times. Academic staff were informed of the Hei Toko application via the School newsletter, with individual staff being briefed as informal opportunities arose.

Results

The students at the workshops generally found the workshops useful and were glad to have attended. Students cited their appreciation for new learning and noted the application to improving the quality of the assessments. There was a notable difference between Workshops One and Two, and that of Workshop Three that was wholly dialogic in its approach.

Workshop One and Two.

An APA workshop "APA Rugby style" was developed, using a recent international rugby event as the basis of the referencing fields for a 'journal article' (i.e. authors were the names of the two teams). These fields were developed in conjunction with staff who teach PE. The workshop was delivered to an undergraduate class of 30 students approximately, on two occasions using a lesson plan (see Appendix Two). This testing established that the students were engaged with the rugby idea though wanted the task to be more complex. The final 'reference' was:

Lions, B., Lions, I., Blacks, A. (2017). *Test match*. Eden Park, 7(8), 430-735.

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[3] Strategies for Inclusion and Social Cohesion in Europe from Education

Below is a breakdown of how each field of the cultural icon reference were matched to APA fields

Fields of the 'reference'	How the cultural icon references were matched to APA
Lions, B., Lions, I., Blacks, A.	Authors replaced by names of the teams
(2017).	The publishing date was replaced with the year of the match
Test match.	The title was the common name of the game
Eden Park,	The publisher details used some literary license, transforming this into the overall organising of the games
7(8),	Date and month
430–735.	This was numeric interpretation of the time, as a substitute for 'pages'.

Many thanks to Professor Toni Bruce and Dr Darren Powell for their creative help with this 'reference'

Workshop One and Two were relatively well received. The students reported the APA content was useful to their studies and most students reported their session had been worthwhile. The students felt their learning would contribute to better grades, and ease of writing further references for upcoming assignments. The students in both workshops self-reported on their levels of competency in citing work in assignments. The range of APA competency ranged from being fairly confident with writing simple references only, through to high proficiency. Most students wanted reliable online resources to help them to cite their work.

One student on learning about how to see a full article reference online leapt to her feet and said in an excited way "you saved my life!", indicating how readily she had seen the value of the workshop and the immediate application to her studies.

The students were intrigued by the presentation of APA content through the use of the well-known cultural of a rugby game. They made ready connection between the rugby game components and the direct parallels to APA fields. Despite reluctance to engage in APA content the students reported the presentation of the rugby/APA was "too easy" and in the same order as an APA book reference. They would have liked more challenge to decipher each component and then try to match it to the reference. In this way the expectations of work students would do was underestimated, however showed they both understood the parallel and were able to complete the task.

The level of student enthusiasm was offset by their compulsory attendance at the workshop, as well as the session being held at the end of the day of their block course. Students begrudge their time being used for at the end of a tiring few days of study. At the second workshop of the day the students expressed they were keen to leave early making it more difficult to complete a full evaluation of the workshop. However, the majority of this second session said they appreciated the online resources and the chance to have specific questions answered.

Workshop Three

This workshop was facilitated as a dialogic interactive gathering. Students reported their appreciation in being able to tell their stories of family and kaumātua. The students were able to make deep connections to the concepts under discussion, such as pōwhiri, whaikōrero, karanga, mana (engagement, speechmaking, respect/status) and kaumātua (elders) as role models. Links to other online resources was sent to participants later and previewed the videos before they were published online.

Discussion

The focus group

There seems to be a fairly generic range of skills that must be taught to students to improve their ability to operate in an academic environment. Skills such as writing, reading and analysis are central to the premise of forming a well-rounded student. Such known themes set curriculum development for the teaching and academic skills.

The focus group was not representative of all students, or even undergraduate or those of their discipline in architecture. However, these students could easily differentiate between what they need to learn, and what they wanted to learn. For example, the students all indicated the learning of referencing was essential to high quality assessment, and subsequently the ability to get good grades. Yet the focus group cited their wish to first learn skills of structuring an assessment/assignment, especially an essay or report. This indicates that while a teacher may set out an order of learning students might be resistant as they have higher priorities.

Since there is no definitive order of the progression of learning of academic skills, the student preference should take priority. Students priority needs in academic workshops can ensure higher attendance, greater engagement of the topic, and higher levels of student satisfaction in the offering.

This early phase shows students are willing to engage in more innovative ways of learning core academic tasks. Despite students recognising the need for a range of skills, the preliminary focus group showed greater willingness to attend workshops perceived to be of immediate interest to their studies, namely; to attain better grades, and to ease their study workloads.

Workshops

In Workshop One and Two the students were intrigued by the unique teaching technique for APA. The use of a *cultural icon* such as a rugby game was well received, in part as some students were studying in the area of sports education. The participants of these two workshops were involuntary clients, expected to attend as part of their course requirements so there was a broad range of levels of participation in the sessions. Additionally, the timing of the workshop hampered the levels of motivation. Workshop Two took place late afternoon as a final session of a day-long block session with students' tiredness demonstrated in hyperactivity or lethargy and greater concentration needed to engage with the content. Despite the involuntary nature of the participation students kept a constant flow of ideas and group answers for the sessions. The motivation and participation levels of the learners indicate negotiation with students on the best time of day, the length of a session, and to negate the punitive aspects – to make the sessions compulsory.

Initially the rugby cultural icon provided interest due to the novelty value. Despite the ability to scaffold components of a rugby game with required fields in an APA reference, the novelty value of the approach waivered about half way through the workshop. While students were quickly able to see the connections between the disparate objects, their desire for answers to their individual pressing APA questions took precedence. Prioritising question time is an expected part of a workshop, so doesn't discount the value of using the cultural icons. The move to question time does show that alone, the use of a cultural icon to teach academic skills in this instance was not enough of a 'draw card' to keep the students interest in this method. The use of the rugby provided some buy in, however it did not extend throughout the whole workshop around the rugby theme as the questions were more about specifics of APA and the resources were most valued, showing that a smaller buy in through introducing rugby might have been enough to get the students thinking and that the emphasis still remains on providing a range of independent resources that are credible and accurate.

In contrast, Workshop Three introduced the cultural icon of pōwhiri to the learners at the beginning of the session. Throughout the gathering the learners maintained a dialogue about their lived experiences and frequently referred back to the concept of pōwhiri. Not only was there regular reference to pōwhiri, the students deconstructed other aspects of pōwhiri to further explore how this might anchor ideas for good essay writing. Subsequently they created knowledge of essay writing in relation to pōwhiri and interpreted not only their own meanings of the Māori concepts but collectively agreed on how this is useful to academic writing.

By maintaining an egalitarian stance among the group allowed free communication of ideas that brought forth long held dreams for themselves and their community. In talking about these aspirations, the participants recounted some lived experiences with clear links to the academic topic under discussion. Once the connections were made between their stories and the academic skills the students were more confident in understanding the subject matter at hand.

The dialogue on known cultural icons and deeply held understandings of Māori concepts provided a rich foundation for collective storytelling. Students made deep connections to the concepts and as the discussions freely developed they collectively and organically made meaning of the concepts, linking it to essay writing or the APA referencing. One example were the discussions of mana (status, acknowledgement) that by honouring the work done by authors to produce the final product, in this case a publication, the work had to be referenced. By inserting the importance of mana as essential provided a culturally entrenched motivator. Rather than a student toil over references for an assessment, the students were able to overlap this academic necessity with their value system of giving mana to the author and their work. This shift from academic requirements to their personal value system means students will be more highly motivated by their intrinsic understanding of why to reference, than the more punitive form of academic expectations.

Online resources

The videos and blog were easy and cheap to produce, and are a permanent resource that can be searched. While the videos provided an accurate account of the student-led discussions they could be easily transformed to stand alone resources with additions of wrap around explanation. However, the blog provided greater context, as well as the opportunity to provide additional links to other resources. The Workshop Three students had been willing to co-produce videos and other visual material however their own academic workloads interfered with further video production,

Conclusions

Well established learning support programmes targeting Māori learners are essential to ever-raising Māori learner success. Integral to the delivery of workshops designed for the unique needs of Māori learners are the underpinning of te ao Māori philosophies and principles.

Students can make a lasting connection to something that is known to them, and transmit that lived cultural knowledge into their understanding of academic skills. More so, this is a more permanent situation as the students can easily recount a famous rugby game or an often-seen behaviour by kaumātua. In this way they can then tap into these memories (either exciting or prophetic or emotionally moving) and so this can be used to scaffold the learned ideas from academic workshops with what is known.

The workshops indicate the egalitarian approach allows learners to position themselves in the learning environment in ways in which their contributions are valued. Likewise, the teacher must make adjustments to their more formal experiences of being 'expert' and 'in control' of the learning environment, and instead tapping into the shared dialogue as equals with their students.

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Appendix One

**Title**: Use ideas from pōwhiri to write your essay

URL: https://wp.me/p3dbzL-66

Site: Wordpress blog for TeporaTeach

What you already know about pōwhiri can help you write awesome essays. A bunch of Māori students joked with me that they procrastinate, draw doodles and being off task. Sometimes they don't get the essay structure. Others talk about going wildly off track with their ideas, rambling, ending up with a huge word count. Sound like you? Then read on.

Figuring out an essay structure

The pōwhiri process is like the structure of an essay. You have all been to a pōwhiri, it's just a part of being Māori, living in Aotearoa New Zealand. So consider yourself an expert of your own experiences. I did a vid on how pōwhiri gives us the structure for an essay, so you can watch it here. Or if you prefer to read I've written it out below...
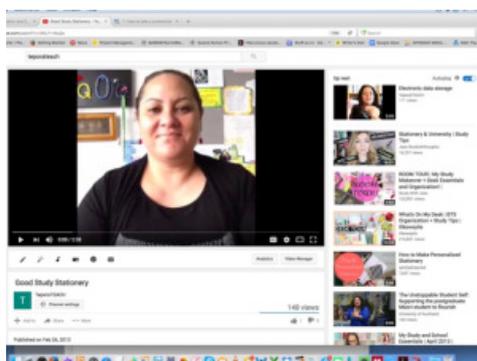
You know when there's an all day hui at the marae. Everyone has been welcomed and we've all settled in. Then a kaumātua will stand up and talk about why we are all there, maybe they talk a bit about what was going on before, or even a long time ago. They tell us who is in the room, and who is likely to talk. Very clearly they state the kaupapa. You get pulled in by the korero, you at least get a little about what to expect for the day. In an essay, this is the Introduction – when you entice the reader to read the rest of your essay.

Laying out the kaupapa of the hui is like an essay Introduction

If you like to draw and doodle

Turn those awesome doodle drawings into an essay. If you prefer the 2.30 sec video, then watch it here. Here's how it can work. Take a moment to think about your essay topic, and check over your notes. Don't worry if you haven't done enough reading, or you are not sure. Just start. Keep thinking about the topic and then draw; use lots of colour and images with only a few words. Switch off and enjoy a few minutes doodling. Maybe your drawing turns into a mind map.

Take a look at your work. Suss it out. Imagine that different parts of your drawing relate to your essay. Can't see it? Carry on anyway. Now set a timer for 20-25 minutes (is that too much? then just set it for 4 minutes). Start to write down how a part of your drawing relates to your essay topic, if it's not working just make it up, be

silly if you have to. This is just a brain storming technique. Now you have a draft of a few words, maybe even a few pages. It's a start. This is one of my favourite sayings about why you need to write....

You can't edit nothing

Can't draw... try a photo of your marae, or a family home. Here's one of where I used to live. For your essay topic write about the stand of trees, or the water features. What story is told by this photograph – what are the big ideas for your essay – write it down.

Loosen up, just write

How to dig down and get the deep thinking

Our contemplative kaumātua role models how to think deeply about your essay. If you want to shift your grade up a whole level, you need to include critical thinking in your essay. If you are just being very descriptive, like saying... this author says this, and another says this, it shows you have been reading. You can take it to the next level and explain what these ideas all together means for you.

An awesome wahine toa recalled fond memories of kaumātua up on the pae (sometimes in the wharenui). The story is.... there's that kaumātua, in this case a koroua, who looks like he's asleep. We all laugh together thinking of all the times we've seen this. These old fellas are sitting there, no one disturbs them (no WAY would we do that), we worry they are asleep and missing it all. Yet they get up at the end of a day and deliver this amazing korero. They remind us of the kaupapa, they pick up on what's been said (sometimes cracking us up with something funny), they respectfully note the differences of opinion. Then.... they tell us what it all means.

When the contemplative kaumātua stands and delivers an amazing summary of our day – that's a conclusion

Their deep thinking results in a clear structure, relevant information and critical analysis of the content. That's an A grade essay! Sometimes they go further and highlight the points made during the day laying out what can happen from here. In a report you include a Recommendations section.

When kaumātua brings together the comments of the day, then highlights a clear path forward – that's Recommendations

Check out the vid here.

Get onto the reference list

Give mana to those who did the mahi, referencing is about respect.

Let's be clear. The many workshops I've done on APA students will report how much they hate it, they don't get it, they can't work out how to do the in-text citations right. Sound familiar. Two things I want to point out here; this is about giving mana to the people who did the mahi to write that article, AND a good essay with a top grade will have good referencing. If you want to be better motivated to improve your skills watch this video on APA referencing and mana

Kia kaha, you've got this!

Appendix Two

Title: APA rugby style

Lesson plan for Workshop One and Two

Title:	APA rugby style		
Aim:	To give a brief overview of APA, and referencing journals using a rugby metaphor		
Objectives:	To recognise the fields in an APA reference To understand the need for APA and briefly outline in-text citations Identify two key referencing resources, and how to use them		
Length of workshop:	50 mins		
Resources:	Whiteboard, whiteboard markers in three colours, URL/keyword for Massey APA (OWLL). Waikato laminate reference guides		
	Purpose	Action	Resources
Introduction 5 mins Lecturer	Give an overview of the workshop	– Welcome and thanks for coming – Overview – Ask for burning APA questions	Whiteboard Markers
APA 20 mins Lecturer	Cover APA basics	Definition, why cite sources, in-text, reference list, in-text (author, date)	
Rugby 5 mins Lecturer	Using the metaphor of a publicised rugby game with an APA reference	Bring up a series of rugby games Identify the teams,	Webpage or printout with three examples
APA fields 10mins Whiteboard exercise	Familiarise student with key APA fields, and demonstrate how to put into the reference	Author = Names of two teams = Lions/All Blacks Date = Year of Game = 2017 Title of Publication = Name of game = Test match Journal name (who organised) = Lions NZ Tour Journal # (month when it is happening) July = 7 Issue # (day when it is happening) 8th = 8 Page numbers, starting and ending time 4:30 to 7:35 (just remove the colons) Lions, B., Lions, I., Blacks, A. (2017). Test match. Lions New Zealand Tour 2017, 7(8), 430–735.	Whiteboard, markers
(could extend lesson by 20 mins) Competition	Answer onto whiteboard	Break class into two teams. Give them a journal and see if they can get the elements into the right fields (accuracy not required)	Whiteboard markers
APA resources 15 min Whole class	To provide resources for APA accuracy	Massey APA interactive (OWLL) Waikato reference guide – walk through types of references	Have website up (or google key words), laminate
End Day 5 mins		Keep putting the tools in your kete Use your APA eyes to see the APA fields	

Appendix Three

Workshop evaluation

The evaluations were oral and to whole-of-class to ensure there was a greater range of comments, and a more interactive discussion of how to improve the workshops into the future.

1. How valuable was the session?

   Use of time, content, improved understanding of APA

2. What worked well?

   Online resources, discussions, group work

3. What was confusing?

4. Did the use of cultural icons with academic skills make sense? If not, why not?

5. How did the session help to improve your APA skills?

6. Any final comments