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Research Report

Supporting doctoral writing:
He ara tika mā ngā kaiārahi

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This report shows the research behind the *Guide to Doctoral Writing Support: He Ara Tika mā ngā Kaiārahi*, making the data and literature review available to those interested in supervision good practice.

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Introduction

There are many reasons, both fiscal and ethical, why good doctoral writing support is desirable. Institutions who are currently funded only on degree completion apply pressure to supervisors and students for timely completion. The squeeze is on—writing must be completed proficiently within a tight time framework. Increasing internationalisation of doctoral education complicates writing feedback, with many supervisors feeling that they do not have the necessary time. Poor doctoral writing and its support are emotionally and fiscally taxing for institutions, students and supervisors.

The demand for doctoral students' writing proficiency raises challenges. Even good supervisors who take time and care are not always confident about explaining grammar, syntax and rhetoric (Paré, 2011; Yeh, 2010). A review of literature resulted in a research-based report on the multiple problems experienced by students and academics regarding thesis writing (Hardy and Clughen, 2012: 25). A recent study in New Zealand found a wide range of beliefs concerning feedback are held by supervisors (Bitchener, Basturkmen & East, 2010), which is understandable given that supervision is effectively teaching done in isolation, not evaluated by students in the way classroom teaching is, and complicated by occurring within intense personal relationships. Not all supervisors or students are aware of the generic expectations of the doctoral thesis (Carter, 2011; Carter & Laurs, 2014), meaning they end up tackling common problems unaware of available resources of support.

Supervisory guide books mainly deal with process and relationship management without much attention on how to handle the doctoral student's writing (e.g., Walker & Thomson, 2010; Wisker, 2012). Few tertiary institutions in New Zealand provide academic development for supervisors on how to give feedback on doctoral writing. However, although, as institutions try to save money, there is a global tendency to reduce generic student support, nonetheless most universities do have student learning advisors who work directly with doctoral students themselves. Supervisors should also encourage their students to take up other support opportunities. As well as what might be offered by learning advisors in their institutions, there are useful guides for doctoral students on writing a thesis (for example, Cryer, 2005; Dunleavy, 2003; Evans & Denholm, 2007; Phillips & Pugh, 2015; White, 2011; Wisker, 2008). A few focus on the writing process itself (Aitchison & Guerin, 2014; Aitchison & Paré, 2012; Murray, 2011), with one devoted to thesis structure (Carter,

Kelly & Brailsford, 2012). Such texts are helpful, but our data suggests that only a small percentage of doctoral students avail themselves of them.

So while international literature is helpful, and global discourse informs our research here, this report is tailored to the New Zealand context. Along with Australia, New Zealand contributes strongly to the discourses around postgraduate supervision (e.g., Grant, 2003; 2008; 2010). We draw on literature that gives supervisors specific advice on how to give useful feedback on writing (e.g., Bitchener et al., 2011; Burke & Pieterick, 2010; Evans, Hartshorn & Tuioti, 2010; Ferris, 2010; Hyland, 2010; Nelson, Range & Ross, 2012; Paltridge & Starfield, 2007). In New Zealand, international education is a significant and growing industry (McCutcheon, 2007; Joyce, 2013), and the international literature includes some specifically for students who have English as an Additional Language (EAL) (e.g., Bitchener & Knoch, 2010; Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Leki 1990; Murphy & de Larios, 2010; Wang & Li, 2011; Woodward-Kron, 2007). Although some literature uses alternatives such as L2, ESL and EAP, we use the acronym EAL throughout. The intention of this report is provide a sound research-based kaupapa (foundation) for supervisory practice in New Zealand.

Aotearoa New Zealand: Our context

Doctoral education makes a promising contribution to the future of our small, geographically-isolated country. Our attention to ensuring that PhDs satisfy international standards and are preferably examined by at least one examiner from overseas signals awareness that the doctorate is one means of showing tertiary institutions within Aotearoa New Zealand to be significant global players. International education is a significant industry, noted in 2007 to be worth more than the wine and fisheries industries together (McCutcheon, 2007), and growing in value (Joyce, 2013). Busy supervisors contribute substantially when they devote time to giving feedback on writing. Delivering quality doctoral education is an arena where there is potential for New Zealand to position itself as leader.

Our history adds another layer to supervision skillsets: the need to work well with Māori and Pasifika doctoral students. Very little in literature considers the specific New Zealand environment in which education is contextualised by Te Tiriti o Waitangi. This constitutional document calls for Māori rangatiratanga to be affirmed in education, beginning with equal access, and culminating in equitable achievement and completions. Despite this expectation,

"a 1916 government report outlined the policy of focusing on industrial or domestic secondary education for Māori to equip them for work deemed suitable for them" (Theodore et al., 2016: 605), i.e., as factory workers, manual labourers or housemaids. Although there have been considerable shifts in attitude since then, arguably our system perpetuates a privileging of the Pākehā majority, following historical patterns that still exert influence. A recent report argues that the current situation "reflects a wider structural dysfunction within the institutions of higher education in New Zealand that, to date, has been only partially addressed by formal mission statements and institutional strategies" (Kidman et al., 2015: 13). Similarly, New Zealand has played a historical role within the Pacific Islands, as colonial proxy for Britain in the early 20th century, and in its own right through to the 1960s and 1970s, both offering and limiting the opportunities for formal education. Hence Pasifika students are another priority group for whom universities want success. With both priority groups, supervisors and advisors in New Zealand need to be aware of the cultural backgrounds, expectations and aspirations many Māori and Pasifika doctoral students bring to their academic writing in a western education system within which the doctorate is the highest degree. Universities need to work to counter historic inequities.

Given Te Tiriti, it's a problem, arguably a political failing, that Māori, the tangata whenua (people of the land), have fewer doctoral graduates per head of population than other cultures. According to the 2014 census, Māori now make up nearly 15% of the population. However, citing Statistics New Zealand 2006, Carter & Laurs (2014: 59) noted that, "the 2006 census showed only 387 Māori PhDs amongst the 16,770 graduates residing in New Zealand (2.3%)". That ratio shortfall is improving slowly: in 2013, 669 Māori were reported as now having doctorates (2.99%), and, in 2014, out of 771 doctoral graduates in New Zealand, 56 (7.26%) were Māori. Acceleration to success is promising, but momentum needs to be sustained.

Often Māori who graduate with a doctorate are the first in their family to achieve this, showing the pathway for others in their whānau, hapū and iwi. Sometimes that is a massive contribution; a Māori scholar quipped "[a]t home, they think anyone with a PhD is like the Prime Minister" (participant cited in Kidman et al., 2015: 31). Our institutions hold legal responsibility by merit of Te Tiriti o Waitangi to ensure all Māori have equal access to success. Furthermore, universities are fiscally motivated by the fact that "the government has provided two forms of targeted equity funding…Māori (and Pacific) doctoral completions

have received an 'equity weighting' which finds them at double the rate of non-Māori (or non-Pacific) completions" (McKinley et al., 2009: 2). It is unsurprising, then, that Māori are a priority group in terms of national and institutional desire for doctoral success.

Additionally, Pasifika students are a relocated cultural group who are also historically under-represented in educational success. Pasifika peoples counted for 7% of New Zealand population according to the most recent census in 2013, with an estimated resident population of 344,400. Based on the 2013 census, a total of 22,314 people in New Zealand had doctoral degrees, but only 177 of them were Pasifika (0.79%). In 2014, only 1.94% of doctoral graduates were Pasifika students. Again, we are seeing slow improvements in higher education for Pasifika, but with a long way to go. As we outline below, material realities underpin these differences, which require awareness in order to turn the situation around.

Although the term Pacific Islander (alternatively Pasifika, Pacific) suggests homogeneity, these are diverse peoples with diverse cultures who at times can come into conflict with each other. Yet they share a commonality in that the ocean dominates their home environment. A case has been made that Oceanian is a more apt name than Pacific Islander, especially with the spread of diasporic communities and their maintenance of strong social, cultural and economic ties across the ocean (Hau'ofa, 2008: 32). Bringing Pasifika people into full participation in educational success is essential for the development of both New Zealand and its neighbours.

This report addresses the issues identified above to produce a guide to effective supervision of the thesis-writing process. A targeted literature review establishes much of what research has found about doctoral writing feedback. It also mines handbooks on academic writing to provide a compendium of strategies for supervisors to use. Primarily data on supervisors' and doctoral students' views about the feedback process forms the basis for the report, and we begin by summarising that. We consider respective roles and responsibilities, ways of giving — and receiving— feedback and complete the process by framing the whole discussion within Māori and Pasifika pedagogies that we suggest ought to underpin supervision in New Zealand.

The report begins with our own research project within one New Zealand institution that sought to address the issues above. First, we describe the project and its methods used to

gather 1) supervisor, 2) doctoral student, and 3) Māori and Pasifika perspectives. Findings and discussion, contextualised within the literature that we reviewed, are also presented in order of supervisors, doctoral students, and Māori and Pasifika perspectives. These are then triangulated into the short guide for supervisor practice in New Zealand: Supporting Doctoral Writing: He Ara Tika mā ngā Kaiārahi.

Research project

This project began from desire to see where supervision challenges lay. At that stage, the principle goal was good teaching. The University of Auckland's Centre for Learning and Research in Higher Education (CleaR) wanted to design seminars for doctoral supervisors that would address the real-life challenges identified by practitioner experience. Then we recognised that it would be ideal to ask doctoral students for their side of the story when it came to feedback on their writing, an area of supervision where practice could be better supported. We felt supervisors could benefit from hearing students' views about the writing feedback cycle. Our student survey process emulated the common custom of reviewing classroom teaching using student evaluations of courses and lecturers. The report thus makes use of findings that relate to doctoral writing development from both sides of the supervisory table.

At the outset, we speculated that disciplinary differences in the relationship between writing and research among Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (non-STEM) might mean that challenges with writing feedback would be dissimilar. We expected that, as a result of our survey, CLeaR seminars for supervisors might divide into two clusters, STEM and non-STEM. Accordingly, we asked supervisors and students to identify which faculty they belonged to within the institution, because we expected to tailor separate seminars for each of these broad groups, using discipline-specific examples, exercises and group talk.

We were also curious as to whether student experience would map on supervisory experience in terms of the challenges to effective feedback. We wondered whether these two groups might have conflicts of interest in their social exchanges around doctoral writing—and, if so, we wanted to see how we might suggest routes to resolving tension by showing a middle-ground. We were aware of how different human beings are, so were (and remain) cautious about how generalisable our findings might be.

Prompted by Ako Aotearoa's Ruth Peterson, we extended the project in order to address the specifics of two doctoral writing priority groups: Māori and Pasifika. The initial research team of two Pākehā /palagi women extended invitations to Māori and Pasifika colleagues with expertise in pedagogies relating to these groups. Additionally, a University of Auckland Summer Research Scholar undertook a literature review on Māori, Pasifika and indigenous pedagogies.

We began with uncertainties in mind regarding just how generalizable guidance for supervision can be, and with a growing enthusiasm for finding out more.

Methods

University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (UAHPEC) approval was obtained for both the supervisor survey and the doctoral student survey.

Methods for supervisor perspective

A 22-question anonymous online survey sought to find out what challenges were experienced by practicing doctoral supervisors at the University of Auckland [n=226] at a time when there were 1245 accredited supervisors. CourseBuilder software was used to deliver the questionnaire, which asked about three supervisory areas: communication, project management and writing. Based on literature (Paré, 2011; Yeh, 2010; Hardy & Clughen, 2012), questions about writing and giving feedback probed supervisors' experiences of issues such as

- writing blockages;
- inadequate quality of writing;
- poor grammar and syntax;
- poor demonstration of critical analysis or use of theory;
- dependency;
- refusal to follow advice; and
- inability to write simply, clearly and succinctly.

The supervisor questionnaire was analysed qualitatively using NVivo. Additionally, two researchers went through the comments and colour coded manually for thematic analysis, while also doing "find" searches of words (and synonyms) for the themes identified as occurring often.

Quantitative analysis was also conducted on 216 cases (individual responses) to determine disciplinary differences. Data from 3 separate research institutions were removed as not having critical mass. The faculties of comparison were Arts, Business, Education, Engineering, Law, Medical and Health Science, National Institution of Creative Arts and Industries, and Science. To correct for missing values in some variables, Little's Missing Completely at Random (MCAR) established that the values were missing at random (Chi-square=358-590, df =325, p =.097). Therefore Expectation Maximisation (EM) algorithm was used to impute missing values to preserve generalisability. The Kruskal Wallis (1952) test (equivalent to the one-way ANOVA but designed for ordinal outcomes variables) was used to determine statistical significance between faculties.

Methods for doctoral student perspective

The purpose of gathering data from doctoral students differed from that with supervisors: whereas the research into supervisor experience aimed to inform workshops and teaching, that into doctoral student experience sought to learn from students so that advice to supervisors and advisors could be grounded in the real two-sided experience of feedback practice. An anonymous questionnaire, distributed via the university's postgraduate student email list and the university's newsletter for postgraduate students, elicited doctoral students' experience on just four items: 1) the first time they gave writing to their doctoral supervisor and handled feedback; 2) any experience of really helpful feedback; 3) any experience of unhelpful feedback; and 4) any literature that they made use of independently. Invitation to participate went at a time when there were approximately 2,000 doctoral students. These questions sought to identify feedback behaviours that dis-incentivised students, strategies that worked well from student experience, and a list of reference books that students recommended as useful in practice. In our experience, the initial exchange of supervisory feedback sets the pattern for how it will be done, so was significant. We do not report on that data here, because it revealed the obvious: that the first feedback exchange is an anxious 'contact zone' for students (Carter & Laurs, 2014: 85). We do report, however, on what students found helpful and what seems to hinder, as useful advice for supervisors to consider.

Methods for Māori and Pasifika perspective

Our initial research questionnaires to supervisors and doctoral students did not directly ask about Māori and Pasifika, because our need to cater for these priority groups of relevance to a

New Zealand audience only became clear to us after we had gathered that data and taken advice on its use for local practice from Ruth Peterson. Consequently, five new researchers accepted our invitation to contribute to the research project: Professor Rawinia Higgins (Tūhoe), and Drs Lisa Chant (Ngai Whatua), Jen Martin (Te Rarawa), Teresia Teaiwa (i-Kiribati), and 'Ema Wolfgramm-Foliaki (Tongan). As part of two fora for doctoral students and supervisors (University of Auckland, 20/11/2015; Victoria University of Wellington, 11/3/2016), breakout hui invited sharing of experience around writing feedback for Māori and Pasifika. Lisa, 'Ema, Rawinia and Teresia led these hui.

At the Auckland hui, 13 supervisors who were working, wanted to work, or had worked with Māori and/or Pacifika students, attended. At the Wellington hui, both doctoral students and supervisors attended, with about 30 participants in total. In the interests of hospitality, we did not ask participants to identify their culture. However, we do know that in Auckland there were two Pasifika supervisors and five who had been, were, or would be supervising Pasifika and that two were Māori and four had been, were, or would be supervising Māori. Critical support from Georgina Stewart, Alison Jones, Matiu Ratima, Tanya Samu and Melanite Taumoefolau who gave interviews and advice, or read drafts of the long report assisted us in the provision of insights from Māori and Pasifika perspectives.

Two people took notes during each of these hui and collated findings from literature and research team members' experience. University of Auckland summer research scholar (2015/2016) Daniel Badenhorst reviewed the literature on Māori and Pasifika pedagogies, and we also acknowledge and are grateful for support from Te Kawehau Hoskins, Georgina Stewart, Mera Penehira, Alison Jones, Tanya Samu and Melanite Taumoefolau who gave interviews and read drafts to help keep us on track.

Findings and discussion

This section weaves literature with findings, and deals with 1) supervisor, 2) student, and 3 Māori and Pasifika perspectives separately in that order.

Supervisor experience

Our most unexpected finding came from qualitative analysis of supervisor [n=226] experience: there were no significant disciplinary differences in the challenges supervisors experience with their students' writing (Carter, Kensington-Miller & Courtney, 2017,

forthcoming). There were some discipline-specific differences with what supervisors enjoyed or found satisfying, but we do not report on these here as they are not relevant to good practice.

That challenges seemed similar across all disciplines surprised us, because, across academic fields, epistemologies and ontologies vary markedly, as do writing styles and conventions. Further, we had felt that some students and academics might be attracted to STEM disciplines because they like *doing research* rather than writing about it—"writing up" perceived as a chore, a bit like cleaning up. We also expected challenges to differ around things like motivation to write, literacy, clarity, and ability to show critical analysis.

We were aware of different attitudes to writing, in that STEM epistemologies place less emphasis on text, whereas language often carries theoretical implications in non-STEM subjects. There may be more too: William Germano describes STEM writing as "book-as-machine" (2013: 137-48). He says STEM students often write like engineers, working mechanically to identify a problem and then develop a solution—a problem in which the reader feels that an investment of reading time is worthwhile (141). The "problem" is hence the central focus in STEM writing. In arts, humanities, and social sciences, however, the author's text-dependent claim or argument is the most valuable asset deserving the investment of reading time. Doctoral writing in STEM disciplines has caught increasing attention at the turn of the twenty-first century (Aitchison et al., 2012; Dong, 1998; Hyland, 1996a, 1996b; Lerner & Poe, 2014; Morton & Thornley, 2001), although the emerging literature often appears to have limited research-based evidence. In our research, only two science-based supervisors demonstrated a STEM versus non-STEM difference: frustration that our questionnaire asked repeatedly about writing. Both insisted writing was insignificant and supervision of doctoral development was all about teaching how to research. Nevertheless, statistically, our findings revealed no significant differences, a factor that justifies producing a generic guide for good practice in giving feedback on doctoral writing.

Key themes emerged from qualitative analysis of supervisor perspectives using NVivo. Each key term is described below, alongside example responses from the survey to illustrate the main issues reported. We report on those that give direction for good practice. Findings confirm the challenges identified in the literature, and additionally tease out what it is specifically that is challenging. A central theme identified was the challenge of supervising

the writing process for doctoral students, with a number of staff indicating that it could be *"hard work"* at times (although it was acknowledged that this varied, depending on the student). Findings confirm that a guide to good practice may be helpful.

Hands-on writing feedback: how much?

Many staff indicated that they struggled with finding the balance between substantive matters and stylistic corrections. A key issue raised was the degree of editing that should be undertaken—and whether or not this was part of the supervisor's role. Some staff were adamant that it was not, whereas others reported that they found it *"hard to resist"* and/or argued that it was needed to make sense of the information:

- *It is challenging to find the meaning in the text sometimes, and hard to resist heavy editing.*
- *I've been in the position of constantly editing a student's work. Colleagues have said I shouldn't do this (in terms of the workload) but the ideas were great, and in order to make them clear, editing was needed.*

Regardless, it was agreed that providing feedback could take up a significant amount of time and was most challenging when the writing was of a poor quality:

- *I often seem to spend more of my time editing than actually providing intellectual feedback.*
- *Sometimes I spend more time line-editing bad prose than being able to work with ideas.*

Some supervisors expressed frustration when they found themselves repeating the same feedback over several drafts, whereas others found it difficult to provide honest critiques in a supportive manner:

- *The balance between critique and enablement.*
- *Sometimes it takes very careful thought to couch the feedback in a constructive way.*

Staff indicated that it was sometimes difficult to manage the workload, in light of other academic responsibilities:

- *The challenge has been to provide a timely response to drafts when there are numerous other teaching and service commitments at that particular time.*
- *[Time] constraint, including administrative burdens, can get in the way.*

Our findings confirm existing literature that suggests "supervisors are consistently under time pressure [yet] sufficient time is essential when it comes to effective supervision"

(Hutchinson, Filipović-Carter & Lawrence, 2014: 29-30). Timely completion is also a major challenge facing research students (Eley & Jennings, 2005: 27-31). Guidebooks for supervisors on effectively and efficiently managing the workload and navigating through the supervision process are abundant (to name a few: Eley & Murray, 2009; Evans & Denholm, 2007; Lee, 2012; Wisker, 2012), although little research has been done on how much time supervisors actually spend on giving feedback on writing, and to what degree they should edit student work. A recent study conducted in New Zealand (Bitchener et al., 2011: 22) reports that supervisors hold divergent opinions about the extent to which they should help with linguistic accuracy and appropriateness in student writing. Another guideline for research supervision recommends supervisors and students discuss the distribution of responsibility between them (McAlpine and Turner, 2015).

The lack of consistency in attitudes about the amount of time spent on editing, together with the lack of literature suggest that we need to talk nationally about how good practice might balance the demands of quality and time constraints. Supervisors are strongly advised to encourage students, particularly EAL students to take up the support offered by student learning centres (see, e.g., Carter, 2012; Aitchison & Guerin, 2014) or similar professional agencies within the institution.

Timing of students' writing outputs

A number of supervisors highlighted that the stages at which students undertook writing could create problems. These included writing *"too early"* in the process, but more usually, the problem was not writing regularly enough, and/or leaving things too late:

- *Sometimes they try to write too late, rather than writing earlier and refining and revising. This can lead to lots of silly errors. They put themselves under too much time pressure to polish their work.*

The main issues included the reluctance of some students to begin writing early, and/or limited or no written work presented to supervisors. One respondent did not feel it was appropriate for students to write throughout, but representative comments from others included:

- *Getting a candidate to start writing in the first year or so (rather than just doing research) has been challenging sometimes.*

- *I have a student who is a perfectionist and who is probably writing, but getting anything out of him is SO difficult.*

In other cases, lack of regular output impacted on the amount of time available to provide feedback:

- *I try my best to stay on top of it by setting deadlines for myself as well as for the student.*
- *Occasionally there have been unrealistic turnaround times but this is usually addressed directly and renegotiated/agreed not to repeat. They want good quality feedback and realise (when reminded) that this takes time.*

Supervisor views that students need to start writing early and to continue writing consistently throughout the doctorate confirm literature. Phillips and Pugh (2015: 73) suggest that students should commence regular academic writing from the start of their time as research students. Starting early and writing regularly are the key strategies in their brief discussion about "when to write". Booth, Colomb & Williams (2009: 173) make it clear that there is no universal formula regarding when to start drafting, "but you can prepare for that moment if you keep writing summaries, analyses, and critiques from the start". Through a closer examination of the beginning stages of doctoral research, Evans, Gruba & Zobel (2014: 39) recommend students should "get into the habit of thinking and working like a research student" in the first months of a typical PhD—that includes factoring writing into the thinking and recording of practical work. The first piece of research that students will write is probably an initial review of existing work in the area, often required by supervisors, which will help define the topic, limit the scope, and devise the methods. "Without realizing it", Evans, Gruba & Zobel (2014: 39) write, "you have not only started your research but you have started writing your thesis, and could even begin to reshape some of those earlier pieces your supervisor asked you to write into thesis-style chapters". They describe this as proceeding research and writing simultaneously, acknowledging that many supervisors and students adopt this practice unconsciously, without realising its benefits.

That is to say, literature generally stresses that graduate students should start writing and drafting as soon as they begin their doctoral research, even though their early writing may be merely reviews and summaries of previous studies in the field. However, existing literature is often quite thrifty on the supervisors' role in this process. We intend to develop better research-based strategies for supervisors to guide students through the initial stage of writing.

Student (lack of) response to feedback

Some supervisors had experienced problems with the way in which students responded to feedback provided on their written work. Of note, they expressed frustration when their advice was (continuously) ignored:

- *Only challenging if they don't use the advice and I have to repeat myself. Some students can't hear the advice, just can't use grammar.*

- *Other issues raised included argumentative students who did not respond well to critiques of their work...*

Supervisors (and students) in our study agreed that responses to feedback can present a challenge to supervisory relationship and the overall quality of the final research output. Supervisors most emphatically felt the time-expense of writing feedback, so were irritated when it was ignored or not handled well. Existing literature (e.g. Bitchener et al., 2011: 30) suggests that supervisors often expect students to respond by addressing the issues that they have pointed out in their feedback—our findings confirm that time-pressured academics want results from their endeavours.

However, the emotional aspects in this process significantly complicate its effectiveness. In terms of graduate research and supervision, current scholarship often focuses on the overall emotional challenges in the process of doctoral studies (e.g. Hughes, 2009; Moore et al., 2002; Morrison-Saunders et al., 2005; Phillips & Pugh, 2015: 83-107). Morrison-Saunders et al. (2010: 206) point out that the doctoral process is an "emotional rollercoaster", and sense of self will affect both students and their supervisors as an integral part of the process. Burke & Pieterick (2010) report that undergraduate students often "read feedback as a statement of praise or blame on them as individuals" (79). Their study shows that feedback often has psychological impacts on student emotions, and calls for better support and psychological scaffolding (84-97) in order to prepare students for feedback in higher education. Doctoral students, working in an even higher-stakes context, are also likely to take feedback personally, reacting emotionally even when they know, logically, that critical feedback is helpful to them. Caffarella & Barnett (2000) found that feedback can be a powerful and useful process for doctoral students, but also highly emotional and at times frustrating. They suggest that, in teaching scholarly writing, instructors should be very clear about the purposes

and benefits of a strong and sustained critiquing process, and assist students in learning how to both receive and give useful feedback.

Maintaining communication when writing is problematic

While not raised as a major issue, a number of supervisor participants commented on difficulties communicating with students when they were experiencing difficulties and/or written outputs were not forthcoming. In such instances, there was sometimes a lack of contact from students and/or tensions developed in the overall relationship:

- *The times when communication has a tendency to drop off without careful monitoring is when a student is having trouble writing.*

Guidebooks for students (Gosling & Noordam, 2010; Phillips & Pugh, 2015) and for supervisors (Bartlett & Mercer, 2001; Grant 2010) often discuss how each can effectively communicate with the other and negotiate their relationship. In our experience, supervisor-student communication becomes tense when students disagree with the direction suggested by their supervisor relating to methods or to writing style, yet feel unable to express their views. It seems clear that communication challenges around writing largely relate to the supervisor's sense of having devoted considerable (too much?) time vis-à-vis the student's instinctive feeling of being under rigorous scrutiny if not attack. Communication in difficult times is challenging for both sides of the supervision, but the double-barreled nature of its emotional tension has not caught wide attention in previous studies of supervisory relationship and still awaits further investigation in future research. We believe we need to find strategies for keeping communication clear and honest without requiring supervisors to act as psychologists. Some students may indeed need support from either generic learning advisors or counsellors as to how to manage their own emotions. As professional educators, supervisors should take some responsibility for being aware of likely trouble spots, initiating potentially hard discussions on how they and their student can work together to re-establish clear communication in order to address the ongoing issues crucial to successful thesis-completion.

Supervisors' views on doctoral students' writing challenges

The main writing challenges faced by doctoral students, as perceived by supervisors, some of which were specifically asked about (e.g. students' ability to write *'simply, clearly and succinctly'*) and others which arose naturally from the data, are outlined below.

Poor writing skills

A key issue was the lack of evident writing skills amongst doctoral students. These included inability to write for an academic audience, poor grammatical knowledge and overall inability to present ideas in a succinct and clear manner:

- *Almost all students initially experience problems with expressing themselves in an appropriately academic manner.*
- *By far the greatest problem for all modern research students is insufficient mastery and flexibility of written expression.*

Literature from the second half of the twentieth literature recognised graduate literacy as a phenomena worthy of study (Casanave, 2002: 136) and more specifically, as a problem. Since the early 1980s, researchers have started to cast more light on supervisors' feedback on student work. For example, Brannon & Knoblauch (1981) found that teachers often interpreted writing according to their own stylistic preferences, without acknowledging student control over voice and language, and recommended the two sides "share their different perceptions" at the start of the supervision (162). In another publication in the same year, Knoblauch & Brannon (1981) reviewed previous literature (albeit limited) on how teachers comment on student writing, calling for more research on this issue. Sommers (1982) investigated teachers' feedback styles across two American universities, and discussed how we can provide better comments to help students. Zamel's (1985) research on EAL students' writing suggests that teachers need to develop more appropriate feedback responses "to facilitate revision by responding to writing as work in progress rather than judging it as a finished product" (79). Studies from the 1990s confirmed the general lack of writing skills among doctoral students (especially EAL students) across a wide range of academic disciplines (Belcher, 1994, 1995; Blakeslee, 1997; Connor & Mayberry, 1996; Gosden, 1995; Hyland, 1996a, 1996b; Penrose & Geisler, 1994; Prior, 1994, 1997, 1998), while broader issues facing graduate student writers also gained attention in the literature (Cooley & Lewkowicz, 1995, 1997; Dong, 1998; Leki, 1990).

In the early twenty-first century, researchers have begun exploring a diverse range of strategies to improve graduate academic literacy. Common approaches include supervisors "modelling" how to write (Lavelle & Bushrow, 2007), embedded courses on academic writing in undergraduate and graduate programmes (Richardson, 2008; Sallee, Hallett & Tierney, 2011), student peer writing and review groups (Aitchison & Guerin, 2014; Cafferella & Barnett, 2000; Lassig et al., 2009; Lavelle & Bushrow, 2007; Moss, Highberg &

Nicolas, 2004; Seals & Tanaka, 2000), and mechanical check-lists for writers, often found in university guidelines for research students (Downey, Mort & Collinson, 2009; Harris, 2006; Nelson, Range & Ross, 2012). Considering the significance of writing for students in completing a research degree, supervisors need a raft of strategies to improve their students' academic literacy.

Poor English language literacy

Poor literacy was highlighted as a common challenge, and had a noticeable impact on written work presented to supervisors (e.g. incorrect grammar, inappropriate use of language, etc.), particularly by EAL students. As can be observed in the comments below, this increased the amount of supervision input required by staff:

- *I have had two international students, both have been very bright and hardworking, but it has been challenging because their English, while adequate, meant a great deal more editorial work for me to correct sentence structure and help them write clear proposals.*

- *Foreign language students is a major issue for PhDs currently – 70% of my workload for supervision is around correcting written English for PhD students without adequate English language skills and the situation is deteriorating as we take greater numbers of foreign students.*

Literacy issues were predominantly linked with (international) students who were non-native English speakers, although a minority of supervisors observed that this was not always the case:

- *The reality is that most of the native-born English speakers have poor grammar and punctuation. The best English I've seen amongst my students has been from those taught it as a second language (e.g. students from HK and mainland China).*

McAlpine & Turner (2015) report that both international students and native speakers of English can produce poor writing, requiring supervisors to spend too much time pointing out problems and re-directing arguments. EAL students' English language literacy often presents a problem for supervisors in increasingly internationalised higher education institutions (Braine, 2001, 2002), and calls for the need to address cultural, as well as stylistic, issues.

How to give effective feedback to EAL students has been widely written about in the literature from various perspectives, including focus on the difficulties and challenges in teaching EAL writing and giving feedback (Abdulkhaleq & Abdullah, 2013; Ferris, 2003;

Hyland, 2001; Manchón, 2011; Murphy & de Larios, 2010). Approaches include strategies for providing feedback and the usefulness of different types of comments (Ashwell, 2000; Dobao, 2012; Ebyary & Windeatt, 2010; Hyland, 2010, 2011; Hyland & Hyland, 2006a, 2006b; Leng, Kumar & Abdullah, 2013); the training of EAL instructors in giving feedback (Ferris, 2007; Ferris & Hedgcock, 2014); and the efficacy and limits of different kinds of error corrections (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012; Bitchener & Knoch, 2010; Chandler, 2003; Evans, Haartshorn & Tuioti, 2010; Ferris, 2010; Hyland & Hyland, 2001; Hyland & Hyland, 2011; Wang & Li, 2011; Storch, 2010; Van Beuningen, 2010). Others have looked at EAL students' perceptions of difficulties in writing (Bitchener & Basturkmen, 2006); their expectations of feedback (Abiddin, 2007; Abiddin & West, 2007), and their autonomy in navigating the writing process (Hyland, 2000). The impact of cultural differences on EAL writing and feedback has been considered (Briguglio, 2000; Cadman, 2000) as well as the lived experience of EAL postgraduate writers (Jaworski, 2015; Lillis, 2001; Woodward-Kron, 2007). It is worthwhile looking at the freely available videos from the Macquarie University (no date) cross-cultural supervision project.[1] Macquarie researchers turned data into scripts that were performed by paid actors. These short vignettes between 'student' and 'supervisor' on a variety of issues uncover a range of mismatched expectations that hindered communication.

Writer's block

Supervisors reported that some students struggled to produce written work, usually because they found the writing process difficult:

- *Usually they stop writing out of fear, so it is primarily a matter of working through that and finding strategies to unlock their writing again.*

Other survey participants commented that procrastination or striving for perfection was also an issue for some students:

- *One is perfectionism: not wanting to submit anything till they think it is really good; the other is procrastination – persuading themselves that they have to read more material before they can start writing.*

Writer's block has long been an issue haunting writers of fiction (see Kelly, 2017) and academic texts alike. Paul Sylvia (2010) suggests the practical solution of using Excel to keep

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[1] Available at http://www.mq.edu.au/lih/altc/cross_cultural_supervision_project/index.php

track of small daily tasks, and, in their sixth edition of *How to Get a PhD*, Phillips & Pugh (2015: 102-4) have also added a short section addressing this issue.

Critical evaluation of literature or theory

Our survey asked supervisors: '*Has teaching a doctoral student how to demonstrate critical evaluation of literature and/or theory in their writing ever been challenging?*' In response, most supervisors focussed on students' limitations in demonstrating critical evaluation rather than their experiences in teaching how to do this. Indeed, as evident in the comments below, many recognised reasoning and argumentation skills as the one of the most challenging aspects of doctoral study, yet seemed unsure how to foster their development:

- *As both a supervisor and examiner, I have found that this is one of the most challenging parts of a thesis for students to tackle….*

- *It can be the most difficult part of the thesis to write, and I have sometimes been dissatisfied with this as an examiner of other theses.*

Some staff reported that students' level of aptitude in this area varied, and a number indicated that it was a particular issue for international students:

- *Some of the international students especially do not understand the notion of critical evaluation, and are not comfortable engaging with theory.*

Many student-centred guidebooks offer advice on how to review and summarise literature and theories, but few published studies have provided research-based guidelines for supervisors to teach students to evaluate literature and express their views. Previous international literature (e.g. Cooley & Lewcowicz, 1995, 1997; Dong, 1998) and local studies (e.g. Bitchener et al., 2011) found that critically evaluating literature is a major challenge for students and supervisors, and more work needs to be done to identify better strategies for both parties in order for constructive feedback to lead to higher-quality critical writing. International doctoral students may experience the additional challenge of having to learn new implicit codes within academic writing (Fotovatian, 2013; Guerin & Green, 2016; Wu, 2013), re-constructing themselves across cultures through their textual engagement as readers and writers.

Positive aspects

Pleasingly, some survey respondents identified positive aspects within supervising the writing process. Most comments were in response to Question 5: "*Has it ever been quite*

energising to watch a doctoral student's development show in their writing?" Responses indicate that many found it rewarding to observe the development of their students' skills. Improvements in overall writing abilities, noticeable advances in the quality of work produced, and the emergence of a stronger and more clearly defined sense of authorial self were variously described as "*exciting*", "*wonderful*" and "*gratifying*", and, for some, "*one of the best things about the job*". Typical comments included:

- *Improvements in writing has been the most striking feature of my experience to date.*
- *… it is always rewarding to see 'light bulbs' appear.*
- *It is wonderful to watch their voice emerge as they develop greater sophistication.*

For a number of staff, student progress was more strongly connected to other aspects of the PhD journey such as advancements in thinking and theory development:

- *Actually probably less about their writing per se – more exciting is what they are writing.*
- *Not only in writing, but also in face-to-face discussion – the incremental expansion of a person's mind is always an exciting process to observe, and, in a way, to be part of.*

Professional development and support

Some supervisors called for specific training or support in relation to this aspect of their role. Topics varied, but included how to supervise international and other students from different cultural backgrounds, management of the feedback process, and encouraging non-compliant students to write. Examples of staff comments included:

- *This seems to be student dependent [but] training in the skills to encourage the more recalcitrant ones to write would be great*
- *Need some seminars on how to support and help Māori and PI doctoral students meet deadlines in culturally sensitive ways.*
- *The experience of supervising 'home-grown' and 'overseas' candidates is different – not better or worse, but there are different challenges e.g. writing up, general communication. I would certainly benefit from some assistance/discussion around this.*

Respondents also called for there to be additional support for students in the writing process, such as resources to address "*language problems*", general writing skills, and basic grammatical knowledge. A number of staff indicated that they encouraged students struggling with writing to employ professional editing or proof-reading services:

- *Difficulties arise where the written work is poor, and one spends more time correcting language and grammar, than providing critical comment on the content and substance of the research. In these circumstances, I ask the student to get proof reading help before re-submitting work for review.*

Rather than referring students to external, paid agencies, there is a strong case to be made for intuitionally-based generic support, such as academic learning centres, for supporting doctoral students (Carter & Laurs, 2014). Our findings and this report endorse the argument that drawing upon existing agencies is fiscally sound in terms of assisting students to timelier completion, and means that academic advisors, who are experts in grammar, rhetoric, generic requirements of doctoral writing and institutional expectations, complement supervisors in ensuring good support.

Supervisor recommendations for practice

A number of supervisors shared their effective practices in relation to supporting the writing process for students, including:

- **Encouraging students to write early**: *I try to encourage students to start writing from day one by collating their notes into sections, which seems to help them get over their initial reluctance to start writing*.
- **Scheduled outputs for review:** *I ask students to submit back stage writing or reading summaries and short pieces from an early stage of supervision.*
- **Face-to-face discussions about writing outputs:** *I always try to sit down with the student and go through the feedback rather than have them receive it electronically.*

Other less commonly reported suggestions included providing feedback via electronic means (e.g. documents with "track changes") and asking students to indicate what type of feedback they were seeking.

Future directs suggested by supervisor perspectives

Findings suggest that guidance would be welcome from academic developers and that a single generic guide about writing feedback per se would work well because challenges to doctoral writing support are not discipline-specific. Time and workload are significant, so supervisors should seek ways to streamline writing feedback processes without compromising quality. It seems discussion around the practice for managing supervision time is needed as much as doctoral students themselves benefit from time management upskilling.

Supervisors were troubled by the issue of how much feedback to give, and guidance as to what is reasonable would be helpful. We are aware of how much of themselves supervisors invest in doctoral projects, and how hard it is sometimes to step back from doing too much in order to get students over the line. Nonetheless, we argue that supervisors cannot reasonably act as proofreaders to doctoral writing, and that they should not in terms of what a doctorate means. Instead, supervisors need to find resources outside themselves, and provide scaffolding so that students take agency for development. Keeping an open dialogue about how much hands on supervisor work with student writing is appropriate might help too.

It is clear that supervisors need to ensure that purposeful writing begins early, and should encourage students to structure a writing schedule for steady production and revision over the doctorate. A plan for writing deadlines and responding feedback deadlines in the supervisor's calendar is recommended. Those giving feedback need to be prepared for an emotional reaction and expect to manage emotions—both their students and their own.

Students' writing challenges according to supervisor experience call for a raft of approaches to feedback. These include assisting students to reach full literacy, especially when English is not the first language. At a deeper level, strategies for teaching students how to demonstrate their critical evaluation of literature and theory are also important.

Doctoral students' perspectives

We closed the anonymised digital survey of doctoral student perceptions when, after several months, we had 80 participants from about 2,000 doctoral students, because by then it captured most of the issues we recognised from experience. Here we report on the two relevant questions: "Have you had really helpful feedback on doctoral writing? Please tell us what made it especially helpful" and "Have you had feedback you found unhelpful? Please tell us what made it unhelpful". We hoped that doctoral students' experience would tease out the specific points that make supervisory feedback such an emotionally intense practice. Note that at this stage we had not recognised that a New Zealand focus for a report that looked inward to the local challenges and potentialities was our goal, and we did not specifically seek Māori and Pasifika experience.

Helpful feedback: doctoral students' perspectives

The vast majority indicated that they had all received helpful feedback at some stage, with only a few reporting that they had not. Analysis of the responses identified that both the *type* of feedback given, as well as the *way in which it was delivered* was important to doctoral students in terms of determining helpfulness. The main characteristics of helpful feedback are outlined below.

Content-based "big-picture" feedback

A number of students reported that specific feedback on the content of their writing, or the ideas presented, was helpful. This included comments, for example, that highlighted areas needing to be expanded on, gaps in the writing, deficiencies in academic arguments, or structural issues. Some students referred to this as *"big picture"* feedback, and typical comments included:

- *I have found that while as a student I tended to stray into new areas, my wonderful supervisor would put a red line through the irrelevant and highlight the relevant. This importantly also helped my thinking very much to become refined and sensitive to irrelevancies as my argument built in my writing.*

- *It was feedback indicating points that I needed to elaborate more on; certain aspects of my literature review for example that needed to be expanded.*

- *One of my supervisors is really great at 'big picture' stuff so I find I can get lost in the details of my writing and she helps me to take a step back see it as a whole and figure out how to organise it in a way that makes sense.*

Some students differentiated this form of feedback from comments that were more concerned with writing style or spelling and grammatical errors. As illustrated in the extract below, it was felt that supervisors were best placed to provide content-related feedback, rather than attend to stylistic issues:

- *Even if I had language problems there is many more other sources (proof-reader, friends etc.) that can give feedback on the style of the thesis, than there is potential sources of feedback on the content of a thesis.*

Specific feedback on style

In contrast to the above, others appreciated receiving feedback that made suggestions on their writing style (e.g. tone, clarity of information presented, etc.). In particular, they valued the

insight gained from someone else's reading of the text, and liked having areas for improvement pointed out, as shown by the typical responses below:

- *My supervisor always helps with the clarity of my writing – when I get my head stuck in a piece of writing too long and can't see it from an alternative perspective, she is helpful at pointing out things that are not clear to someone less familiar with the work which helps me out for the next piece of writing.*

- *I also have had good feedback around the tone of my writing – sometimes it comes out as a bit ranty or over-the-top and my supervisors tell me when I need to tone it down or reframe or just let the evidence speak for itself without me hammering in the point.*

Of note, students who identified as non-native speakers of English indicated that they found such feedback helpful:

- *Being a non-native English speaker all the feedback in grammar and spelling is more than appreciated. The "I don't know what you mean by this" tells me I need to work on the way of communicating the ideas.*

That is not surprising, given the challenges of working across languages and cultural contexts with different structures that nuance meaning (Siepmann, 2006).

'How-to' suggestions

A number of student respondents highlighted the value of comprehensive critiques, which provided very detailed and specific feedback on written work. This included identification of specific deficiencies or shortcomings, and manageable suggestions for improving the write-up:

- *What makes it helpful is the degree of thought that it induces to improve the structure direction and flow of my writing. Typically, there will be … comments ranging from suggestions to clarify meaning to questions regarding theoretical feasibility.*

- *Yes – when the critique and questions asked were specific and showed me where I needed to address gaps in structure and content.*

This type of feedback was viewed as especially helpful when it was manageable (*Ensure goals are bite-size rather than meal-size.*) and provided tangible steps for improving future drafts:

- *I find specialised and specific feedback extremely helpful, one that is solid and actionable. I understand about my weaknesses and able to tell where exactly I can improve on […]. The understanding helps me to avoid repeating the same mistakes in future.*

Supportive and constructive feedback

Student descriptions of feedback that was delivered in a supportive manner, and contained constructive feedback included highlighting positive aspects, offering encouragement to the student, and providing acknowledgement of their efforts and work completed to date. In addition, some students appreciated *"constructive"* comments, which allowed them to see how improvements could be made. Typical comments included:

- *What made it especially helpful was the fact that she was kind and encouraging while still pushing me to go further.*

Constructive feedback, students commented, made them feel more confident, inspired, and motivated:

- *Feedback is always helpful. It is particularly helpful when it doesn't cause me to become disheartened and feel as if I have been pouring hours of work into something which will be re-worked to an unrecognisable state. Feedback which begins with praise always makes me feel better and helps me to know that my supervisor is aware of the amount of time and effort which has gone into each piece of work.*
- *Initiating feedback with a positive comment can go a million miles towards inspiring further work confidence in current work and general the well-being of the author! ... Being bombarded with negative comments is not something anyone wants in any aspect of their lives.*

Timely feedback

The timing of feedback, particularly on a regular basis throughout the writing process, was considered helpful. In addition, some indicated that "*early feedback*" was particularly crucial to allow sufficient time to make changes and enough scope to develop writing skills fully:

- *The most helpful feedback is detailed, specific and constructive (addressing aspects of content, style, spelling and grammar) and the sooner it is provided the better.*

- *Early feedback is crucial so that your style can develop early on in the thesis.*

Some noted that receiving feedback fairly promptly after submitting work helped them maintain a steady workflow. Morrison-Saunders et al. (2010) report that frustrations arise when students have to wait for what they consider unreasonable periods for their supervisors to return written feedback on their drafts—our student participants endorsed this frustration, interpreting timely feedback as evidence of real engagement on the part of their supervisors. Others raised the expectation that supervisors would notify students of potential delays:

- *My primary supervisor was brilliant at returning writing, usually within days. If this supervisor was unable to address my work promptly I always received a note to this effect and an indication of when I could expect a response.*

- *Similarly, it is helpful for the supervisor to be honest about likely turnaround times and periods when they are relatively free to review work.*

Ability to discuss feedback

Some respondents found it helpful to discuss feedback with supervisors. This generally occurred via face-to-face meetings whereby supervisors explained their feedback, enabling students to respond or ask further questions:

- *I agree with my supervisors that idea development is best done in verbal discussion so comments like 'we should talk about this' has been better than the supervisor trying to write why the analysis is flawed (or whatever).*

- *From my experience, the more helpful feedback comes from a discussion that follows the written comments. It gives the student and the supervisor a chance to talk about the written exchange; it tends to eliminate any confusion and it gives the student a chance to defend areas in their work that they feel strongly about.*

As evident in the extracts above, an oral forum gave students an opportunity to argue their case when they did not agree with the evaluation of their work. Importantly, it eliminated any ambiguity in the critique, and resulted in students gaining a deeper understanding of the feedback, as well as identifying any shortfalls in thinking and written expression:

- *My supervisor addressed the overall trend in my writing [i.e. using passive rather than active voice] during a discussion rather than just making small scale edits throughout the document.*

- *[Follow-up] discussion about the written feedback tends to eliminate any confusion and gives the student a chance to defend areas in their work that they feel strongly about.*

"Modelling" and exemplars

Other characteristics of helpful feedback included comments being delivered in a straightforward and clear manner, with the supervisor's expectations clearly understood. One student reported finding it useful when supervisors "*modelled*" how to write by providing written examples. A small number of students also appreciated feedback that included referrals to other sources, for example, publications which illustrated a particular concept, or provided exemplars of quality writing:

- *One supervisor has been providing me with papers he thinks have good short writing styles. Has been very helpful. He has also shown me a blog that has good tips.*

Unhelpful feedback: doctoral students' perspectives

Most respondents were able to provide examples of unhelpful feedback, although a few reported all critiques proving useful. The main characteristics of unhelpful feedback are outlined below.

Non-specific comments

Key responses to this question were comments that lacked specificity or only provided a very general response to the student's written work. This might entail, for example, limited feedback (e.g. *"On one chapter I had a five-word comment and less than a minute of verbal feedback. I changed supervisor"*), vague, overly-general statements such as *"good work"* or *"keep going"*, or lack of explicit guidance as to how work could be improved:

- *I was a little confused if the feedback was only '?'.*

As a result, students felt an important learning opportunity had been lost and were often unsure how to progress their writing:

- *It is as though the supervisor is unloading all responsibility of fixing the issue on me when I would expect at least something to prompt me in getting started with a solution.*

- *More detailed feedback would be good.*

- *Resist saying 'just do …', show <u>how</u>. If you don't have time to show how, acknowledge this and direct your student to someone who can.*

Overly critical feedback

Perhaps unsurprisingly, survey participants described *"very negative"* or *"harsh"* feedback as unhelpful. This sometimes included comments that offered no constructive advice, or were perceived as being of a personal nature:

- *Haha – yes, that very first feedback I got. I didn't get what she was expecting of the work. I couldn't understand what went wrong. And I felt she was attacking me personally.*

- *I was a bit taken aback with the amount of feedback […] that was framed as* 'your ideas are bad' *as opposed to* 'here's how to make your ideas better'.

Thoughtlessly worded critiques could undermine the student's confidence, and halt further progress in their writing:

- *The negative feedback was framed on my own personal ability and capacity to complete a manuscript thus making me doubt myself and not be able to simple move on and address the feedback.*

Delays in receiving feedback

It was reported that feedback from supervisors was sometimes slow coming, which could entail delays of several weeks or months. This either slowed down or halted the writing process altogether, with some students reluctant to progress further in the absence of interim feedback. In some cases, feedback came too late to be helpful. Typical responses included:

- *When feedback was delayed or piecemeal it was hard because I was worried that the next bit I was already doing would all be on the wrong track and a waste of time.*

- *It was obvious the supervisor hadn't been reading my work. The feedback was useful but if it had come months earlier would've been more appropriate.*

Contradictory feedback

Several survey participants reported receiving contradictory or conflicting feedback from their supervisor(s). Sometimes first and second supervisors had opposing views on matters such as content or writing style, which resulted in uncertainty or confusion for the student in terms of how to respond:

- *I had once more or less completed a paper with one supervisor and then my other supervisor made heaps of changes which took him quite a long time after which I had to basically re-write the whole paper again with the first supervisor who had by that time forgotten a great deal about the content of the paper.*

Others reported experience of the same supervisor providing conflicting feedback across different drafts. As evident in the following response, students are likely to have already taken the initial advice on board, only to have the resultant text challenged at a later review:

- *It can be frustrating when you have been told to make a change and then told at a later point in time to change it back. I can understand that sometimes even the supervisor may not be certain what the best way to express an idea is but if that is the case please make this point explicit.*

Over-attention to proofreading

Some students expressed frustration when supervisors mostly commented on or made corrections to spelling or grammar. This was considered far less useful than feedback on content and ideas, which was seen to make better use of the supervisor's skills and experience – and of greater importance overall:

- *My supervisor corrects the grammar and paragraph structure but makes few comments on the content […]He seems to think I should have a mature idea of where I am going with the work but I am still exploring that and he doesn't seem to listen.*

- *I find it unhelpful when I get nit-picky feedback on the little things - that is just maddeningly frustrating. I can figure that stuff out myself e.g. full stops etc., (especially since I can proofread) so I think the supervisor's talents and time are better spent on more intellectual type feedback on ideas and concepts and the overall structure of the writing.*

Unhelpful feedback – other issues

Other characteristics of unhelpful feedback noted by respondents included contradicting the student's own views or approach, advice that was incompatible with departmental or other standards, and unrealistic levels of expectation presented in a single critique:

- *The most unhelpful feedback was given on a chapter which was ground-breaking and the supervisor told me to take it out because he didn't understand it.*
- *When I am given feedback on everything at once. One thousand comments in the margins.*

Recommendations from doctoral students' experience

Findings from the student survey show that students acknowledge the importance of receiving feedback in order to improve their written expression, but the way it is delivered can have a considerable impact on its effectiveness. Respondents noted that it was hard not to take critique personally, and appreciated supervisors acknowledging the effort they had put into their writing, even if it did still need work.

The best feedback is specific: comments such as "this section works well, because…" or "you need to revise this, because…" allow the student to move forward. In other words, students appreciated being given specific feedback, preferably accompanied by practical advice to address the issue at hand, such as 'how-to' strategies, exemplars, and useful resources. Vague or contradictory feedback gave students the impression supervisors hadn't read their work, while comments on too many aspects at once (grammar and typos and structure and argumentation) can be both demoralising and counter-productive.

Ideally, feedback should be timely. Oral feedback to discuss work-in-progress can help students stay on-track. Similarly, posing targeted questions can enable students to clarify what they really want to say, as well as drawing attention to the need to meet audience (i.e. examiners') needs. Overall, students seem aware of the range of alternative sources available for linguistic and stylistic advice, and looked to supervisors for 'big picture' guidance and encouragement.

Voices from local practice: Aotearoa New Zealand context

Many non-Western knowledge traditions do not draw demarcations between textual and non-textual knowledge, science and art, discursive and poetic language or individual and collectively held knowledge nearly as clearly as mainstream Western traditions.

- Engles-Schwarzpaul, 2015: 1251.

Woven throughout the literature on Māori, Pasifika and indigenous experiences within the academy is the occupation of heterogenous worlds and spaces. Supervisors need to be aware of this backdrop. Researchers into Māori and Pasifika highlight academia as a political space fraught with power imbalances, disconnections and violences (Grant, 2003; Jones, 1999; Middleton & McKinley, 2010; Smith, 1997, 2007). Although the need for indigenous doctoral students to flourish seems important, "as we watch the unions getting smashed up and the university becomes more corporatized, it is very easy to lose space for [protest movement] kind of thinking" (Māori participant cited in Kidman et al., 2015: 61). There are "unresolved and competing demands between… disciplinary knowledge bases and indigenous knowledge" (Kidman et al., 2015: 14). Differing cultural backgrounds put special relevance on the idea that "[o]ne can never assume that a PhD candidate and her or his supervisor share a common world" (Engles-Schwarzpaul, 2015: 1250). The question of successful navigation of the doctoral journey by Māori is a crucial one in New Zealand, whose Te Tiriti o Waitangi/Treaty of Waitangi obligations demand equal access to educational success. What can supervisors do to improve support for research writing, and by extension, the doctoral experience, for Māori and Pasifika students? And what do the Māori and Pasifika knowledges teach us that will benefit all supervision?

We are aware that within this relatively short research project we are guilty of elision: participants in a study by Kidman et al. (2015: 13) raise objection that Māori and Pasifika are 'lumped together,' something we have found unavoidable here. Small scope and a tight time-frame is a limitation of this project's investigation of Māori and Pasifika. However, in defence of our approach, and as encouragement to non-indigenous supervisors, we cite Engles-Schwarzpaul's (2015: 1252) words: "A supervisor is not, in the first instance, a purveyor of knowledge; 2) postgraduate students already have substantial and refined pockets of knowledge to draw on; and 3) they are able to activate networks of distributed knowledge, often outside of the University". Once supervisors set aside the need to be a font of all

wisdom, and offer, quite simply, the best they can from their own experience, their contribution is likely to be helpful to students. Each doctoral student brings her particular culture with her. There are considerable differences between Pasifika and Māori, and there are also differences between Pacific Island nations. The principles that emerged from our limited study will need to be nuanced accordingly. That is the premise upon which we offer this report.

The report begins by examining Māori perspectives, followed by Pasifika approaches. We don't have scope here to consider the different cultures within that term "Pasifika", but acknowledge our limitation. This section leads into our summary of this project and recommendations for practice, taking us to the suggestion that, in this country, Māori and Pasifika pedagogies provide an appropriate tūrangawaewae, home ground, where we can stand confidently in supervisory practice for all doctoral students.

Māori perspectives

Non-Māori advisors need to be aware of the multiple agendas that some Māori doctoral students bring to their academic work. They also need to be prepared for the unpredictable consequences of their involvement, such as the requirement to support students' attendance at hui in the community or the need to become familiar with Kaupapa Māori methodologies. Furthermore, non-Māori advisors need to understand that some Māori students may be using their doctoral study to strengthen their Māori identity, seeking out mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) and creating connections with their iwi. In these instances, the student's journey may not only be long but also at times painful. The advisor's openness to both the influence of community-based mentors and unfamiliar ways of knowing and thinking is crucial.

- McKinley et al. 2011: 127

No Māori undertaking a PhD walks alone, even if they think they are, or even if they try to be an independent researcher. There will be networks of whānau, community and colleagues who will want to be involved, and will be eager to understand how their support or contribution to the study journey might be made.

Yet entry to academia is likely to be hard. Māori students report that they encounter a closed off world when they engage in the doctoral process (McKinley et al., 2009; McKinley et al., 2011). Spatial metaphors are often used in the literature tackling the position of Māori in the academy: insider/outsider; closed/open; and marae/university. Te Ao Māori (the Māori world) is almost universally explained in relation to spatiality and links to papatūānuku, the land, and whakapapa, genealogy (Morrison, 1999, is helpful on this; see too Smith, 1999a), and the conscious occupation of one's particular position (Middleton & McKinley, 2010; Smith, 1997). Academia is more abstract in its sense of positioning—we do it theoretically rather than through grounding metaphors. One rare spatial dichotomy sees the university as "unhomely" (Manathunga, 2007, 2010, citing Homai Bhaba).

Arguably, space and time are highly significant conceptual frameworks for Māori and Pasifika world views. For example, Durie's whare tapa whā (four walls) model (1994: 70), a much-cited pedagogy for health based on taha wairua (the spiritual side), taha hinengaro (thoughts and feelings), taha tinana (the physical side), and taha whānau (family), offers a positive framework for non-Māori and Māori alike. Often Māori students projects require "direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of…their social worlds" (Tolich, 2001: 7)—worlds that may show a different understanding of New Zealand from the supervisor's.

So, equally, while anxious to support fledgling Māori researchers, we suggest that support should be given to the supervisor, who may walk alone through unfamiliar territory. We supervisors are by definition experts in our field, yet with Māori and Pasifika students, we often need to recognise that our assumptions are possibly unhelpful—that can be disconcerting. Non-Māori supervisors at the forums we held expressed similar concerns, anxious that they might not have the breadth of knowledge, competencies, experience, or connections to supervise someone coming from a worldview and set of experiences different to their own. They also felt inadequate about being able to "'front up' to the people and in the usual welcoming rituals of Māori [to] position themselves publically on the marae in terms of their whakapapa" (Smith, 1999b: 9). Such feelings of uncertainty may be amplified if the subject of the thesis involves engagement with Māori or indigenous knowledge, in which case supervisor knowledge will usually be severely limited.

As supervisors in New Zealand, we need to get our heads around good supervision for Māori. The simple fact is, there are not enough theses incorporating mātauranga Māori (Māori ontology or word view), nor Māori PhD graduates nor people with experience in supervising Māori doctoral students, for there yet to be a substantive body of knowledge and experiences for novice supervisors to draw from. Supervising across cultures is a practice on the rise: "with increasing numbers of students from different cultures (speaking different languages and drawing on distinctive knowledges and practices), supervisors will inevitably confront areas of their candidates' research in which they cannot claim mastery [yet] there must be a way to support candidates in their project without the pretence of mastery" (Engles-Schwarzpaul, 2015: 1253). The Pākehā lead-researchers behind this project spoke together often of our misgivings that we had blundered into a political minefield that is wrenched by many different tensions we are not aware of. What compelled us to continue was our shared belief that ongoing talk, even amongst the tensions, is the only way to promote good supervision for burgeoning Māori scholarship. As supervisors, non-Māori need to consider how to give good support for Māori doctoral writers.

Whanaungatanga is our starting point. Whanaungatanga can be interpreted, amongst other interpretations, as how we choose to practice relating as a family, and can be applied in all aspects where relationships occur, including where we study and where we work (see Chant, 2013). It is a Māori model that can help relationships between Māori and non-Māori. Māori philosophy of Pa Henare Tate (Tate, 1999) teaches that whanaungatanga is underpinned by the universal Māori values of

- tika (doing what is right),
- pono (doing what is right with integrity), and
- aroha (doing everything with love/compassion).

A relationship based on whanaungatanga between student and supervisor will be cognisant of what is tika, pono and aroha from the dual perspectives of the student and the supervisor. We argue that this simple model is helpful to all supervisions, regardless of context or cultures that need to be negotiated across—it gives a positive framework to begin working together. How whanaungatanga translates into practice will hopefully be discussed, decided, revisited, and renegotiated constantly throughout the formal part of each supervision relationship, and on into when, in the fullness of time, supervisor and student become colleagues who continue to share and care for each other.

Often the Māori student is the first in their family to attend a university, so they walk a path that is unfamiliar to their whānau, and how to be supportive in this new context will be a learning journey for the family (McKinley et al., 2009). One Māori academic commented that, "when we are working with students, we're not just working with students, we're working with their whānau and their communities, and more often than not, there's more than one of them involved in the whole process" (participant cited in Kidman et al., 2015: 34). A whānau hui where the supervisor can meet, have a cup of tea with the community and de-mystify the doctoral process at the beginning of the journey so that even the kāumatua and kuia understand can be a good way of starting the journey in a way that is tika, pono and aroha for the student and the whānau. A clear understanding of the unknown aspects of a PhD is essential for both the student and their whānau, How the long hard journey can be valuable whatever happens at the end should be pointed out. The more the implicit workings of academia can be made clear, the more likely whānau and academic can work together comfortably.

Whanaungatanga will only work between the supervision team and the student if the dynamics of each other's whānau commitments or experiences have been shared: a supervisor who finds it hard to be a part of a students' whānau journey is likely to experience discomfort in the long-term thesis process, and may unintentionally cause distress to the student and their whānau, as well as feeling frustrated themselves. There needs to be careful reciprocal respect of whānau. Many Māori undertaking a PhD are including in their journey their perspectives/experiences of te ao Māori (the world of Māori), mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) and tikanga Māori (Māori practices) – often from their own whānau knowledge/experiences/perspectives/expectations. Care with giving feedback on writing is essential around these shared cultural perspectives. As one supervisor put it "if the supervisor values the candidate's world, the candidate can value the beliefs of the supervisor as an academic". Only by showing respect for the student's world can a supervisor earn the right to expect respect for their authority within the academic world.

A supervisor of a Māori doctoral student might choose to establish a whanaungatanga-based cohort of colleagues to support their supervision practice. This could include Māori and non-Māori colleagues from the community and the academy who have supported others supervising Māori students, or who have experience of supporting or supervising Māori students. One non-Māori supervisor at the November hui in Auckland intended to inform this

report described the supervision team as needing to be a "semi-permeable membrane", inferring that at different times, different people might join the team or slip out of it again. The student could be also encouraged and supported to establish their own whanaungatanga-based cohort of whānau, community, and colleagues from the academy to support their PhD and supervision experience.

It helps, for example, if the supervisor is not the only person giving critical feedback. Gathering occasional feedback on a small piece of the student's doctoral writing from several of their whanaungatanga cohort can be a good way to share feedback styles and ideas from colleagues, and may provide a pressure release valve for the supervisor. Some supervisors recommend the student shares their writing with their whanaungatanga team as they go, for sense-checking. Planning an agreed timetable for sharing learnings with the whanaungatanga team, perhaps with the student reading their work out loud (perhaps with the supervisor in attendance to hear the oral feedback) can serve as a very strong motivator for work completion by the student. Likewise, feedback from whānau kāumatua and kuia on accuracy in terms of Māori knowledge and practices and te reo, with the supervisor possibly occupying the place of naïve learner, is beneficial for everyone involved.

Research on Māori doctoral students to date reflects experience, often in terms of what is challenging for both students and supervisors. Here we are grateful to have previous studies to inform our awareness. For example, a number of supervisors in our hui on doctoral writing (November 2015 and March 2016) mentioned students who took longer to complete than either the student, their families, the supervisor, and/or the institution expects. Terry Evans (2010: 70) notes that doctoral students are increasingly accountable for demands outside the academy: "almost all doctoral students undertake significant family and/or domestic activities each week, whether they are full-time or not". Anecdotally, it was felt that delays caused by such extramural responsibilities happened more often with Māori than non-Māori PhD students, and were generally due to whānau commitments (confirming McKinley et al., 2009) or financial difficulties (Theodore et al., 2016: 606). This view is confirmed by Theodore et al. (2016)'s large study [n=626], which showed that the majority of Māori graduates "studied full-time…and were employed while studying. One third were parents (32.9%) and nearly half were first generation students (48.4%)". Of these, "females were more likely to be parents, to study extramurally, to work part time, and to have a long-term medical condition, impairment or disability". That data sketches a picture of how 'delay in completion' can

create a complex set of institutional and professional dilemmas for the supervisor to resolve. Having an agreement between the supervisor and the institution around support mechanisms, and supportive and clear processes for the supervisor to follow should this occur can reduce reluctance for non-Māori supervisors to take on Māori PhD students.

A couple of non-Maori supervisors at the hui said they know when they take on a Māori doctoral candidate that they are unlikely to get a similar volume of publishing collaborations or research outcomes as they might with non-Māori students. There are a number of reasons for this: Māori graduates may focus on 'by-Māori' publications and/or become involved in publishing cohorts with other Māori academics; non- Māori supervisors may feel they are unfairly viewed by others if they publish mātauranga Māori alongside their supervisees; many Māori graduates head straight into the community to work and are not interested in spending time on getting publications out. One idea might be to start co-writing fairly early on in the supervision process, perhaps something as simple as a joint reflective journal of the journey that can lead to joint conference papers or publications. Reflecting on the hiccups or bumps along the road, which supervisor and supervisee might not have expected, provides a base upon which to build a collegial research relationship for future collaborations. We suspect that journals might be quite keen to publish articles that allow better understanding of supervision with Māori and indigenous students: this is an under-researched area and one where practice is encouraged by government prioritisation.

Supervisors cannot treat Māori essentially as one entity: like all students, each Māori candidate will have different agenda. McKinley et al. (2009) found that projects are more likely to be highly political and related directly to the betterment of their community which suggests pursuit of a PhD is less for career in the academy but more for the good of their particular hapū or iwi. Stokes warned against allowing the impression "that research that is motivated out of a genuine community need is somehow less valid than a study of an issue undertaken in a more high-minded, detached academic environment" (Stokes, 1985: 5). A recent Australian study (the *ACOLA Review*, McGagh et al., 2016) found that indigenous graduates are more likely to take up employment (96.6%) compared to non-indigenous (90.9%). In a period when the challenge of finding rewarding jobs after doctoral graduation is recognised as a sufficient enough issue to warrant change of pedagogy, employability may be less of a problem for Māori.

This is likely to be the case regardless of whether the graduate wants to focus on their own community or not: we are not suggesting that supervisors try to steer all Māori candidates in the same direction. Te Kawehau Hoskins (private conversation, 19/2/2016) pointed out that not all Māori have a sense of their culture, nor are all interested in Kaupapa Māori theory. Like others, Māori scholars look "beyond New Zealand for intellectual and discipline communities abroad" (participant cited in Kidman et al., 2015: 36); as with other doctoral students, this is an exciting part of academic engagement. Some seek to create for themselves "academic identities that are highly individualistic and highly competitive" (participant cited in Kidman et al., 2015: 73). Discussion early on with Māori students needs to be open-ended. Some Māori will be keen to take up a radical political position through their research. Others will want grounded approaches likely to improve things for their whānau. Some may not position themselves as specifically Māori and will choose to proceed along western routes. Supervisors need to be alert to variations and consider how they might best support the position each student chooses to occupy.

We suggest that approaches that are home-grown in longstanding cultures in Aotearoa make a considerable contribution to international literature on supervision practice, often by merit of their evocative metaphors that make concrete what is often hidden in the abstraction of theory. Stokes called for "more specific aims and objectives in Māori research which are directed at helping people in their daily lives" (Stokes, 1985: 3). Māori and Pasifika pedagogies, such as ako and va, are beneficial in emphasising the value of research aiming to connect academic endeavour with helping people in their daily lives (Hemara, 2000; Mahuika, 2008; Nepe, 1991; Smith, 1997).

In a thoughtful study of research ethics, Fiona Cram itemises seven guidelines that she personally developed as a researcher (Cram, 2001), which we summarise:
1. A respect for people: allowing people to define their own space and meeting on their terms.
2. He kanohi kitea: meeting with people, face-to-face
3. Titiro, whakarongo…kōrero: looking and listening so that you develop understandings and find a place from which to speak.
4. Manaaki ki ti tangata: take a collaborative approach to research and research training with reciprocity.

5. Kia tūpato: be politically astute, culturally safe and reflective about our insider/outsider status.
6. Kaua e takahia te mana of te tangata: don't trample the mana of the people—sound out ideas, keep people informed about the research process and findings
7. Kaua e mahāki: Don't flaunt your knowledge--share knowledge and use expertise to benefit community (Cram, 2001: 42-50).

Cram's guidelines are underpinned by kaitiakitanga: 'the exercise of guardianship by the tangata whenua…in accordance with tikanga Māori in relation to natural and physical resources' (2001: 45). The Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate describes supervision as stewardship (Golde and Walker, 2006) and suggests an apprenticeship model for supervision (Golde et al., 2009). Cram's kaitiaki model, which views researchers as fledgling caretakers of resources, sits somewhere amongst these conceptualisations as a New Zealand-centric model.

It would be naïve to evoke nostalgia for the university as it once was—academia in New Zealand has never been an egalitarian paradise uncontaminated by financial concerns. It has always served the political perspectives of the powerful—and certainly tertiary education for a long time acted to exclude most Māori, restricting them to areas of low wage employment. We are not suggesting that the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake can ever be free from the restraints of vested interests. Nonetheless, for those who resist the current bite of academic neoliberalism (Bundy, 2004; Davies, 2003), upholding the values of indigenous pedagogies makes a sustainable position for supervision. Obviously this approach will be strongest for Māori projects, but we suggest that adopting the kaitiaki model and other indigenous pedagogies is not simply a non-Māori nod to political correctness, but a viable option for many supervisors in terms of their own values and identity.

Stokes points out that "the traditional detached academic stance of the universities is not only inadequate, but in many situations irrelevant….What needs to be explored now are ways in which other cultural frameworks can be admitted and given appropriate status in research methodologies" (Stokes, 1985: 19). Linda Tuhiwai Smith proposes that the principles of rangatiratanga should govern the way that the following critical questions of research are answered:

- What research do we want to carry out?
- Who is the research for?
- What difference will it make?
- Who will carry out this research?
- How do we want the research to be done?
- How will we know it is a worthwhile piece of research?
- Who will own the research? Who will benefit?

Many of these questions have applicability to early supervision discussions with all students, we suggest. Smith also points out that "in all community approaches, *process*—that is methodology and method—is highly important. In many projects the process is far more important than the outcome. Processes are expected to be respectful, to enable people, to heal and to educate" (Smith, 1999a: 127-8). While Smith writes as a Māori supporting Māori, she brings to light values that many supervisors are likely to endorse, values that give a helpful way to think about supervision practice.

The literature in relation to practical solutions for supervisors of Māori researchers tends to be speculative. This is not surprising given the multi-layered complexity of practice. Middleton and McKinley (2010) speak to the importance of success, yet, like other empirical accounts (McKinley et al., 2011; Grant, 2010), they present data and make theoretical investigations into educational philosophy that tend to focus on challenges rather than practices to guide supervisors. McKinley et al. (2009: 4) helpfully outline the issues commonly faced during the supervisory process:

- The multiple obligations that students face and their impact on progress;
- Being on the edge of knowledge as a supervisor;
- Making judgements re progress;
- Seeing self as the coloniser (for non-Māori supervisors);
- Navigating multiple relationships (for Māori supervisors);
- Students who struggle to believe in their academic merit.

While these points succinctly raise the challenges facing students and supervisors around Māori research, this project aims to turn such challenges into positive potentialities for supervision.

Kaupapa Māori is inextricably linked to Māori education yet its complex political and spiritual dimensions offer much to the deep-level meaning of research learning. Linked to tikanga and woven throughout a fundamentally interconnected universe (Metge, 1984; Pere, 1991), Kaupapa Māori as a pedagogy allows for thinking about the transmission of knowledge and its formation not only in 'educational acts' but in relation to all situations (Pihama et al., 2004).

Kaupapa Māori is both a traditional conceptualisation of Māori knowledge, and a discourse, philosophy and practice that is both critical and anti-colonial (Mahuika, 2008; Smith, 1993). Resisting the post-colonial oppressor/oppressed binary, Kaupapa Māori has an inherently political grounding. As Linda Tuhiwai Smith notes, "Kaupapa Māori is a fledgling approach occurring within the limited community of Māori researchers. It exists within a minority culture that continues to be represented within antagonistic colonial discourses. It is a counter-hegemonic approach to Western forms of research…" (Smith, 1999b: 6). Yet, as has been previously noted it is neither reducible to this binary, nor is a reactionary position (Mahuika, 2008). We acknowledge the existence of Kaupapa Māori before colonisation and see it as helpful to avoid reducing a people's entire history to colonial oppression and reading history as beginning with Pākehā arrival. Kaupapa Māori is a way of conceptualising Māori knowledge (Nepe, 1991; Smith, 2006), a a critical and anti-colonial discourse (Mahuika, 2008) and a way of grounding what is seemingly complex (Pihama et al., 2004; Stucki, 2010).

We want to acknowledge Smith's politicisation of post-colonial methodology—that is her driver. She notes that "Kaupapa Māori is also about critical theory, in particular the notions of critique, resistance, struggle, and emancipation", citing Graham Hingangaroa Smith, who argues that "Kaupapa Māori is a local theoretical positioning, which is the modality through which the emancipatory goal of critical theory in specific historical, political, and social context is practiced" (Smith, 1990a: 3-4). Linda Tuhiwai Smith suggests the decision to choose Kaupapa Māori as a methodology is both performative and "imbued with a strong anti-positivist stance" (Smith, 1999b: 6). While acknowledging the power of Kaupapa Māori as a resistance methodology that empowers Māori, we also draw on Māori pedagogies for what they offer about the performance of ako, teaching-and-learning, in supervision.

The Kaupapa model as ako

Linda Tuhiwai Smith defines the organisational concept of Kaupapa as "a plan, a philosophy, and a way to proceed". Embedded in the concept of Kaupapa is a notion of acting strategically: "Kaupapa Māori has become a way of structuring assumptions, values, concepts, orientations and priorities in research" (Smith, 1999b: 2). We would argue that one thing all doctoral students and supervisors need to do is to question their own assumption, orientations and priorities.

Kaupapa Māori is a recitation of a thinking that has been handed down through whakapapa, but, as is the nature of whakapapa, has developed based on the encounter of new phenomena (Sadler, 2007). G. H. Smith (1990b: 11-13) offers six 'intervention elements' for summarising the foundational pillars that comprise Kaupapa Māori:

- tino Rangatiratanga (the 'self-determination' principle);
- taonga tuku iho (the 'cultural aspirations' principle);
- ako Māori (the 'culturally preferred pedagogy' principle);
- kia piki ake i nga raruraru o te kainga (the 'socio-economic' mediation principle)
- whānau (the extended family structure principle);
- Kaupapa (the 'collective philosophy' principle).

These pillars speak to the interwoven nature of Kaupapa Māori, emerging from a traditional past and bound up with the present. Our practical advice for supervisors for giving quality feedback maps onto these foundational pillars; they have the potential to enhance all supervisory relationships.

Working with a student grounded in Kaupapa Māori not only means managing differences in orientation towards objects, but also entails the bridging of a fundamental gap between worlds. Kaupapa Māori is not a closed system of thought (Hoskins, 2001; Mahuika, 2008; Pihama, 2001; Sadler, 2007), and often exists in doctoral work alongside western theory. It nonetheless challenges the western academy's restrictions of appropriateness. The particular spatial grounding of Māori candidates insists that research is primarily more about the world than about academic conventions, and that research must be vitally connected to people and real world challenges.

It is unsurprising that Kaupapa Māori has been internationally recognised. This in itself attests to the relative nature of "appropriateness". Supervisors can be assured that

encountering the unknown does not necessarily mean risking the inappropriate. For some supervisors, it will be rewarding to open themselves up to a fundamentally new experience that posits them as both teacher and learner simultaneously, and thus transforms the inherently asymmetrical power relation of supervisor/supervised into an embodiment of ako Māori (Lee, 2005; Pere, 1982).

A major concern of the literature about cultural methodology begins with the fact that research is nested within a colonial model of education. The university structure is historically a western framework, where research been undertaken with indigenous peoples as subjects rather than agents of research. Ngahuia Te Awkotuku identifies that "[research] is about control, resource allocation, information and equity. It is about *power*" (1991: 13). Tolich (2001: 37) highlights that "there is now a pressing need for us to decolonize Māori research", by which he means Māori "having rangatiratanga over research that investigates Māori issues" (37). The opportunity to turn that around and speak back to the system offers an exciting opening for some Māori.

We recommend too that Māori research students with Māori-focused research aspirations choose their supervisors carefully due to these differences in grounding (McKinley et al., 2009). If students intend to draw upon Kaupapa Māori, they need supervisors who are willing to learn and to work enthusiastically with the unfamiliar. Even when students do not choose the theoretical stake-out of a Kaupapa Māori framework as postcolonial resistance, they are likely to benefit from supervisors who will respect the legitimacy of Māori knowledge and the Māori world view.

As with all ako, the teaching and learning framework within the supervisory relationship must be based on mutual respect and consensus. For example, supervisors at the Auckland doctoral writing feedback hui (November 20, 2015) talked about the importance of brainstorming the conceptual frame of the thesis together as part of the high level conceptualisation discussions. It was advocated by some that this should occur regularly throughout the thesis journey, strongly connecting the "holism of the writing" to an ongoing approach, with any re-conceptualisations framed as part of the journey rather than as bumps in the road to the thesis.

Māori traditions are oral, and so sometimes, if a student is having problems with writing, supervisors may find it useful to get students to record their thoughts and then write from there. Likewise, students could record the supervision meetings to capture ideas that they can take away to reflect on. Another supervisor, however, mentioned that their student subsequently used these recordings as part of an art installation – and recommended whanaungatanga discussions include protocols around use of recorded conversations.

At the forum, students and supervisors alike voiced concerns about the access/storage of research data and how the institution will deal with the "data", particularly if it includes taonga (things precious to Māori). This might be one of the most challenging aspects for the student and the supervisor to negotiate with the host institution. Having whanaungatanga-based cohorts can support these negotiations and resolutions that are likely to hold inherent tension.

We began this project with some trepidation, beginning from a place of uncertainty—an uncertaintythat many supervisors and advisors inhabit. The literature on Māori pedagogy itself so often emphasises particular individual presuppositions, differences in metaphysical grounding, politics, and life histories; it seemed disingenuous if not downright highhanded to presume to offer a generic guide for practice supervising Māori and Pasifika students. For that reason, our recommendations tend towards the tentative. We suggest that both students and supervisors should consider cultural and value differences individually and together before agreeing to embark together on a project, a decision-making that becomes even more layered when there is motivation to produce a doctorate in te reo Māori.

Undertaking a doctorate in te reo Māori

Considerations for supervisors before beginning

All supervisors, regardless of the discipline area, would ideally have knowledge and expertise in the subject area they are supervising. They would also, of course, be clear about what makes a good thesis or dissertation, and be able to guide the student accordingly. This can become somewhat complicated when the student is writing in te reo Māori. In that case, the questions potential supervisors might want to think about include:

- Do you have the proficiency to understand work written in te reo Māori at the doctoral level?

- Do you have enough knowledge of the subject area?

- Will you be able to engage with your student's work and give adequate feedback?

- Does the institution have support mechanisms for doctoral students undertaking their theses in te reo Māori?

If you answered "no" to any of these questions but are still interested in supervising the student, it may still be viable to supervise the thesis with the following considerations:

- What strategies do you have in place to support you and the student?

- Do you have access to anyone who does have adequate proficiency who might be able to help or be part of your supervision team?

- Would you be comfortable (especially as a primary supervisor) supervising a te reo Māori student if you are not proficient enough in the language to be able to understand their work?

Considerations for the examination process

Identifying examiners can often be a challenge and the examination process can take some time. Supervisors should factor this in to the student's progress and negotiate this as early as possible, depending on the institutions' policy for PhD examination. There is a dearth of qualified examiners who have both the adequate language proficiency and subject expertise to examine across the country. Academics with this mix of expertise are generally in high demand, and therefore their limited availability can delay the examination process, adding quite a few months before the examination can be completed. This is something that supervisors need to take in to consideration when supporting students through the PhD process, in order to alleviate students' expectations and anxieties during this time.

Considerations for candidates at the beginning

Having made the decision to write a thesis in te reo Māori, there are a number of things that candidates will also need to consider, many of which are similar to those mentioned above. Supervisors should remind their potential candidates of the following points and discuss the possibilities and challenges. Writing a thesis in te reo Māori without a Māori-speaking supervisor has been done before, however, not without challenges: this is a big thing to think about.

Things for candidates to think about include:

Supervision

- Does your supervisor have the relevant subject expertise, as well as the language proficiency, to support you through this process?

IF NOT

- Will you have to relay everything you've written in English?

- If this is the case, will there be issues of translation?

- Will the supervisors fully appreciate the work or be able to identify areas that need more work?

- What challenges might there be in applying their feedback (in English) to your te reo Māori writing?

Language support

- Who will give you feedback on the quality and clarity of your writing in te reo Māori?

- Does the University have any support mechanisms in place for your writing in te reo Māori? (i.e. te reo Māori experts)

- Does the institution have policies about editorial support?

- Will you be expected to organise language support on your own?

- If so, are you ok with having to do that?

Community of practice

As a candidate writing in te reo Māori, you need to be aware that you are a minority. That is the reality. You won't necessarily find a cohort of doctoral candidates who are all writing in te reo Māori, so you have to be prepared to be more isolated than your peers writing in English. In saying that, it would be useful to think about how you might still be able to get some support. Where will you find a community of practice, something that is of practical and psychological benefit for the long journey of the doctorate?

- Do you have any other Māori speaking peers or mentors you can bounce ideas off?

- Can you link up with any other postgraduate students at other institutions who are writing in te reo Māori?

There are currently no specific guidelines available on exactly how you go about writing a doctoral thesis in te reo Māori, so you need to be confident in your own abilities to know about writing, structure, style, referencing, and orthography. Researching completed doctoral

theses online can also provide some supportive information around these areas. Even then, it helps a lot to have people you can go to, to ask and get advice and affirmation.

Readership

Writing in Māori automatically reduces the readership. That is the reality. As a minority language, writing in te reo Māori will therefore target a limited readership. It is worth thinking about this early on and the candidate should also consider the following:

- How does this impact upon your own career goals or ambitions?
- Who do you need to speak to for your research to have impact in practice?
- What are the opportunities to disseminate your research?

Writing issues

You need to think about your field and the literature and other sources you will draw on as part of your research. You will likely have to deal with a lot of English language material and you will also need to consider how you will frame your thesis in a way that is meaningful in the Māori language:

- How will you treat English text in your thesis?
- Will you translate them or quote the English original?
- Do you have a te reo Māori referencing system?
- What writing conventions will you follow?
- What style of prose will you adopt?
- What orthographic conventions will you use?

You will not be able to join peer review writing groups or make use of other support avenues that apply to students writing a thesis in the English language.

The formality of academic writing in te reo

There is a common understanding that a thesis is written in formal English rather than common speech. We don't write the body of a thesis in the same way we talk. There is not yet sufficient analysis of theses written in te reo to identify specific guidelines or advise on the formality of academic writing in te reo Māori. Although there are no current guidelines or frameworks in place on what constitutes academic writing in te reo Māori, there are principles that we can adopt from formal English academic writing guidelines, such as including parts of the language in the written form that may not be used in the spoken form,

such as the particle "i". Consistency in the use of orthography is also important and ensures readers are clear on your particular use.

With no standard guidelines about what constitutes formal academic writing in te reo Māori, a number of thesis-writers have drawn on other examples of formal language such as whaikōrero, karanga or waiata. Therefore, formal use of language can be conceptually framed using metaphor, as the Māori language can be very poetic in form. Consequently, these don't always translate well in English as they are conceptual framings. In this way, the Māori language is quite different with colloquial expressions (both formal and informal), proverbs and vernacular that often have implied meanings and understandings. Using these stylistic elements helps to enrich prose, while also demonstrating the candidate's depth of understanding about the topic.

As with writing in English, the principles around academic writing still apply. You must still aim for clarity. You don't want your sentences so long that they go on for a paragraph; you want your argument to be logical and your written expression to be concise and cohesive. If you adopt a metaphoric framing, its relevance to the overall thesis must be clear to the reader.

Reflection on purpose
You need to be sure about <u>why</u> you want to write in te reo Māori. Certainty about your reason is not just to be able to justify your decision to others, or gain their support, but rather, so that you are confident and comfortable in your own choice. Ultimately, this is your PhD journey and you need to ensure you understand the conditions of being a doctoral candidate and understand what you need to support you through this journey. You will likely be challenged, not about the subject, but by people who really don't see the point in writing in te reo Māori and struggle to understand your choice. It is a personal choice. Writing a thesis can be an isolated process, even in English, but even more so in te reo Māori.

Each of the authors of this section had different experiences with the PhD and the following are some reflections on the choices made and the challenges faced in choosing which language to write our doctoral theses in. To provide a context to these reflections, there is a 10 year difference between the time we completed our doctoral theses and initially institutions hadn't quite developed an acceptance, or created the policies to promote the writing of te reo Māori theses that are now in place in many institutions.

One author speaks and teaches te reo Māori but decided to write her PhD in English after considering the questions raised earlier and despite writing her earlier postgraduate research in te reo Māori. At the time, there was a requirement to provide a translation of the whole thesis to ensure that an international examiner could engage with the thesis. This policy marginalised the author to write in English as ultimately a translation would mean the writing of a new thesis. Although these policies have now changed, they do challenge the author to think about the intellectual value that is placed on te reo Māori and the political choices that a candidate has to make.

The other author chose to write in te reo Māori and, even though the institution's policies by that time were more conducive to writing in te reo Māori. Even more importantly, her choice and motivation were based on the following understandings:

- **It's a political act**: Taking a stance and demonstrating that we don't need to write in English in order for the work to be important or to make an impact. Moreover, reclaiming space in the academy for te reo Māori and increasing its intellectual value.
- **It's about empowerment.** Writing in te reo Māori at the doctoral level is an important way of demonstrating to younger generations that there is a place for te reo Māori in higher education. We need to reinforce to graduates of immersion education and that they can pursue higher qualifications through the medium of te reo Māori and more importantly, show students that there is a place for the language outside of the classroom.
- **It's about language revitalisation.** Te reo Māori is still an endangered language. Writing in te reo Māori contributes to language documentation, and to building comprehensive bodies of work in te reo Māori in numerous different areas.
- **Sometimes it just makes sense.** The topic of this author's doctoral research, *He kura hāpainga, he kura-waka, he kura-kōrero, he kura-huna, HE KURA-KURA* (Martin, 2013), was one where it made absolute sense to write it in Māori. In fact, it would have diluted or negated the overall arguments presented in the thesis had it been written in English.

These reflections highlight some of the issues that candidates are confronted with when making choices about their work. Ultimately, the candidate must be comfortable in their decision. However, keep in mind that whatever language choice you make does not limit you

from producing any writings about the topic in another language. There is no reason why Māori researchers cannot produce pieces of work that target different audiences, and are written for different contexts. These are the joys of academic writing and bilingual academics have scope to extend their research even further.

Supporting Pasifika doctoral students

At the University of Auckland hui on doctoral writing (20 November, 2015), a Pasifika participant who had recently defended her PhD thesis spoke of her doctoral journey: "It's all about the relationship – the relationship is really important." Pasifika peoples are anchored by their relationships with others; whether family or friends and/or colleagues, relationship is central to their well-being and daily living. Similarly, the teaching and learning relationship between teacher and student is critical to the success of Pasifika students at all levels (Chu, Abella & Paurinin, 2013; Samu, 2015; Thaman, 2008). These findings have important implications for the relationship between supervisor who may or may not be of Pasifika descent and a Pasifika student.

As a starting point, the Pacific Island concept of va or vaa (Anae, 2010; Kaili, 2008; Thaman, 2008) provides a useful and meaningful framework for how we view the supervisory relationship between Pasifika students and their supervisors. Va exists in most Pacific Island cultures (Anae, 2010; Thaman, 2008) —'vaa' can be used interchangeably—and is used to bring together the relational space existing between oneself and others and things (Kaili, 2005). Mahina (2002) categorise va into four dimensions, namely physical, social, intellectual and symbolic. All four dimensions are interrelated to one another (Kaili, 2005). Within the social context, va refers to social and spatial relations. For example, the people of Tonga experience "social relations spatially and come to know space socially" (Kaili, 2005: 23). For them, human relations are socially and spatially constituted." Va refers to the social space between people that connects them to one another (Kaili, 2005). An important companion of va is ta, or space and time (Mahina, 2010). While different cultures mark time and space in a variety of ways, in Tonga, time is marked symmetrically by artists in different designs (kupesi) and displayed on tapa, traditional carvings, fine mats and so on. The social act of tauhi va, tidying up the relational space, ensures that one's va with others are nurtured and maintained. Kaili (2008) maintains that tauhi va is a symmetrical arrangement of time ta in space va. It is the "art of sociospatial relations, [and] also marks time (ta) in a symmetrical

form in space (va). Specifically, it arranges time through the mutual performance (ta) of social duties. The mutality of the performance creates symmetry and symmetry gives rise to a beautiful sociospatial relations." In the context of supervisory relationship, va enables reconceptualisation of the supervisory relationship of Pasifika students and their supervisors. According to Thaman (2008), va puts the focus on the relational space, together with an emphasis on taking care of relational space to maintain peaceful and functional relationships to continue.

When both supervisor and student mutually engage in a socio-spatial relation it can be said that they are in a functional relationship. It is often said when a relationship becomes dysfunctional, that it is because members have not taken care of the va. Anae (2010) refers to this, in her Samoan culture, as the need to Teu le va or to 'tidy up the space' between one person and others. She offers Teu le va as an indigenous methodology for negotiating research relationships, with an emphasis on the significance of social connections of everyone involved in Pasifika research. As such, Teu le va can be a critical element of the supervisory relationship that extends beyond the Samoan culture, given the reciprocal nature of the practice together with its underpinning behavioural expectations.

To begin with, the supervisor needs to understand where the student comes from, as well as showing an interest in their family background, family members and family dynamics. One of the participants at the November hui articulated this point well: *If the supervisor shows an interest in the student's world then the student can value the supervisor's world*. Many supervisors understand that relationship-building is key to working successfully with students, but may not understand that they can build effective relationships with Pasifika students by reframing their usual practice as 'maintaining and nurturing va'. Kalavite (2010) argues for a fluid relationship where members of the academy help their students navigate what is often unfamiliar terrain. This does not mean letting students off easily or giving them easy passes, but rather requires staff to be accessible and understanding, show an interest in students' well-being, and be deliberate and explicit about showing them how they can successfully navigate academia.

Maintaining the va and nurturing the relationship may mean prioritising face-to-face time. Supervisors need to be open and willing to be challenged by students. One participant noted that supervisors should think about ways they can encourage students to give their opinion

and critique the information they receive. For example, there may be a need to "ask questions differently" of students, in particular those who are from Pasifika communities, encouraging them to view their own experiences and cultural practices from a different viewpoint without feeling they are being criticised. Importantly, va is underpinned by core values such as love and compassion, respect, humility and reciprocity (Thaman, 2008), and the aim is to develop an optimal relationship of benefit to all involved.

The bottom line is that best practice for mainstream is best practice for Pasifika; that makes a starting point to which to add the philosophical lenses outlined here as Pasifika methodologies. Conversely, the values behind these Pasifika methodologies can help also make sense of many other supervisory relationships.

What does va look like in supervision?

This section provides suggestions for how va might look like in a supervisory relationship, given the metaphoric nature of the theory.

1. Treat PhD students as role models for undergraduate/Honours/MA students, rather than patronising them. They often come with significant work and life experience. They are often at least bilingual.

2. Promote a culture of excellence in communication (and excellence in demystification) by articulating your expectations clearly, and encouraging transparency and accountability in your processes (e.g. having students circulate action points from meetings, etc.).

3. Share meals with Pasifika students, occasionally one-on-one, and also communally; encourage them to participate in departmental social events, forums etc.

4. Foster cohort support groups for Pasifika students, being aware of intra- and inter-departmental opportunities for this. Some Pasifika students will thrive in Pasifika-only support groups; others will want to be part of different cohort groups; some will want a bit of both.

5. Put aside some time in each supervision meeting for catching up with your student and what's happening in their life for example, births, deaths, marriages, family crises, financial woes (i.e. cost of living, cost of travel) Just listen, so that your students are aware that, even when assisting them is outside of the scope of your supervisory mandate, you see them as whole people with lives that are important.

6. Help to link students to the counselling services, scholarship and hardship services available at your institution, student Learning and library support, etc. Often they will go with your recommendation but maybe won't otherwise.

7. Be mostly firm with deadlines, but flexible and understanding where necessary. Talk about why deadlines matter so much for success.

8. Be an exemplar of generous but diplomatic critique for your PhD student—be encouraging and offer positive affirmation on students' writing, while crafting your criticisms constructively, with explicit recommendations of things the student could read to enrich their empirical data, or help sharpen their analysis, etc.

9. Check that you both share the same understanding of what is required to complete the project and what needs to be done next.

10. Support your students to use cultural frameworks in their project where appropriate.

The learning village

Participants at our Auckland doctoral writing feedback forum (November 2015) highlighted the benefit for Pasifika students of including a cultural advisor within the supervision team. Having a support network beyond the supervisors can contribute to various aspects of the research project, including peer-reviewing writing and brainstorming research challenges. Whatever role each member plays, the goal is a team learning environment, what students in Chu, Abella & Paurini's (2013) study referred to as a "the learning village", a safe learning space in which Pacific learners can be "confident *as Pacific*" (6). This teaching and cultural team can include members and experts from the community who may have the required cultural expertise but are not members of the academy.

Pasifika methodologies

It is also important for supervisors to demonstrate willingness to appreciate the wealth of scholarly Pasifika literature that might resonate with their students' worldviews and ways of being. By familiarising themselves with Pasifika research, supervisors signal to students that Pasifika cultures have a place in the academy. In this way supervisors can encourage students to reclaim their own indigenous knowledges through their doctoral work. At the same time they are showing students that these knowledge bases are valid forms for research and engagement. Over the past decade or so a number of different culturally-based methodologies

have been developed by Pasifika scholars and researchers in order to expand and add to what already exists as canonical western forms of knowledge.

There are a number of cultural methodologies that have been articulated by Pasifika scholars, who realised that Pasifika knowledge and research frameworks occupied a marginal position in relation to western paradigms. Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (1999b) work of decolonising research methodologies has also helped to progress Pasifika research in the academy. Similarly, the use of Pasifika theoretical frameworks, such as the Tivaevae Model from the Cook Islands (Maua-Hodges, 2001), Fa'afaletui from Samoa (Tamasese, Peteru & Waldergrave, 1997) and Vanua (Nabobo-Baba, 2006) push back against the idea that universal models for research in the academy are mainly based on western beliefs and knowledges. It must be noted that emerging models are currently being developed by other Pasifika scholars; however, this report focuses on the Kakala, Talanoa and Tivaevae methodologies, which are relevant resources and frameworks for teaching and research. For Pasifika students, the values behind these theories can map comfortably onto the requirements for research.

Kalakala

Tongan scholar and poet Konai Helu Thaman (1993) developed the Kakala research framework as a holistic framework for research and teaching. It has since been used in other forums such as arts, spiritual gatherings and events. Thaman (1993) argues that the Kakala framework is inclusive and meaningful to Pasifika peoples and is representative of weaving together of different worldviews from indigenous cultures: "For me, kakala provides a philosophy (as well as a methodology) of teaching and learning, which, although rooted in my culture, can be adapted to other cultures and other contexts. Kakala requires me to use knowledge that is sourced both locally and globally so that I may weave a garland that is both meaningful and appropriate and worthy of being passed on" (Thaman, 2003: 10).

The Kakala framework consists of three steps (toli, tui & luva), based on the process of making garlands from fragrant flowers in Tonga. Each step represents what is entailed in the making of the Kakala: Toli refers to the picking and selection of the appropriate flowers for the garland; Tui is the act of making the garland while keeping in mind who it is for; and Luva is the giving away of the garland to family members, guests friends or dignitaries. Johansson-Fua (2015) has further developed this model by adding Teu or the preparatory

stage of the process whereon the kakala-maker conceptualises the work to be done. She also added malie as the point of reflection in the process and mafana as the evaluation point where one asks whether the solutions are practical and whether any transformations are sustainable.

Talanoa

Vaioleti (2006: 21) describes Talanoa as "a personal encounter where people story their issues, realities and aspirations", allowing for more mo'oni (or pure), real and authentic information to be collected than through the use of western data-gathering methods. Tala in the Tongan language means to talk, to have a conversation and to tell stories while noa means of no value or about nothing in particular. Talanoa has also been described as interacting without a rigid framework (Vaioleti, 2006). A critical analysis of Talanoa has led some to argue that a conversation without direction or focus and/or value means a lack of critical discussion. Vailoleti (2006) contends that Talanoa requires the researcher to be part of the conversation and part of the "research experience" rather than "stand back and analyse". Further Talanoa creates an environment that is safe, which in turn enables participants to share their most inner stories. Participants form a relationship with each another, together with the researcher, and all are respectful of the va that has been formed. This means everyone listens to what others have to say, with what is shared in the Talanoa considered to be of value.

Tivaevae Model

The Cook Island Tivaevae model was developed by Teremoana Maua-Hodges (2001), and is based on the process of making the Cook Island quilt or tivavaevae. The tivaevae or quilt is made up of many pieces of materials with different colours and patterns that are sewn or crocheted together to make a large quilt. Each quilt tells a story or makes a complete picture. Rongokea (2001) identifed two different ways of sewing a tivavevae and four different styles according to personal preference.

The model comprises five key values that underpin Cook Island culture and way of life: taokotai (collaboration), tu akangateitei (respect), uriuri kite (reciprocity), tu inangaro (relationships) and akiri kite (shared vision) (Te Ava & Rubie-Davies, 2011). Taokotai (collaboration) is critical and practical in the making of the tivaevae. The sewing of the tivaevae is done within a communal group and requires shared labour to achieve their vision and objectives. Tu akangateitei (respect) is critical in the making of the tivaevae, where

expertise and skills are developed based on mutual respect and sharing of knowledges. Rongokea (2001) argues that the process of making the tivaevae suggests a form of learning based on respecting the knowledge and skills of others. Equally important is the value of reciprocity (uriuri kite) where women share their ideas with one another; hence the making of the tivaevae becomes a teaching and learning context (Maua-Hodges, 2001). The process of relationship-building (tu inangaro) is also identified by Maua-Hodges (2001) as an important aspect, where time is spent on learning, observing, listening, practising and reviewing the task of producing a tivaevae. Once a student is considered skilled in the art of making a tiavaevae they can share their work with the community. Akiri kite or shared vision is also extremely important amongst women who are making the tivaevae. Rongokea (2001) asserts that the value of akiri kite involves the values of tu akangateitei (respect), tu akakoromaki (patience) and tu kauraro (humility). In relation to a teaching and learning relationship, knowledge is shared and appreciated which enables both teacher and student to engage in a discussion of what knowledge they have gained. Hence the tivaevae is a symbol of cultural knowledge that is widely respected in the Cook Islands.

Even when students choose not to include these methodologies in their thesis, they can be useful to supervisors of Pasifika PhD students as ways of demystifying and re-conceptualising research processes. Cultural validation is empowering and energising for all. This report proposes that by demonstrating some knowledge of Pasifika frameworks and theories, supervisors pay respect to their Pasifika students, a respect that takes them well on the way to building a healthy va space within which supervision might flourish. In the context of Pasifika methodologies, the words of Huffer & Qalo (2004) echo what we are aiming towards:

> …[t]wo elements stand out. First is the awareness among growing numbers of Pacific academics of the need for a genuine and far-reaching contextualisation-acknowledging the relevance and applicability of indigenous cultural values in contemporary settings. Second is the success of communities whose initiatives have followed the ways they know and understand, reaping many rewards. (Huffer & Qalo, 2004: 108).

This is also relevant when we consider the supervisory relationship of Pasifika students and their supervisors. Considering Māori and Pasifika puts emphasis on the importance of recognising the role of relationships in a student's journey, something that enhances supervisory relationships in general.

Working with Māori and Pasifika students

As a Summer Research Scholar at the University of Auckland, Daniel Badenhorst researched literature on how to increase the quality and efficacy of feedback for Māori and Pasifika pedagogy, especially looking for literature that might be adaptable for this guide. It seemed helpful in terms of orienting for critical analysis of that literature that he attend a hui for doctoral supervisors and students on November 20, 2015. There were more than 40 participants, including a collective kōrero attended by 15 supervisors about working with current and future Māori and Pasifika students. This section includes the notes Daniel took during that seminar.

Even though the Auckland hui sought to move beyond the challenges to suggestions for supervisor good practice, much of the discussion centred around problems. Nevertheless, the session was invaluable in probing the issues of supervising a candidate whose world is not one's own. Difficulties included establishing a joint understanding that being is multi-dimensional and that learning occurs in multiple ways: as always with supervision, supervisors need to adapt to each student. Once participants split into groups to discuss possibilities, conversation shifted into the realm of affirmation.

In March 2016 a second forum took place in Victoria University of Wellington, attended by some 30 students and supervisors, but we were not able to capture comments from supervisors during this session. However, general discussion amongst hui participants, together with data gathered by Kidman et al. (2015), underscore our points below. What follows constitutes a list, not definitive in any sense, of successful techniques and speculative strategies that may hold promise in terms of increasing the quality of doctoral feedback for Māori and Pasifika candidates:

Oral feedback is important: kōrero

Marking up manuscripts is helpful, but supervisors should also talk when giving feedback. It is more longstanding for Māori and Pasifika to work orally than textually—the kōrero may be where progress is made.

Ask questions

Question-posing pedagogy is the most effective way to ensure it is the student thinking and writing, not the supervisor. Hui participants acknowledged that carefully chosen questions can prompt the driving force of the candidate. Candidates find solutions themselves and are more likely to bring themselves and their own world to their work.

Tone down power relation that characterises student-teacher relations

Some Māori and Pasifika candidates throughout the academy and society as a whole see New Zealand history as problematically colonial. In order to foster student agency and to mitigate the alienation already felt by these students, supervisors should consciously work around the power binary to promote a mutual, dialogic learning relationship.

Acknowledge student expertise in te ao Māori and Pasifika

There should be a recognition on the part of the supervisor that— in relation to the candidate's world— the supervisor is the student. The process is one of learning and coming-to-know for both parties, not only the candidate. Due respect for the wider network of kāumatua and kuia is also important.

Community involvement

Māori and Pasifika voice and perspective tend to be inextricably linked to the voices of their families and knowledge is sometimes tapu. Hence, even without direct involvement with whānau, the Māori or Pasifika student is always operating in relation to a body of knowledge and experience that transcends their own individual presence. This creates a tension. Acknowledge sensitivity about shared cultural knowledge. Avoid pushing candidates to share that which they consider tapu by creating an environment in which the candidate is not torn between the academy's drive to bring all understanding into the light and the cultural imperative to protect some knowledges.

The hui established that it would be helpful to create a network of non-Māori/Pasifika supervisors who could support one another. The desire to create a general pool of skills and knowledge stemmed from a shared sense of anxiety and uncertainty. Doctoral supervision with two people of different cultures requires a meeting of worlds, which are often are so different that those involved fail to recognise the validity of each other's ways and customs. In order to ensure that the relationship is not a sole venture on the part of the supervisor, it would be helpful to have a forum for students and supervisors, in which knowledge can be shared and peers supported.

Doctoral writing feedback: final words

Our research project on doctoral writing feedback sit on advice drawn from the literature, supervisor and student respondents to our online surveys, participants at the University of Auckland and Victoria University of Wellington hui, and our own experience in the field of doctoral education. We suggest that good practice is good practice for all concerned: for Māori and Pasifika, international (EAL) and Pākehā /palangi students and supervisors. At the same time, every supervisory relationship is different (and likely to change over time), so any strategies that we suggest here will need to be tempered accordingly, based on a understanding of both who you are and how your relationship can work most productively.

Starting points

1) Before a student formally enrols, endeavour to ascertain their language levels through email conversations and preferably phone or Skype conversations: enter the relationship aware of skills level and potential areas to work on, ready to make the supervision work with whoever you take on.

2) Begin by establishing whanaungatanga and va relationships with all students:

- Discuss with your student the expectations, roles, responsibilities and commitments that you share—the family is the model.
- Explain that the job of keeping the relational space (va) healthy is to be shared by both of you, through mutual respect and reciprocal commitment to each other and to the project.

- Acknowledge the holistic makeup of each student: check for differences in culture, gender, age, religious belief, family status etc. and suggest practices for open communication to avoid misunderstanding down the track.

3) Talk about expectations as to how much writing should they produce in that year; what parts of the thesis might they begin with; what other agencies are available to help. Explain how the feedback process will work: how many drafts of the same section you are prepared to work through; how finished the writing should be; how long after submitting must students typically wait for your feedback.

4) Encourage writing to begin early. Get students to take notes after each supervision meeting in order to translate talk into actions. The best time for describing choices, for example, is when the reasons for choice are fresh in their minds, i.e., as you discuss how they should gather data, how much data they will need, and how they will analyse it.

5) The first time students submit writing will set a pattern: you want that to be one of trust that enables progress. Probably they will be nervous. Handling the exchange to make sure it goes well is important.
- Explain in advance what standard of writing you expect for the first submission: a rough draft that lets you skim through for evidence of thinking will suffice, or a more fully-worked draft..
- Focus on content. Even if literacy is poor, begin by discussing ideas.
- At the same time, if literacy is an issue, explain that improvement over the duration of the doctorate will be necessary. Make sure that students have clear expectations about the quality of writing expected, so there are no emotional let downs later in the degree.

6) If you know you are unable to be very helpful as a teacher of grammar and rhetoric, ensure that the student knows where else they might find support. This may come from student learning support, from other doctoral students, or digitally.

7) Normalise using support from others as part of being a good doctoral student. Advice from others usually lessens tension within the supervisory relationship because others also give critical feedback.

8) Ensure that students have a realistic understanding of generic expectations of the thesis.

Students should also be encouraged to look at other doctoral theses for stylistic and structural commonalities: the moves they make throughout, the boosters and hedges that give accuracy to findings, the kinds of language used in titles and subtitles, the length of reference lists, and the typical structure of sections on methods and methodology. Overtly ask them to look for strong features that they may later be able to emulate in their own work, encouraging them to read not for content but for structure. Share Paltridge and Starfield (2007: 83) moves for the introduction as an example—See Appendix A.

7) Employ a variety of ways in addition to their writing for students to demonstrate their thinking. Ask them to mindmap their thesis, draw up a mock contents page, and then estimate how long each section should be to take them to the desired total. Establish possible headings and sub-headings to tell the story. Foster the idea that research, thinking and writing are interlinked, and should move forward in synergy.

Middle phases of writing

1) Aim to establish a rhythm of regular writing and feedback. You are likely to do this in different ways with different people.

- It is almost always helpful to break writing tasks into small doable sections, even down to "just write one paragraph on x".
- Encourage writing of what is known (for example, journaling of thoughts as they arise) along the way.
- Consider allowing students to write using the first person ["I"] in order to develop confidence in expressing their views. (Passages can always be reworded at a later date, to accommodate disciplinary conventions.)

2) Some students find it affirming to plan, record, and routinely tally progress (either before for writing management or after completion for motivation), by keeping a table or Excel spreadsheet. Paul Sylvia's (2010) short readable book is worth passing on to students who are anxious about writing. It is fun to read and method-focused.

3) Let your doctoral students see how diligently you work on your own writing Organise writing retreats with them, tapping the collective energy of writers at work. Rowena Murray (Kempenaar & Murray, 2016; Murray & Newton, 2009) describes a structured writing retreat where supervisors set students small tasks, everyone works on writing for an hour or so, then supervisors gives quick instant verbal feedback and set another task. This format works particular well with students who are blocked, or nearing submission with a lot of work still to be done.

4) Be prepared to lead your student through the personal growth required to handle emotions around writing critique. Discuss peer-reviewer feedback on your own writing to show that critical feedback happens to all academics. Talk about how you choose journals, tailor articles to fit well in them, and bounce back when you get rejections.

5) Preserve yourself by hooking your doctoral student into other support networks. You could work with other departmental supervisors to establish peer writing groups. Some students have the charisma and energy to lead such groups, in which case they should be encouraged to keep records of their 'demonstration of leadership,' the current jargon that is handy for future job applications. Students learn an enormous amount by reviewing their peers' writing and having their own routinely reviewed.

6) Encourage students to take increasing agency for their own understanding of the requirements of writing at this level, availing themselves of resources and support agencies such as learning centres, as required. Digital resources such as Grammarly, DoctoralWriting SIG, Expectations of Style,

7) Well before submission, students need to be exposed to opportunities to able explain, qualify, define and defend their choices. Conference poster presentations and participation in departmental seminars and three-minute thesis (3MT) competitions, for example, offer supportive fora where students can begin to practise making their voices heard. Get them aware of examiners' expectations—see Appendix B.

Final stages

Early drafts are usually writer-centric, as students clarify their thinking through putting words on paper. By the final stages, however, they need to shift focus towards what their audience needs. This can require making connections clearer, checking modifiers and boosters, some restructuring, ensuring the introduction and conclusion work as bookends, removing repeats and ensuring it is clear that every section of the thesis purposefully adds the overarching topic.

Students often find it hard to see what lacks clarity or precision in their own work, or where their way of saying something might raise doubts or further questions in readers' minds. Good pointers for self-revision of writing are suggested by others of Glatthorn's "common examiner" questions found in Appendix C.

Remind students that readers won't be experts with their own levels of understanding, so their thesis should provide definitions and explanations. Sue Johnston (1997: 345) found that "examiners' reports…suggest that the examiner approaches the reading of a thesis just like a reader of any new piece of writing. Examiners require all of the normal forms of assistance which should be provided to any reader". As noted by one of the student respondents in our survey, presenting feedback in light of *"the 'what if'-type comments an examiner might make"* helps ensure supervisor and student are both working towards the same goal.

Conclusion

We began by settling this report into the context of Aotearoa New Zealand, and for that reason, its framework is firmly inflected with Māori and Pasifika pedagogies of whanaungatanga and va. We'd like to finish by reading international research through this perspective in order to emphasise that these local cultural pedagogies align with some western models and offer a specific richness to them in terms of doctoral education's obligations to society. Melanie Walker (2010: 35) recognises

> …a deeply social as well as a pragmatic approach [to doctoral education]. Having and owing obligations to others arises out of our view of ourselves not as isolated individuals but as members of communities, as selves-in-society. At one level we make individual moral decisions…but we also make these decisions as social beings in social collectives so that our acts bind us to others and form and reform the

institutions and structures that might guarantee equality (or at the very least improvements in society that makes people's lives go better…).

It is our hope this report can lead to improvements that will make lives go better for Aotearoa New Zealand's doctoral supervisors and their students, by fostering collaborative feedback relationships in order to empower doctoral students to succeed—as writers, potential colleagues and world citizens.

Our team

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> Susan coordinated the Student Learning Doctoral Programme from 2004-2012, and now contributes to the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice, the Art of Supervision and the supervision seminar series within the Centre for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education. Understanding gained from years of working with doctoral students translates into support for supervisors and academics and she's also involved with peer review of teaching within faculties and departments.

> Susan completed her Ph.D. in English Literature at the University of Toronto (2001) and then taught in the English department at the University of Auckland for several years, from medieval literature through Shakespeare and into New Zealand and 20th Century literature, as well as in the Reading/Writing/Text paper. An English Literature hermeneutics (seeking evidence of what lies behind the surface) and fascination with the craft and craftiness of writing continues to influence her research and teaching.

> She frequently reviews articles for Higher Education journals, is an Associate Editor for *Higher Education Research Development*, and sub-edited the *Māori and Indigenous Review* (2009-2011), a cutting edge journal promoting discussion of Māori pedagogy. Susan pulls all these past experiences into her work on academic writing and its development of identity. In 2014, she co-edited *Generic Support for Doctoral Students: Practice and Pedagogy* (Routledge) with Deborah Laurs, and they are currently working on a second book relating to supervisory feedback on doctoral writing.

Dr Deborah Laurs, Senior Learning Advisor, Student Learning Te Taiako, Victoria University of Wellington

> Deborah lectured at Massey University between 1990-2007, across a range of courses including academic and business writing, English literature, drama and media studies, with a distance paper in creative writing for children (guest presenters: Joy Cowley, David Hill and Bernard Beckett) a particular highlight.

Based in Student Learning at Victoria University since 2001, Deborah provides one-on-one support for doctoral students at all stages of the thesis journey. She also oversees a campus-wide PG research skills seminar and workshop series, contributes to supervisor training and delivers regular thesis-writing workshops. As well, she coordinates the PASS (Peer Assisted Study Support) programme, which offers voluntary study support in more than 50 first-year core courses in Commerce, Law, Humanities and Social Sciences, Psychology and Science.

Her doctorate in English Literature (Massey, 2005) traced the socially-constructed depictions of adolescence in 20th-century New Zealand young adult fiction and her current research interests include on student leadership, graduate attributes and the postgraduate experience. She is the co-editor of the *ATLAANZ (Association of Tertiary Learning Advisors Aotearoa/New Zealand) International Journal.* In 2014, together with Susan Carter, she co-edited *Generic Support for Doctoral Students* (Routledge 2014) and the pair are currently collaborating on a second book, on supervisory feedback.

Dr Teresia Teaiwa, Senior Lecturer & Director, Va'aomanu Pasifika, Victoria University of Wellington

Teresia is a founding staff member in Pacific Studies at Victoria University of Wellington, and has been programme director from 2000-2009 and again since 2015. She teaches and mentors students at undergraduate and postgraduate levels in Pacific Studies at VUW. Teresia also taught in the History/Politics department at the University of the South Pacific for five years.

Teresia was raised in Fiji, and is of Kiribati, Banaban and African American heritage. Teresia holds a Bachelor of Arts from Trinity College, Washington, DC; a Masters of Arts from the University of Hawai'i and a PhD from the University of California, Santa Cruz. Her research and writing spans political analysis, cultural commentary and literary criticism, historiography, feminist theory, pedagogy and poetry.

Teresia received a Royal Society of New Zealand Marsden Fast-Start award in 2008 to undertake research on three generations of Fiji women who have served in the military forces in Fiji and Britain and is currently completing a book manuscript on the topic. In 2014 she received an Ako Aotearoa Tertiary Teaching Excellence award, in recognition of her innovative approaches to Pacific Studies. Teresia is an active member of the Wellington Central Branch of PACIFICA, the oldest Pacific women's organisation in New Zealand.

Professor Rawinia Higgins, *Te Kawa a Maui* & AVC Māori Research, Victoria University of Wellington

Rawinia completed a Tohu Māoritanga and a BA in Māori Studies at Te Kawa a Māui. She completed her postgraduate qualifications at the University of Otago where she served as a Lecturer until 2006. She returned to Wellington and worked as a research consultant until 2009, when she took up a Senior Lecturer position at Te Kawa a Māui. In 2012 she became an Associate Professor and appointed as the Head of School for Te Kawa a Māui in 2014. In July 2014 she became Professor of Māori Studies and Iho Ngārahu Māori (Assistant Vice Chancellor Māori Research).

Alongside Associate Professor Poia Rewi (University of Otago) in 2010 she was appointed joint Principal Investigator of Te Kura Roa, a 3-year, $1.5m Ngā Pae o Te Māramatanga Pae Tawhiti Initiative for Te Reo Māori. She also leads the Whaihua-Community Responsiveness project in collaboration with Te Ataarangi and Te Kōhanga Reo.

Rawinia has been a member of the Waitangi Tribunal since 2013, and is on the board of the Māori Broadcast Funding Agency, Te Māngai Pāho.

Dr Jen Martin, Lecturer, Māori Studies, University of Auckland

Jen's background is in te reo Māori and Māori immersion education. A graduate of Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Hoani Waititi Marae in West Auckland, she holds BA/BCom and BA(Hons) degrees from the University of Auckland, a PhD from AUT and is also a graduate of Te Panekiretanga o Te Reo.

Between 2008-2013 she taught te reo Māori at the University of Auckland and AUT and since 20 she has been a lecturer at the University of Auckland, first in The Centre for Learning and Research in Higher Education (CLeaR), and, from mid-2015, in Māori Studies.

Her research interests include Māori language revitalisation and development, academic writing in te reo Māori, and Māori achievement and advancement through education.

Dr Lisa Chant, Senior Education Consultant & Senior Lecturer, Tai Poutini Polytechnic

Lisa is a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (UK) and obtained her PhD in Community Health from University of Auckland. She has taught at undergraduate and postgraduate levels at the University of Auckland and Auckland University of Technology and was Assistant Director for Boston University's Internship Program at University of Auckland.

Her teaching expertise includes Medical Humanities, Politics and Public Policy, University Teaching & Learning; Indigenous and Māori, and Media, and she has also designed and delivered courses for international groups from South Korea, China, USA, and the Kingdom of Saudi.

She has also coordinated communications for the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (UK), and worked on projects for Royal Mail (UK), The Human Rights Commission (NZ), Lion Nathan Community Partnerships (NZ), Northern Regional Health Authority and NZQA. She has been an external reviewer and assessing committee member for the Health Research Council since 2010.

Dr 'Ema Wolfgramm-Foliaki, lecturer, Centre for Learning and Research in Higher Education (CLEaR), University of Auckland

'Ema holds a Master of Arts (Honours) and a Doctor of Philosophy in Education from The University of Auckland. 'Ema's dissertation used the Tongan metaphor' Ko e Hala Kuo Papa' (a well trodden pathway) to illustrate the multiple pathways Tongan children take to acquire literacy. 'Ema's thesis highlighted the presence of specific forms of literacy practices that are underpinned by Tongan cultural values and beliefs. She concludes that parents' and caregivers' ideas and beliefs about education play a significant role in the literacy development of their children and that the three sites (home, language nest and Sunday school) are indeed 'resource-full'.

Her current research centres on widening participation for first-in-the-family students' success. This project is a global collaboration among university colleagues from Auckland, Sydney and Western Australia, Cape Town, Berkeley, California, and Thompson Rivers, Canada. Funded by the World University Network (WUN) and supported by each of the partner universities, the project closely aligns with national and institutional strategic aims.

Dr John Wei, Lecturer, Media and Communication, University of Canterbury

Dr John Wei is a lecturer in Media and Communication at the University of Canterbury. He recently completed a joint PhD in Culture and Communication (University of Melbourne) and in Media, Film and Television (University of Auckland). He has published multiple articles on global media and screen cultures, and is currently working on his first book project. He joined the team in 2015 as a research assistant to conduct literature reviews and prepare materials for submission to Ako Aotearoa. He has also contributed to the editing of the reports and of the forthcoming book on supervisory feedback.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix A

Brian Paltridge & Sue Starfield (2007: 83) draw on Swales & Feak (1994: 175) and Bunton (2002: 67) to offer a linguistics analysis of typical moves in a **thesis introduction**:

Move 1: Establishing a research territory

a. by showing that the general research area is important, central, interesting, problematic or relevant in some way (optional)

b. by providing background information about the topic (optional)

c. by introducing and reviewing items of previous research in the area (obligatory)

d. by defining terms (optional)

Move 2: Establishing a niche

a. by indicating a gap in the previous research, raising a question about it, or extending a previous knowledge in some way (obligatory)

b. by identifying a problem/need (optional)

Move 3: Occupying the niche

a. by outlining purposes/aims, or stating the nature of the present research or research questions/hypotheses (obligatory)

b. by announcing principal findings/stating value of research (optional)

c. by indicating the structure of the thesis and providing mini-synopses (previews) of each subsequent chapter (obligatory)

d. by outlining the theoretical position (optional)

e. by describing the methods used in the study (optional).

Appendix B

As Denicolo & Boulter (2002: 43) recommend, it is "important for candidates to appreciate how **examiners approach their task** and to think about this as they start their doctoral journey". Trafford & Leshem (2008) offer a useful guide on this premise that students could consult, while the following summary of expectations (adapted from Denicolo, in Tinkler and Jackson, 2004: 114-116) might also prove helpful:

- *Clearly-explicated rationale for the study*
- *A brief overview of the thesis; a clear outline of the 'story line.'*
- *Clear and succinct hypotheses or questions derived from/revealed by the literature review.*
- *A novel theoretical or methodological slant and/or bringing together previously unrelated fields and/or a new area of application.*
- *Rationale of general approach closely argued, together with reasoned case for rejecting other possible approaches.*
- *Justification of research design, taking account of potential advantages and limitations.*
- *Research techniques argued as theoretically and practically relevant to research problem; reasons given for rejection of possible alternatives, rationale provided for amendments to standard tests and procedures or for detailed design of innovative techniques.*
- *Information about the difficulties encountered and how they were dealt with so that the research was not compromised.*
- *Mode of analysis theoretically justified*
- *Any assumptions stated and justified.*
- *Main points of the outcomes summarised and evaluated, and linked to literature.*

Look ahead to the **oral defence**. While we regard the following list of commonly asked questions developed Allan A. Glatthorn (1998: 186-188) as an overly rigorous bombardment, such prompts might generate relatively easily-written material to shore up the defence of a student's thesis:

- *Why did you choose that particular problem? Why did you not study this other problem instead?*

- *Can you relate your findings to other important research in the field? In what specific ways do you think you have made a contribution?*

- *Why did you choose that particular method? Why did you not instead use this other method?*

- *Can you clarify for me how the particular method you chose relates directly to the problem you have chosen to study?*

- *What specifically was your relationship to the context and subjects of the study? Do you think that your relationship in any way contaminated your study?*

- *In what ways was that context or those subjects not representative? Have you been sensitive to that problem of atypicality?*

- *Can you clarify for me what procedures you followed to ensure that your research observed the canons of the profession with regard to ethical procedures?*

- *Can you account for this particular result which seems not to have been predicted?*

- *You posed certain specific questions in your first chapter. I am not clear that you answered each of those questions. Can you review those specific questions and relate them directly to your findings?*

Appendix C

More of Glatthorn's commonly asked examiner questions that help students with their own revision.

- *Your summary seems just a bit generally stated. Could you speak more specifically about your important findings?*
- *I am not persuaded that your conclusions are supported by your findings. Could you explain specifically to me how this conclusion derives from the results of the study?*
- *Your recommendations or your discussion of the implications of the study seem too sweeping to me. Can you explain specifically how you arrived at this particular recommendation?*
- *The results you cite on this page seem somewhat in conflict with the results you cite elsewhere. Can you explain the discrepancy?*
- *What exactly were you trying to find out? I'm unclear about the meaning of your problem statement.*
- *You have reviewed the important literature, but I fail to see what use you make of your review. Can you clarify for me what you learned from the review of literature?*
- *Your dissertation contains several proofreading errors. Were you aware of these errors?*