INDIGENOUS HIGHER EDUCATION

MĀORI EXPERIENCE IN NEW ZEALAND

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Indigeneity

While there are significant differences in the circumstances of indigenous peoples in various parts of the world, there are also commonalities in experiences and world-views.

Māori experience has not been substantially different from other indigenous peoples except in three important respects. First Māori demographic patterns are distinctive. Around fourteen percent of the total New Zealand population is Māori and the percentage is likely to rise to around twenty percent by 2051. Second the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi has created a special relationship between Māori and the Crown with implications for education policy. Though largely ignored for some twelve decades after it was signed, and still a point of contention for some political parties, since 1975 the Treaty has come to occupy a more central position in New Zealand's constitutional conventions. Third there has been effective Māori leadership in education for more than a century, initially the result of a deliberate effort by one school to promote engagement in university study.

Pioneers in Tertiary Education

Among the Church of England schools established for Māori in the nineteenth century, Te Aute College (1854) was to develop a reputation as an incubator for a new type of Māori leadership based on a fervent commitment to Māori advancement and improvement of spiritual and material conditions. In 1891 an 'Association for the Amelioration of the Māori Race' was established by the young advocates, but did not lead to further activity. In 1897, however, many of the same group, under the guidance of Apirana Ngata formed the Te Aute Association 'whose special aims were to improve health, sanitation, education, work habits, and family life.[1] The Association became synonymous with the Young Māori Party.

Two of the Te Aute group, Maui Pomare and Peter Buck (Te Rangi Hiroa) were to become the first two Māori medical graduates (in 1899 and 1904 respectively) while Ngata, the first Māori graduate (1894), achieved distinction in law, politics, literature and land reform. Māori social, economic and cultural revival is often credited to this trio, Ngata, Pomare and Buck, and the Young Māori Party that they helped to establish. Their philosophy was greatly influenced by their inspirational principal, John Thornton; whose religious convictions and social conscience acted as a catalyst and agenda.[2]

Ngata, Pomare and Buck were adamant that the answer to Māori survival lay in the need to adapt to western society and to do so within the overall framework imposed by the law. While strongly and emphatically in support of Māori language and culture they were equally passionate advocates of western democracy, and higher education. Although differing on what aspects of Māori culture should be retained, they all believed it was possible to maintain a secure Māori identity while embracing Pākehā values and beliefs. They became powerful role models for tertiary education and were living examples of how to integrate western and indigenous aspirations.[3]

Ngata was awarded an honorary doctorate for his contributions to Māori literature while Buck received many prestigious academic prizes. His university degrees included the MB ChB (University of Otago, 1904), MD (University of Otago1910), MA (Honorary, Yale, 1936), DSc (Honorary, NZ 1937), DSc (Honorary, Rochester 1939), D.Litt (Honorary, University of Hawaii 1948). All three men were elected to Parliament, Pomare and Ngata becoming cabinet ministers and Ngata serving as Acting Prime Minister for a short time.

Educational Transformations - A Century Later

If the beginning of the twentieth century were dominated by the emergence of three Māori academic giants who were later to become inspirational leaders, the beginning of the twenty-first century has been characterised by the emergence of large cohorts of Māori learners at all levels of the educational ladder. While the participation rates are uneven, and many Māori youngsters still remain outside the reach of effective education, there has been a remarkable turnaround. The establishment of Māori alternatives such as Kōhanga Reo (Māori language immersion centres) have provided

incentives and within the mainstream higher Māori participation rates in early childhood education have also been evident, growing by over thirty percent between 1991 and 1993. By 2001 forty-five percent of all Māori children under five years of age were enrolled in early childhood services, nearly one-third in kōhanga reo.[4]

Between 1983 and 2000 the percentage of Māori students who left school with no qualifications decreased from 62 percent to thirty-five percent, while at the tertiary level, Māori participation actually increased by 148 percent between 1991 and 2000. By 2002 Māori had the highest rates of participation in tertiary education of any group aged at twenty-five and over. Although the significant improvement masked the fact that Māori were still five times more likely to enrol in Government remedial training programmes and three times less likely to enrol at a University,[5] around seven percent of the total university population in 2005 is Māori. But most of the recent tertiary education growth has occurred through wānanga which increased enrolments from 26 000 students in 2001 to 45 500 in 2002.[6]

Wānanga were formally recognised as tertiary educational institutes in the 1989 Education Amendment Act and they are eligible for funding in the same way as other tertiary institutions. Wānanga students tend to be older and more likely to be enrolled in sub-degree programmes, though both undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes represent a significant part of the offerings of Te Wānanga o Raukawa and Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiarangi. These two latter wānanga are closely aligned to tribal development, while the third Te Wānanga o Aotearoa operates at a national level with as many non-Māori as Māori students.

Despite the larger number of students enrolled in sub-degree programmes there has also been a sharp increase in the number of Māori with doctorate degrees (since 2000 around twenty or thirty graduates each year) with a corresponding increase in Māori research capacity. A major milestone for the New Zealand research community was the establishment of Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga, a centre for research excellence at the University of Auckland in 2002.[7] The Centre provides a focus for interface research across a number of tertiary educational institutes and is actively promoting the development of a large cohort of Māori Ph D graduates. In addition to Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga there are several other Māori centres for research including Māori

health research centres, Māori business research, educational research, and an interdisciplinary Academy for Māori Research and Scholarship (Te Mata o te Tau) at Massey University.

A centre for research into custom law at the University of Waikato (Te Mātāhauariki) plays an important role in bridging the legal and philosophical differences between systems of law in New Zealand while Crown Research Institutes, such as the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) have also sought to include Māori research and researchers and Māori capability building is part of a deliberate planning process.

The major educational transformations that have occurred since 1984 are summarised in table 1.

Table 1 **Māori Educational Transformations 1984 – 2005**

- ☐ Rapid uptake of early childhood education
- ☐ Greatly increased participation in tertiary education
- ☐ Educational policies recognise Māori aspirations and Māori knowledge
- ☐ Multiple educational pathways (university, polytechnic, Wānanga, private training organisations)
- ☐ Higher participation rates in in sub-degree programmes
- ☐ Significant research capacity

Explaining the Transformations

There is no single explanation for the transformations that have occurred over the past two decades – and in any event many commentators would ask why change had not been more rapid and more extensive. But leaving aside concerns about the challenges yet to be faced and focusing for the time being on explaining the substantial gains already made, it is possible to identify three broad areas that have contributed to change: political recognition of indigeneity; reforms within the education sector; and institutional reforms.

Political recognition

Political recognition of indigeneity stems from two sources, often confused with each other and often argued from the same basis, although clearly they have quite different origins. First, policies and programmes that target Māori are sometimes justified on

inequalities in socio-economic circumstances and are rationalised from a social justice perspective. Second, however, Government policies for Māori are sometimes based on the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi with a corresponding sense of responsibility to Māori as an indigenous people. Under the Treaty, Māori ceded sovereignty (or, according to the Māori text, at least 'the right to govern') to the Crown in exchange for certain guarantees regarding property and wellbeing.

For many years in so far as it was recognised at all, the Treaty was applied to physical resources such as land, but after the Royal Commission on Social Policy report in 1988,[8] a case was made for the Treaty to be recognised in social, environmental, and economic policies. The combined arguments – social inequalities and indigeneity - have been applied to health, justice, social welfare, employment, so that tertiary educational policies have been part of a wider set of reforms. Not all political parties are convinced of the arguments in favour of recognising indigeneity preferring instead to simply focus on need without reference to race. But the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (1993) suggests that there is a more fundamental status acquired by indigenous peoples (as collectives) with significant obligations on states.[9]

Educational Reforms

Although the sweeping economic and government reforms instituted in the 1980s impacted heavily on Māori causing unemployment to suddenly escalate, they were also accompanied by a fresh spirit of independence and a renewed determination to retain those elements of indigeneity that were essential to being Māori in a complex and modern society. Before 1980 there were only a handful of Māori providers and they often had to contend with dogmatic assumptions that all New Zealanders shared the same cultural values, aspirations and histories. In contrast, after 2000, there were several hundred Māori providers of health, education, and social services and Māori language and culture had become more or less accepted as part of the operating norm in schools, hospitals, state agencies and community centres.

Prior to the 1984 economic and structural reforms introduced by the Fourth Labour Government, the inclusion of Māori specific items in the curriculum or within the culture of the school was the exception rather than the norm. Kohanga Reo, Māori language immersion early childhood centres, were the first major transformations in

Māori education and quickly became part of the national scene. Critics were concerned that a generation of Māori children might grow up unable to speak the language of commerce or science and would be seriously disadvantaged. Similar arguments were heard when kura kaupapa Māori (Māori speaking primary schools) were launched. The conservative call was for New Zealand to have a single system of education, and a curriculum that the majority approved.

But over the next decade not only did both Kohanga and kura flourish, they also gave rise to whare kura (Māori speaking secondary schools), wānanga (Māori tertiary educational centres) and a range of tribal and community educational initiatives. Consequential changes have also been evident in the primary and secondary curriculum, teacher training programmes, school cultures, and education policies. The New Zealand Qualifications Authority for example has a Māori field within which criteria for a range of Māori-focussed qualifications can be found.[10]

In addition, the Tertiary Education Commission, which funds tertiary education institutions (TEIs), has required some demonstration that each TEI will have developed initiatives to address Treaty of Waitangi principles[11] and has expected institutions to report against Māori enrolments, course completions by Māori students, and staffing profiles. Responding to Māori is no longer an optional exercise or a question of goodwill but is closely linked to funding agreements.

Institutional Reforms

Affirmative Action

At institutional levels several initiatives have led to greater Māori access to tertiary education. First there has been active recruitment in schools and in communities by Māori liaison officers, and other marketing efforts. There are also a number of programmes that provide targeted assistance to Māori students either through government scholarships and bursaries, operational grants to tertiary education institutions (e.g. the 'Special Supplementary Grant'[12]), or preferential entry into academic programmes.

Two students, Tutere Wirepa and Te Rangi Hiroa were the first recipients of a government grant made available in 1899 specifically for Māori who wished to study medicine at the University of Otago. The purpose of the grant was primarily to improve Māori health. Both the Otago and Auckland universities still have entry schemes that enable a limited number of Māori and Pacific students to enter Medical School without necessarily having the same academic profiles as other students.

Criticism of programmes such as these has been made on two grounds. First there has been a suggestion that Māori and Pacific students who enter tertiary education under a preferential scheme are allowed to graduate with lesser standards. Clearly that view represents a distortion. While different criteria might be used to justify admission, once admitted, students undertake similar course work, sit the same examinations and meet the same qualifying standards.

Second the case has been made for all students to be admitted on 'academic merit' alone. The need for a non-Māori student with high grades to forfeit a place to a Māori student with lower grades is opposed by those who associate academic performance only with pre-entry academic merit. However, successful educational outcomes depend on many factors apart from earlier academic achievement. Moreover, the purpose of ethnically based preferential entry schemes is not simply to have more Māori doctors but for educational institutions to make a contribution to society.

Education has both personal and public benefits and the charters of many tertiary educational institutes accord high priority to the public good. In the University of Otago charter for example, 'the enhancement, understanding and development of individuals *and* society' is part of the university's mission and a contribution to both Māori development and the development of Pacific Peoples is also highlighted.[13]

While it is important to ensure that students accepted into a programme are going to be able to meet the required academic standards, it may be more meritorious to admit students who will help institutions achieve their public goals and meet charter obligations to provide for future societal leadership.[14] It is short-sighted to define merit solely on the academic merits of individual students in isolation of other students or the institution's broader social goals. The profile of the total student

population must be considered so that the institution as a whole can foster academic advancement, contribute positively to the campus learning experience, and provide society with leadership for the future. Taking account of race helps institutions achieve their mission of promoting academic advancement, having diversity on the campus, and attending to long term societal needs.[15]

Communities of Learning

It has been increasingly recognised that the establishment of communities of learning provides many students with greater likelihood of success. Māori students have been particularly attracted to the notion of cohort learning and various programmes have been established to foster a sense of whānau (family) and maximise the positive effects of peer support. Te Rau Puawai is a comprehensive programme for Māori students who are studying for a mental health related qualification at Massey University.[16] Funded by the Ministry of Health, a hundred students each year are awarded bursaries, provided with customised learning support and opportunities to meet together as a group two or three times a year while maintaining close electronic links during the academic year.[17] In the first five years of the programme 103 students successfully completed qualifications at undergraduate and postgraduate levels and in the first semester of 2005, a paper pass rate of 92% was achieved.

Campus Innovation

To create a culturally-relevant environment many institutions have developed cultural centres on campus. Of particular note has been the establishment of marae (cultural meeting places). Unlike tribal marae, the functions of institutional marae tend to be shaped around institutional business rather than tribal priorities but for many students they nonetheless represent a safe place where cultural identity can be endorsed and customary rituals rehearsed. They are also sites for learning especially in subject areas that are closely aligned to Māori culture such as Māori language courses and offer students opportunities to associate with other Māori students as well as becoming part of wider tribal and community networks. Although there are sometimes tensions between institutional conventions and the protocols adopted on a marae, the overall experience has been that marae have contributed to both retention and completion and other non-Māori students have benefited as well as staff and the institution as a whole.

Collaborations

Partly because Charters require, but also to create active links into Māori communities and to attract Māori students, TEIs have established a range of collaborations. Formal agreements with tribes have been important at governance and operational levels and at the Waiariki Institue of Technology a Māori council, Te Mana Matauranga, made up of tribal elders has been established with delegated authority from the Council. Collaborations with Māori interest groups, Māori professional bodies and Māori public servants, have also provided mutual benefits, facilitating TEI access to research as well as recruitment opportunities.

A Māori Tertiary Education Matrix

Arising from the Māori experience and previous efforts to build a Māori tertiary education framework,[18] it is possible to construct a matrix within which Māori tertiary education can be considered. The matrix comprises a set of four high level principles, five platforms necessary for enabling progress and a series of pathways through which measurable gains can be made.

Principles

The principles include the principles of indigeneity, academic success, participation, and a futures orientation.

The principle of indigeneity refers to the recognition of indigenous peoples and their culture, language and knowledge. For effective indigenous participation in tertiary education, indigeneity should be evident in national policies, educational policies and programmes, and the academic curriculum. It requires a commitment that goes well beyond the confines of the education sector and reflects the ways in which states value indigenous cultures. At institutional levels, indigeneity is reflected through the campus culture, the curriculum, communities of learning, and leadership at academic and governance levels.

Academic success is a further principle. While access to the tertiary sector is an important starting point, of greater importance is academic success. In this respect measuring the progress of indigenous participation in tertiary education should focus primarily on the completion of recognised qualifications rather than simply the

number of enrolments per year. Although Māori participation rates are relatively high, completion rates leave room for improvement.

The principle of participation has three dimensions. First it refers to full participation in the tertiary sector – student participation, staff participation, participation in management, governance and policy making. Second it refers to an outcome of tertiary education – namely full participation in society and the economy. Higher education is not in itself an end point; instead it is a stepping stone that increases chances of successful participation. Third, the principle of participation is about readiness to participate fully in indigenous society. If education has not made some contribution towards indigenous participation in the indigenous world then it has not addressed indigenous realities which are about belonging to two worlds and being active in both.

A futures orientation is a reminder that planning for full and effective involvement in tertiary education needs to take a long term perspective. The Māori experience is that gains occur incrementally over time and a long term vision is a necessary precursor. Otherwise there is the risk that a series of fragmented and unconnected initiatives will occur with little impact and a loss of confidence by indigenous communities. But typically planning occurs for relatively short terms – three to five years – and often in response to a crisis rather than as part of a strategic direction that relevant to the next generation of learners.

Platforms

Five platforms have been important to Māori: national policies, educational policies and programmes, balanced tertiary options, campus innovation and indigenous leadership.

National polices that recognise indigenous peoples across all sectors are necessary precursors to full tertiary participation. The corollary is that an approach to tertiary education which is out of step with other sectoral directions or which occurs in a policy vacuum is unlikely to be sustained.

Similarly educational policies and programmes must be consistent across all levels of education. There is evidence that success in later years of schooling and education is more likely if there has been some experience of early childhood education. And decisions about higher programmes of study are probably made in high school years, well before eligibility to enrol. An integrated educational system with minimal disruption between high school and tertiary education is necessary.

Tertiary education options that reflect diverse capabilities and interests are a feature of the current tertiary system in New Zealand. Students seeking a tertiary education may choose between wānanga, polytechnics, private training establishments, and universities. Similar financial conditions such as fees and state subsidies apply but not all options offer qualifications that will have international currency. Although choice has been an important part of the Māori experience, there is also a need for ensuring optimal ratios between programmes and levels of study. Currently Māori tertiary education participation is heavily weighted towards certificate and sub-degree programmes and in that respect lacks balance.

Campus innovations have been important to Māori experience in tertiary education.[19] While policy decisions determine broad directions, each campus can implement more specific programmes to facilitate higher education for indigenous peoples. The benefits are mutual. Māori gain from being able to participate within a learning environment that is culturally resonant and the campus stands to benefit from Māori input into academic programmes and research. Many campus managers have concluded that what is good for Māori is good for the institution as a whole, enabling the fulfilment of higher goals and aspirations. The development of Māori strategies that are endorsed by governance and senior management have been useful ways of gaining buy-in and commitment from the institution as a whole.[20]

Indigenous leadership is a further platform.[21] Māori, like other indigenous populations are keen to employ a degree of self determination and to exercise leadership across the full range of endeavours. In tertiary education indigenous leadership is a necessary precondition with implications for academic direction, research, managerial responsibilities, policy making and governance. All North Island polytechnics and universities have senior Māori managers (in the case of

universities variously known as assistant vice-chancellors or pro vice-chancellors) with responsibilities for implementing Māori tertiary strategies and the New Zealand Vice Chancellor Committee has established a Māori standing committee (Te Kahui Amokura) made up of the senior Māori academics from the eight universities. Māori leadership is similarly included on all North Island TEI councils. Academic leadership at professorial levels and in research arenas provides important modelling for both students and staff. In wānanga, all senior positions are filled by Māori and the majority of academic and support staff is Māori.

Pathways

Pathways to achieve indigenous participation in education are summarised in table 2. They may be grouped into four areas:

- pathways that secure access to tertiary education,
- pathways leading to successful completion of qualifications
- academic excellence
- workforce development.

Table 2 Pathways to Higher Education

Access	*Successful completion*	*High academic achievement*	*Workforce Development*
Affirmative action Bursaries, scholarships Collaboration Curriculum expansion	Communities of learning Engagement with elders Cultural learning centres Collaboration Curriculum expansion	Postgraduate qualifications Centres of excellence Research capacity building Indigenous methodologies Collaboration	Identification of career academics Recruitment Staff development that includes opportunities to engage with indigenous peoples, & groups Competitive remuneration.

Some pathways, such as collaboration are important to all four areas. Links with tribal elders, Māori networks, marae in the vicinity of the campus, and specific Māori interest groups such as providers of health and social services, will contribute to student recruitment, academic success, post-graduate degree completion and research outcomes by indigenous researchers.

Workforce development is particularly important to build a critical mass of indigenous scholars. The burden carried by a lone indigenous academic can be a heavy one and sometimes leads to an early exit. When Māori were struggling to find a place at TEIs, departments of Māori Studies were critical to attracting academics and providing an environment where peer support was available. Now that is less critical since clusters of academics can also be found in faculties of law, health sciences, education, social policy, performing and visual arts, research centres, and in some institutions the applied sciences.

The principles, platforms and pathways can be represented diagrammatically as core components of a Māori tertiary education matrix (Table 3).

Table 3 Māori Tertiary Education Matrix

	Platforms				
Principles ↓	National Policies	Education Policies	Tertiary Options	Campus Innovation	Māori Leadership
Indigeneity			↑		
Academic success	←		**MULTIPLE PATHWAYS**		→
Participation					
Future Orientation			↓		

The matrix can also be shown as a hierarchy of three levels of priority (Table 4).

Table 4 Māori Tertiary Education: Three Priority Levels

Principles			
Indigeneity,	academic success,	participation,	future orientation

Platforms		
National Policies	Education policies	Campus Innovation
Balanced Tertiary Options		Indigenous Leadership

Pathways	
Affirmative action	Centres of excellence
Communities of learning	Bursaries, scholarships
Campus cultural learning centres	Elders on campus, collaboration
Postgraduate qualifications	Curriculum expansion
Research capacity building	Multiple delivery modes

Essentially Māori participation in tertiary education has depended on five platforms: national policies that endorse indigeneity; educational policies and programmes that successfully engage Māori learners in all stages of the education process, commencing with early childhood education; options for tertiary education (including wānanga, polytechnics, private training establishments, and universities) that recognise a range of approaches and subject areas; the gradual indigenisation of the academy – through campus innovations, curriculum extension, and methodological developments based on indigenous knowledge; and effective indigenous leadership at governance, managerial, and academic levels.

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