



# The Australian Journal of **INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

This article was originally published in printed form. The journal began in 1973 and was titled *The Aboriginal Child at School*. In 1996 the journal was transformed to an internationally peer-reviewed publication and renamed *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*.

In 2022 *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education* transitioned to fully Open Access and this article is available for use under the license conditions below.



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

# INDIGENOUS EPISTEMOLOGIES

## in TERTIARY EDUCATION

SHANE EDWARDS  
& KIERAN HEWITSON

Te Wananga o Aotearoa, 320 Factory Road, Te Awamutu,  
3800, Aotearoa/New Zealand

### ■ Abstract

This paper contends that Indigenous epistemologies in educational curriculum can serve as powerful counter hegemonic action to dominant discourses. It then discusses how the implementation and application of Indigenous epistemologies in adult educational curricula can support intellectual sovereignty and positive identity construction for Indigenous wellbeing.

### ■ Introduction

We argue for the advancement of subjugated knowledges and Indigenous episteme as tools for emancipation and liberation from discourses that negatively affect the wellbeing of Indigenous peoples. While the context and experience from which this discussion draws its understandings is a Maori experience from Aotearoa/New Zealand, it may be that there are similar stories and opportunities for other affected groups. Our aim is to connect with likeminded people and agendas, and to encourage a critical mass of Indigenous intellectuals and non-Indigenous allies to challenge the pervading ideologies of dominant discourse.

Much of our discussion in the tertiary sector takes place in relation to “the academy.” While we acknowledge that “the academy” as a site for discussions of Indigenous epistemologies may not necessarily be appropriate to some, we would contend that the discussion is important enough to encourage conversations to occur in whatever sites we may come across. Most accept that “the academy” as a site is not power-neutral, and that attempts to engage with the academy may also be attempts to indigenise it from within. Whether the academy can serve Indigenous liberation agendas or not, is subject to much debate. Justice (2004), for instance, questions whether we can or should indigenise the academy and points to some of the embedded elements of colonial interests: “The Academy is the privileged centre of meaning making in this hemisphere dominated by imperial nation-states, as such, its primary history is one that has served colonialist cultural interests, both directly and covertly (p. 101).

The points raised above are to highlight that Western thought and practice, which advances non-Indigenous cultures and degrades Indigenous cultures, are a “construct” of knowledge systems based on Western theories. It is also to draw forward our position in this paper that elements of the colonial presence are by their very nature diffusionist (Blaut, 1993) and serve essentially to normalise forms and agendas that privileges some and not others.

### ■ Western education as epistemological violence

Western education systems have been one of the fundamental ways used by colonial agents to support the “civilising mission” agenda. It has been argued that Europeans introduced the writing system and created

schools for the betterment of Indigenous peoples (Simon & Smith, 2001). However, in our view, colonial education systems have acted primarily as tools of enslavement. It was meant to hinder real education and real knowledge by providing the kind of limited and ideological education needed to produce obedient servants of the colonial masters as well as workers who had to contribute to the looting of their own countries for the economic interests of Europe (Walker, 1990). Most importantly, it was not an education for freedom. This was an education for alienation, an education that praised the glory of European culture while inculcating in the minds of Indigenous peoples the idea that their ancestral past was wholly evil and irrational. Indeed, the colonial education was a major industry of "pauperism anthropologique" the ultimate instrument of epistemic violence (Walker, 1990). The greatest feature of this domination was the ability to colonise the mind (Fanon, 1968).

In the initial stages of colonisation, the conquered people are enslaved and controlled with the force of arms. The weakness of this form of colonisation is that the colonised people can rise up in revolution and send the coloniser packing, permanently. This early form of colonisation is transient. However, the coloniser has other weapons in his arsenal and these are used to colonise the minds of the conquered people, since colonisation of the mind has more permanency. This is not a thing of the past and is still done with great vigour. The big guns for this colonisation today are the televisions, radios and newspapers and other forms of media – they serve a purpose of de-culturation and continue the earlier colonial agenda of epistemological violence and genocide (Churchill, 1997).

The term genocide chosen here is emotive in contemporary contexts quite rightly for its association with atrocities committed against the Jewish people by Nazis (Churchill, 1997). However, this term is equally applicable to the position Indigenous peoples the world over have been and are in currently (Churchill, 1997). An examination of the ideas of genocide feature prominently in the works and discussions by Native American activist Ward Churchill (1997). A quick exploration will show that the term "genocide" was coined by Raphael Lemkin (1944), the architect of the United Nations resolution on *The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* adopted in late 1948. It was influenced by his earlier work in 1944 called, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*. However, and notably, the Convention confined itself only to mean physical genocide:

Any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, such as:

- Killing members of the group.
- Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group.

- Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or part.
- Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group.
- Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group (United Nations, 1948, p 70).

The fact that the focus of the Convention was limited to physical acts rather than the fuller application as envisaged by Lemkin (1944) was because the 20 member nations that signed the Convention would have found themselves in contravention of the Convention had it been applied with its full intent, that is, Lemkin's desire to include non-physical acts of genocide, primarily psychological was not incorporated:

Generally speaking, genocide does not mean the immediate destruction of a nation, except when accomplished by mass killings of all members of a nation. It is intended rather to signify a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves. The objectives of such a plan would be disintegration of the political and social institutions, of culture, language, national feelings, religion and the economic existence of national groups, and the destruction of the personal security, liberty, health, dignity and even the lives of the individuals belonging to such groups. Genocide is directed against the individuals, not in the individual capacity, but as members of the national group (Lemkin, 1944, p. 36).

Freedom of epistemological thought depends heavily on the knowledge of a people and the low level of Indigenous control of formal education greatly curtails this freedom. In other terms, where the freedom of knowledge is controlled, freedom of thought and speech is stymied and stunted, and without such basic freedoms, democracy merely becomes a tool for maintaining the oppressive system and practices of the existing powers. They deprive people of their history, languages, arts and techniques. They totally wash their brain of any creativity, any ambition, any attempt to search, imagine, or achieve any solution adapted to their needs. Moreover, they cause such an economic, social, and cultural bareness that the most dynamic ideas are condemned to die fruitlessly. Then they arrange an appropriate space for the implantation of a cultural misery-making industry maintained by so-called "technical assistance," "technologies transfer systems," and other multinational enterprises for anthropological pauperisation (Churchill, 1997).

Our point here is that current forms of Western education have sutured over an earlier agenda of epistemological violence, and to a certain extent have succeeded in taking it out of our view, but it is our contention that it remains within and insidiously supports the ongoing disenfranchisement of Indigenous people to this day.

### Formal education and other ways of knowing

The process of developing worldviews that are in contrast to the dominant discourse requires a commitment to questioning knowledge constructions and how we come to know. The nature of dominant discourse is always already insidious. For a time many Indigenous people took for granted the assumed superiority of the dominant culture believing that as Indigenous people we were somehow inferior, and that our ways of knowing, being and doing were not as robust and legitimate as those of the dominant culture. In so doing, we relegated ourselves to the status of “other”. Within the Aotearoa/New Zealand context the regime of “othering” happened over a span of nearly four generations – from a time when *Tē Reo* Maori (Maori language) and *tikanga* Maori (Maori customs) were the norm through to today where things Maori are marginalised and considered to be “different” or “special”. This obscure loyalty to regimes of “other”, “different” or “special” has firmly taken hold of many aspects of our lives and infected our systems and minds in the process.

The challenge we as educators are facing today is how to rupture the “taken-for-granted” positions, to bring about change and counter the years of Eurocentric discourse that has pervaded our society. We need to look to different epistemological paradigms and act from both within and outside the academy. We need to look to other forms of experience and knowledge. This can be done most successfully, we would argue, by Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars alike to find ways to make more explicit the colonial structures and frames of mind that pervade our thoughts and actions. We need to know the “Masters tools” (Lorde, 1981, p. 46) well enough and in its entirety so that we comprehend more fully what constrains our possibilities under colonial regimes. As bell hooks notes,

Within a complex and ever shifting realities of power relations, do we position ourselves on the side of the colonising mentality? Or do we continue to stand in political resistance with the oppressed, ready to offer our ways of seeing and theorising, of making culture, towards that revolutionary effort which seeks to create space where there is unlimited access to pleasure and power of knowing, where transformation is possible (1990, p. 68).

Fanon (1968) on the other hand argues that liberation will only come from a new person with a new discourse. Although the oppressed may resort to the language of the oppressor to construct this new discourse, the philosophical underpinnings of such discourse need to be rooted firmly in a construct that allows the creation of a new space and provides for different ways of knowing.

One way that we have worked up to counter the hegemony with positive results is creating tertiary educational programmes based on Indigenous epistemologies and worldviews as well as adopting systems that normalise Maori epistemologies. One of the greatest challenges we faced in challenging the educational status quo by using Indigenous epistemological paradigms is the scrutiny from our own people (Nakata, 2004). In challenging the very things that we are used to, the things that have confined us to being the “marginalised other”, Maoris often mistake our challenge as an attack on them rather than as a way to break free from the Master’s tools. It is often a lonely and frustrating journey having to constantly legitimise (even to our own) our every move. How does one explain the chosen epistemological stance to rupture what is already familiar and comfortable to Maori is “good for them”?

This frustration is often compounded when dealing with funding agencies who want to resource projects that reify approaches and understandings from within extant colonial regimes. Unfortunately, for Maori in Aotearoa/New Zealand this is the everyday reality. In order to fund initiatives, we are reliant on Government agencies for funding. By accepting this funding, we accept the strings attached to this. Often those strings ensure the maintenance of ideologies from which we are trying to break free. Largely these demands come from people who have little understanding of how Maori are entangled at the juncture of Western and Maori epistemological trajectories.

Despite this, we are convinced by our experiences so far that Indigenous tertiary programmes of education can be constructed to bring subjugated ways of knowing back to the forefront of educational scholarship and practice.

### ■ Maori education

Some examples of programmes of education to counter oppression are detailed below and are part of a programme portfolio that sits within a *wananga* – a contemporary Maori lead adult education institution. The contemporary *wananga* took their name from the ancestral Maori institutions of higher learning known as the *whare wananga* (Best, 1924). The contemporary *wananga* began in the early 1980s to support the continuation of Maori ways of knowing and being. Its sole intent was to establish tertiary institutions of education that could positively contribute to Maori

success and where Maori worldview was front and centre. Wananga were eventually accorded legal status via the New Zealand Education Amendment Act, 1989. Section 162, subsection 4b (iv) clearly states that a wananga is characterised by teaching, learning and research that maintains, advances and disseminates knowledge and develops intellectual independence, and assists the application of knowledge regarding *ahuatanga* Maori according to *tikanga* Maori. While it is not discussed in this paper it is important to note that the struggle for existence was extensive and occurred against political attempts to not allow wananga to exist and against the power, might and extensive resources of the Crown. At present three wananga make up the recognised wananga under the Act. They are Te Whare Wananga o Awanuiarangi, Te Wananga o Raukawa and Te Wananga o Aotearoa. Together they form, and are guided by, the wananga association called Te Tauihu o Nga Wananga.

### ■ Te Wananga o Aotearoa

Te Wananga o Aotearoa is relatively young as an educational provider, especially when compared to universities and the like. Its conception was grounded in a project named the Otawhao Marae project when in 1983 the Te Awamutu College desired to build a marae on its school grounds.

The project was led by Te Wananga o Aotearoa's founder, Dr Rongo Wetere who was at the time a member of the College's Board of Governors and had become disillusioned with his increasing role in being asked to expel a number of students at the school, many of whom were Maori. He saw the marae project as a catalyst for change and engaged master carver Paki Harrison and a team of carvers, mostly unemployed, to build the marae. This occurred against a backdrop of mostly anti-Maori sentiment in the Te Awamutu area at the time. The project continued and the marae was eventually completed and opened.

Fuelled by the desire to re-engage disenfranchised youth into culture and employment, Wetere and a group of foundation members established the Waipa Kokiri Arts Centre with the primary purpose of offering Maori Arts and Trades Training Programmes as part and parcel of post secondary education. Importantly, this was supported by Maori values and principles. This was back in 1984 and continued for five years with sites across Aotearoa/New Zealand, including Te Kuiti, Hamilton and Manukau. They were also the first private training establishment to be registered in New Zealand. In 1988, they were renamed as the Aotearoa Institute.

By 1993, and upon achieving wananga status, it was again renamed as Te Wananga o Aotearoa. In the same year, a site was opened in Te Arawa, Rotorua with subsequent sites in Porirua in 1997, Tokoroa in 1988, Gisborne, Palmerston North, and Huntly

in 1999. These developments occurred against a backdrop of no Government capital support. The reluctance of government to recognise wananga and Maori aspirations resulted in a political march and demonstration at parliament. The petition to government was for capital funding similar to that received by other institutions (WAI 718, 1999). By 2000, a capital funding agreement was reached and the new Zealand government recognised its responsibility to fund wananga and Te Wananga o Aotearoa's. The funding agreement with the Government was sealed at a signing ceremony to formally acknowledge the new status.

During this time, other initiatives including early learning centres in Manukau, Gisborne, Te Awamutu, Tokoroa, and Hamilton and a total immersion Maori primary school at Te Awamutu were established. Today Te Wananga o Aotearoa employs some 1400 people and educates some 40,000 adult learners per annum, 75% of whom are Maori.

Many of the programmes of study on offer at Te Wananga o Aotearoa use Maori epistemologies as a base for the transmission of both traditional knowledge and social mobility. This is done through programmes such as Te Arataki Manu Korero, Kaihoe Waka and Maori language acquisition programmes, Ta Moko (Maori tattooing) and Rongoa Maori (Maori medicine) together with Computing, Business and Social Services.

Below, we outline two programmes of study that are offered at Te Wananga o Aotearoa as examples of how Maori epistemologies are applied in an adult education context and how these are used as counter hegemonic tools to reclaim and advance Maori ways of doing and being.

#### 1. Te Arataki Manu Korero

The Te Arataki Manu Korero programme was created to bring Maori elders together in order to share, discuss and debate knowledge of traditional Maori epistemologies and their contemporary usage. This was a political act to reinforce Maori theory and practice as Maori language and customs faced critical survival issues. The future of Maori ways of knowing were and still are not guaranteed. Our elders, in recognising that our formal processes and rituals were being carried by far fewer knowledgeable people, came up with the idea to initiate this programme of education. It was a direct response to the diminishing number of elders with the knowledge and/or confidence to take up leadership roles on Marae (traditional gathering places) and other customary aspects of Maori society.

The programme was first established and trialled in 2003 within the Tainui tribal region where the Kingitanga (Maori Monarchy) movement resides. The programme is now offered across the country with plans to offer the programme for Maori elders residing

in Australia. The programme is offered one weekend a month starting on a Friday evening and finishing on Sunday afternoon with a total of 10 weekends of study being undertaken within the year. The learning environments are mixtures of ecological environs, marae environs and in some cases classroom-based depending on the context required of the learning objectives. Over five hundred elders have completed this programme in the past four years.

Through offering this programme, it was identified that there was a need to also offer something similar to the next and younger generation. This led to the development of a programme focused on Marae protocols for a slightly younger generation ready for start-up in September 2007. Combined with national initiatives such as pre-school language nests, primary and secondary Maori immersion education and programmes, a view of “womb to the tomb” education now proliferate thinking across other contexts of lifelong learning.

## 2. *Kaihoe Waka*

The Kaihoe Waka programme was designed to retain and maintain the traditional knowledge associated with waka (water vessels). This included navigation by the stars and other natural markers, as well as the different types of waka that were used traditionally as well as more modern constructions. With the number of elders who are keepers of the nautical knowledge dwindling, there was a decision that something had to be done to ensure that this knowledge was not only maintained but operationalised.

Similar to developments with Maori language and culture, the traditions associated with waka were soon captured in books and teaching resources. The programme today validates and confirms for students that navigation by the stars, sea currents, and other natural markers is a science that our ancestors were well versed in, and were used in the many trips across the Pacific to and from Aotearoa. This reinforces for younger generations the view that our ancestors had a highly technical, knowledge systems.

The programme has been running since 2001. Approximately 2000 students have passed through the programme. It is run on the same basis as Te Arataki Manu Korero with students attending one weekend a month for 10 months, and with students staying on the Marae. The addition of a sailing component in the programme is supported with a traditional double-hulled waka named Aotearoa One. It was built by Te Wananga o Aotearoa as a “floating classroom”, and can sleep approximately 20 students. It is also capable of open-sea sailing.

### ■ Identified benefits

The two programmes outlined above use Maori ways of knowing and being as an implicit part of the

programme, this allows for not only a Maori-centric way of learning but also aimed at producing a critical mass of people to keep the traditions of Maori protocols in relation to marae and nautical studies alive. Other benefits include valuing and sharing knowledge amongst students, valuing traditional knowledge as important and valid, acknowledging every student as holders of knowledge and with something to offer, and normalising Maori practices and knowing as central to their education.

These two programmes have raised and heightened collective awareness of the value and importance of Maori epistemologies that are fast becoming normalised in many communities. The contributions to community wellbeing are many and varied. For example, this means Maori traditions are maintained, tribal histories and practices are kept alive, awareness of health issues are raised, and formal teachings are now performed in the familiar environment of maraes.

The contributions of both programmes have provided a vehicle for Maori communities to revisit, if not to increase, their knowledge of Maori ways of knowing. The two programmes positively reinforce Indigenous identity through Intergeneration Learning, grandchildren learning alongside grandparents. In other words, a key achievement of both programmes has been this interaction between grandparents, parents and grandchildren formally learning together and sharing knowledge.

Whilst Te Arataki is aimed at our elders, the Kaihoe Waka programme is open to all ages and draws seventeen to seventy year olds. This intergenerational learning and sharing not just empowers learners, it also creates positive learning experiences for the many who have only experienced negative learning experiences in the past. Our experience has seen different generations from the same family enrolled in these two programmes, and the positive effect has been a cascading one down through the following generations, enthusing and creating a culture of continued learning.

There are also reciprocal and complementary benefits in the community. Te Wananga o Aotearoa supports the local iwi (tribe) and hapu (sub tribe) by providing a programme that ensures the maintenance of their protocols. In turn, iwi and hapu are supportive of Te Wananga o Aotearoa and they provide cultural guidance for staff and students. In other ways, Maori communities benefit from the increased uptake of their members engaging in learning, and importantly learning that is helping to keep traditional ways of knowing and being alive in a modern context. The benefit for Te Wananga o Aotearoa is the support network from the Iwi and hapu throughout the areas that Te Wananga o Aotearoa operates. By having this support and open communication with the Maori community, Te Wananga o Aotearoa are able to be responsive to the educational needs of that Maori community.

## ■ Critical success factors

These two programmes have been successful for a number of key reasons.

### *Economies of scale*

In order to be financially viable there are clear guidelines around the staff to student ratio. Te Arataki Manu Korero the ratio is 1.5:60 teaching staff to students, and with guest lecturers making up part of the teaching staff. Kaihoe Waka has a ratio of 1:40, and again with guest lecturers. Te Wananga o Aotearoa rely on student-funding from the government to fund their programme. Students pay no fees.

Food plays an important part in keeping the students nourished during their studies. The ability of Te Wananga o Aotearoa to provide meals on a large scale enables economies of scale to keep costs down. Students dining together also provide a positive context for learning and development of relationships, considered by Te Wananga o Aotearoa, to be an essential part of their education.

### *Teaching staff*

It has been critical to get in the right teaching staff to teach on the programmes. Te Arataki Manu Korero has quite specialised requirements because the majority of students are over 60 years of age. The teachers not only have to be a respected member of the community but skilled enough to also teach students who may not have had formal education engagements for 50 years. This requires careful selection, and both Te Wananga o Aotearoa and the community's involvement. Kaihoe Waka presented a different challenge and that was the limited numbers of people with the knowledge on waka traditions and navigation. This required us to be very mindful of the demands placed on those who possessed such knowledge.

### *Student support*

An important factor in the programme's success is the support that is offered to students. Both programmes have their own needs but they also share some common needs. A nurse is available for the Te Arataki Manu korero for a set time during the weekend, the students are able to consult the nurse on any health issues. Both programmes have student support staff who can advise on study skills, writing, research, or library resources. The student support staff also offer advice on budgeting, student loans and allowances, as well as other services that can help break down barriers to students' participation in learning.

## *Community involvement*

As can be understood, we are approached by different tribes or sub-tribes with requests to run programmes in their area, and we have learned that this is another critical factor for ensuring success of the programme. It is crucial that the programme is flexible enough in design to accommodate the needs of different groups of people, and to allow their histories and their practices to serve as primary starting points to learning goals. Ostensibly, many students would not enrol without the support and encouragement of the local tribe or sub-tribe. It is crucial that the programme is first meaningful to the community.

## ■ Conclusion

This paper discussed and argued that dominant ideologies and discourse acts to disempower Indigenous peoples. It argued that the disempowerment occurs in multifaceted ways and as part of an agenda of genocide. One of the primary ways highlighted was how genocide is inflicted via Western educational systems and frameworks for knowing. To counter these oppressive agendas, the paper proposed that Indigenous people and Indigenous allies (re)consider Indigenous epistemologies in knowledge construction as a vehicle for countering oppressive ideology and discourse as well as a vehicle to support Indigenous wellbeing and Indigenous intellectual sovereignty. To illustrate benefits of this proposal, the paper drew experiences from two examples of adult programmes of education in Aotearoa/New Zealand, namely Te Wananga o Aotearoa. The core argument in the paper has been that adult programmes of education can be constructed and delivered within Indigenous paradigms to benefit Indigenous communities, and positive identity constructions. Building on the critical success factors as well as building on these achievements must be part of our continued dialogue and intellectual growth in the field of Indigenous education.

## References

- Best, E. (1924). *The Maori*. Wellington, New Zealand: Government Printer.
- Blaut, J. M. (1993). *The colonisers model of the world: Geographical diffusionism and Eurocentric history*. New York, NY: The Guildford Press.
- Churchill, W. (1997). *A little matter of genocide: Holocaust and denial in the Americas 1492 to the present*. San Francisco, CA: City Lights Books.
- Fanon, F. (1968). *Black skins, white masks*. London: Pluto Press.
- hooks, b. (1990). *Yearning: Race, gender and cultural politics*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.
- Justice, D. H. (2004). Seeing (and reading) red. In D. A. Mihesuah & A. C. Wilson (Eds.), *Indigenising the academy: Transforming scholarship and empowering communities* (pp. 100-123). Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press.

- Lemkin, R. (1944). *Axis rule in occupied Europe: Laws of occupation, analysis of government, proposals for redress*. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
- Lorde, A. (1981). The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. In C. Moraga & G. Anzaldúa (Eds.), *This bridge called my back: Writings by radical women of color* (pp. 44-53). Watertown, MA: Persephone Press.
- Nakata, M. (2004). *Indigenous Australian studies and higher education: 2004 Biennial AIATSIS Wentworth Lecture*. Retrieved 11 July, 2007, from [http://www1.aiatsis.gov.au/exhibitions/wentworth/a352185\\_a.pdf](http://www1.aiatsis.gov.au/exhibitions/wentworth/a352185_a.pdf).
- New Zealand Education Amendment Act. (1989). Wellington, New Zealand Government printer, Wellington.
- Simon, J., & Smith, L.T. (2001) *A civilising mission? Perceptions and representation of the New Zealand native schools systems*. Auckland, New Zealand: Auckland University Press
- United Nations. (1948). The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Adopted by Resolution 260 (III) A of the United Nations General Assembly on 9 December 1948; Geneva.
- WAI 718. (1999). *The Wananga Capital Establishment Report*. Retrieved 11 July, 2007, from <http://www.waitangi-tribunal.govt.nz/reports/view.asp?ReportID=39E13093-2F4D-4971-ACA0-28E811572755>.
- Walker, R. (1990). *Ka whawhai tonu matou: Struggle without end*. Auckland, New Zealand: Penguin Publishing.

#### ■ About the authors

Shane Edwards is Kaihautu Marautanga (Academic Director) at Te Wananga o Aotearoa, a tertiary education provider in Aotearoa/New Zealand. He lives with his partner and four children in their rural tribal homeland. His interests include Indigenous epistemologies, Indigenous self determination, and education. His pastimes include involvement in tribal social settings and reforestation of lands with Indigenous fauna.

Kieran Hewitson is Pou Marautanga (Curriculum Manager) at Te Wananga o Aotearoa, a tertiary education provider in Aotearoa/New Zealand. She hails from the East Coast of the North Island with tribal affiliations to Ngati Porou and Te Whanau-a-Apanui. Her interests include youth education, organisational behaviour, and systems thinking from an Indigenous perspective.