

# **MĀTAURANGA MĀORI**

## **An Introduction**

A 'think piece' report  
written for the Ministry of Education

by  
Te Ahukaramū  
Charles Royal

Final Version, 23 August 2019

## Executive Summary

This 'think piece' report contains responses to the following three questions:

- What is Mātauranga Māori?
- What is the Value and Significance of Mātauranga Māori?
- What can the Ministry of Education do to raise the status of mātauranga Māori?

The report notes the complexity of these questions and presents a proposed and introductory way to answer them, including:

- 'Mātauranga Māori' understood by considering examples and expressions of this body of knowledge and ways by which the terms have been used historically
- The value of mātauranga Māori by considering its value and significance to Māori, individually and collectively; and to wider New Zealand society and economy including education
- Activities proposed to be undertaken by the Ministry of Education include continuing investments in Māori language and cultural revitalisation, undertaking targeted and in-depth research into particular perspectives and ideas about education found in mātauranga Māori for eventual application in New Zealand education, and an information sharing/communications strategy

The report presents one way to answer these questions. The report is a 'think piece', a presentation of a range of ideas by the author. It has not been peer reviewed or edited.

The key points of the report are as follows:

- Mātauranga Māori is *a body of knowledge* that arose out of the lived circumstances and experiences of Māori people since first arrival in approximately 1350. Hence, it has Polynesian origins.
- Mātauranga Māori is *multi-faceted and diverse*. It includes a wide range of expressions and applications of knowledge such as fishing, gardening, teaching, learning, decision making, knowledge creation and more. It is used in the organisation of iwi/Māori communities and in the creation of physical objects such as clothing, buildings, vessels and much more. Mātauranga Māori is *inextricably entwined within the lives of iwi/Māori communities*, historically and today.
- Mātauranga Māori is *a vehicle for the tangata whenua/indigenous worldview* in the Aotearoa-New Zealand setting. Contained within this worldview are a wide range of perspectives on life and existence - such as the nature of right and wrong, of life and death, of knowledge and knowing, the purpose of life and more. Ultimately, this is the value of

mātauranga Māori - as a vehicle for the indigenous worldview in the Aotearoa-New Zealand setting.

- In recent decades, there has been a significant rise in interest in mātauranga Māori where it is now *being experimented with, applied and used across a wide range of 'sites'* in education, health, environmental sustainability, economic development initiatives, research activities, in Government departments and, of course, in the organisations of iwi/Māori communities.
- Mātauranga Māori *exists in a state of recovery*, however, and only fragments and portions of this body of knowledge exist today. Some parts are better organised than others. It is important to note, however, that the mātauranga Māori continuum, including Te Reo Māori, never entirely disappeared. In the case of particular applications of mātauranga Māori, such as whakairo, raranga, whaikōrero and karanga, certain applications have existed continuously since pre-European times. *The fragments and portions that exist today are catalysing and inspiring a new creative period* in the life of this body of knowledge.
- Mātauranga Māori is *extraordinarily valuable*, particularly to Māori. It can inspire and sustain positive transformations and empowerment in the lives of individual Māori and in their communities. It informs both the construction of iwi communities as well as their everyday lived culture and practices. It also bequeaths to them values and beliefs and an orientation to the world.
- An understanding of the value of mātauranga Māori to general New Zealand society is increasing too. A particular value that mātauranga Māori can bring to general New Zealand is *a deepened and increased sense of Aotearoa-New Zealand identity and culture*. A new shared culture is rising at the intersection between mātauranga Māori and general New Zealand culture.
- With respect to mātauranga Māori, it is proposed that the Ministry undertakes the following:
  - Continue investments in *Māori language and cultural revitalisation* as it builds positive relationships in society.
  - Make specific investments in a *critical and meaningful engagement in mātauranga Māori ideas, perspectives and approaches to education* (teaching, learning)
  - Develop *resources and a communications strategy* to be applied in educational organisations, such as schools and universities, designed to increase general knowledge among all New Zealanders about mātauranga Māori.

**Note**

This report is a 'think piece' paper. It was written in response to a request from the Ministry of Education to:

...deliver a 'think piece' report for the Ministry of Education, that outlines what mātauranga Māori is, why it is important, and what the Ministry can do to raise the status of mātauranga Māori in the education system.

This report remains unedited and has not been subject to peer review.

This report presents ideas and perspectives held by the author. It can not be construed that this report represents policies or decisions of the Ministry of Education.

***Not Ministry of Education policy.*****© Ministry of Education 2019**

No part or whole of this report may be reproduced in any form without permission.

**Attribution**

When quoting from this report for research purposes, please use the following attribution:

'Mātauranga Māori: An Introduction', an unpublished 2019 'think piece' report written by Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal for the Ministry of Education.

# Contents

<b>Contents</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1.0 He Mihi</b>	<b>6</b>
1.1 Introduction	7
1.2 Ministry of Education	8
1.3 Key Questions	9
1.4 Some Caveats and Notes	10
<b>2.0 What is Mātauranga Māori?</b>	<b>11</b>
2.1 An Overview	12
2.2 Usages of the terms	13
2.3 An Encompassing Term	14
2.4 Knowledge Derived from an Atua Māori	16
2.5 The Biblical Tohunga Maori	19
2.6 Mātauranga in the Bible	20
2.7 Association with Schooling	22
2.8 Types, Expressions and Applications of Mātauranga Māori	22
2.9 An Orienting Statement	24
2.10 Example Statements	25
<b>3.0 What is the Value and Significance of Mātauranga Māori?</b>	<b>28</b>
3.1.0 The Value of Mātauranga Māori to Māori	29
3.1.1 The Māori Individual	29
3.1.2 The Māori Collective	31
3.1.3 Mātauranga Māori inspired Creativity	33
3.2.0 The Value of Mātauranga Māori to Broader New Zealand Society	33
3.2.1 The Evolution of National Identity and Culture - Matariki as an example	35
3.2.2 The Value of Mātauranga Māori in Education	37
3.3 Mātauranga Māori as a Vehicle for Indigeneity	39
<b>4.0 What can the Ministry of Education do to raise the status of mātauranga Māori? 41</b>	<b>41</b>
4.1 Māori Language and Cultural Revitalisation - Enriching New Zealand Education	44
4.2 Developing a Mātauranga Māori Philosophy of Education, Teaching and Learning	45
4.3 Increasing New Zealanders general knowledge of mātauranga Māori	46
<b>5.0 Conclusion</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Appendix:</b>	<b>48</b>
‘The Purpose of Education: Perspectives from Mātauranga Māori’, an executive summary of a 2007 report written by Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal for the Ministry of Education.	48

## 1.0 He Mihi

Ko te pū, ko te kāuru  
 Kei te hiahia, kei te koronga  
 Ko Rongomātāne  
 Tūramarama ā nuku  
 Tūramarama ā rangi  
 Ko te rangi e tū  
 Ko te papa e takoto  
 Ko ngā tauira o ngā wānanga  
 Whakamau! Whakamau!  
 Whakamau ki te ingoa o Io,  
 o Io-i-te-wānanga!<sup>1</sup>

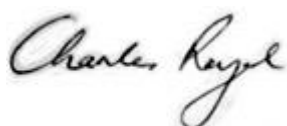
Tihē Mauriora

Tēnā koutou katoa e te hunga e tiro tiro mai nei i ēnei kōrero. Tuatahi, kia tukuna atu he mihi ki te wāhi ngaro, ki te pūtaketanga o ngā mea katoa, ki te tuturutanga hoki o te Ao. Kia tau rā ngā manaakitanga o te wāhi ngaro ki a tātou katoa.

Tuarua, ka mihi hoki ki ō tātou tūpuna, ki te hunga kua whetūrangitia, te hunga nā rātou te mātauranga i waihanga, i pupuri, i tuku i ō rātou wā. Mei kore rātou, ka kore hoki tātou i te rangi nei. Nā reira, ngā mihi ki te hunga kua whiti ki tua o te rā.

Ka mutu, ka tahuri mai ki a tātou te hunga ora, otirā, ki te hunga whai mahara mō te taonga e kiia nei ko te mātauranga Māori, tēnā koutou katoa. He waiū nō tātou tēnei taonga, ā, kei ngā pito katoa o te motu e kōrerotia ana, e wānangatia ana i runga hoki i te mohio he hua kei roto.

Nā, kei ēnei tuhituhi ka whakatakotonga ētahi whakaaro mō tēnei taonga, mō te mātauranga Māori. E puta ana ēnei whakaaro kia whitingia e te rā, kia puhipuhia e te hau. Ehara i te mea, kei konei ngā māramatanga katoa mō te mātauranga Māori, heoi, ka whatakotonga ēnei whakaaro hei timatanga, hei āwhina hoki i tā tātou whai atu, tā tātou wānanga i te taonga nei. Tangohia tā koutou e pai ai. Ki te whiwhi koutou i tētahi āwhina, i ētahi hua, ko te painga atu tērā. Kāti.



Te Ahukaramū  
Charles Royal

---

<sup>1</sup> He karakia tēnei i kawea i te whare wānanga o Hui-te-rangiora. I tū tēnei whare wānanga ki Kihikihi, kāinga tata atu ki Te Awamutu. Tirohia te pukapuka a Pei Te Hurinui mō *King Potatau*, Polynesian Society 1959, whārangi 243

## 1.1 Introduction

Interest in Mātauranga Māori-Māori Knowledge has grown to an extraordinary degree in recent decades. Everywhere in Aotearoa-New Zealand today (and even beyond), people can be found exploring, experimenting and working with mātauranga Māori. Whether in education or health, in tourism enterprises or environmental management initiatives, in arts and cultural organisations and research providers, people are investigating and yielding the creative potential of mātauranga Māori. Of course, mātauranga Māori finds deep and ongoing expression in iwi/Māori communities - in organisations and enterprises; at marae, in kapa haka and waka ama groups, in Treaty claims and settlements, in Māori medium education and much more. Here is a list (not exhaustive) of some of the 'settings' where mātauranga Māori is being used and applied:

- The organisations and structures of iwi/Māori communities which make use of mātauranga Māori to, among other things, guide decision making and action taking (tikanga) on behalf of those communities - including marae, rūnanga and other representative structures
- Kōhanga reo, kura kaupapa, where kura and mainstream schools where mātauranga Māori appears in curricula and experiments concerning teaching pedagogy are being explored and applied
- Tertiary education institutions, including where wānanga, polytechnics and universities where mātauranga Māori is used in teaching and research
- Arts, culture and heritage communities and their organisations where mātauranga Māori is applied in both artistic practice and in arts management<sup>2</sup>
- Environmental management organisations, including iwi/hapū/whānau initiatives, exploring *Kaitiakitanga* and its potential applications<sup>3</sup>
- New Zealand research organisations (CRIs, universities, private providers, where wānanga) applying the *Vision Mātauranga* policy framework<sup>4</sup> in their work and where researchers and scientists are engaging with mātauranga Māori.

---

<sup>2</sup> The new Māori arts funding strategy of Creative New Zealand - entitled 'Te Hā o ngā Toi' - is an example of new public policy making which makes provision for mātauranga Māori, this time in the form of 'ngā toi Māori'. See here:

<http://www.creativenz.govt.nz/about-creative-new-zealand/corporate-documents/te-ha-o-nga-toi-maori-arts-strategy-2019-2024>

<sup>3</sup> The *Mātauranga Kura Taiao Fund* is administered by the Department of Conservation and 'supports whānau, hapū and iwi to revive, retain and promote traditional Māori knowledge and its practical use in the management of indigenous biodiversity.' See here:

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/get-involved/funding/nga-whenua-rahui/matauranga-kura-taiao-fund/>

<sup>4</sup> *Vision Mātauranga* is an innovation framework designed to unlock 'the science and innovation potential of Māori knowledge, people and resources will benefit New Zealand'. It is applied throughout New Zealand research, science and technology system. Further information can be found here: <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/science-and-technology/science-and-innovation/agencies-policies-and-budget-initiatives/vision-matauranga-policy/>

- Economic development initiatives, particularly business enterprises, which make use of mātauranga Māori in the design and delivery of distinctive products and services (e.g. iwi tourism enterprises)<sup>5</sup>
- Health providers exploring, among other things, mātauranga Māori approaches to health and wellbeing

In addition to these settings, the contribution of mātauranga Māori to New Zealand's overall national culture and identity is growing. As New Zealand transitions into the 'post Treaty settlement future', more opportunities are being created to investigate and apply mātauranga Māori in the nation's institutions and the evolution of a shared national culture. This transition includes the mātauranga Māori response to colonisation, its ongoing effects and a deepening understanding of our nation's history.

## 1.2 Ministry of Education

There is considerable scope and opportunity to explore the 'creative potential' of mātauranga Māori in education settings - from enriching aspects of pedagogy and curricula, through to relationships between schools and communities and the management of schooling and more. Consequently, the Ministry of Education is undertaking a number of initiatives designed to explore the application of mātauranga Māori in New Zealand's education system. One such initiative is the commissioning of this 'think piece' report and some accompanying presentations. The contract description reads as follows:

In January 2019, the Mātauranga Māori team was established within Te Uepū Reo Māori and the Ministry of Education. The application of Mātauranga Māori within the Ministry and across the sector is an essential task. Whilst the Mātauranga Māori team recognise this and the work streams associated with this group reflect mātauranga Māori, a gap has been highlighted where the existence of mātauranga Māori within the Ministry and across the sector can exist to support Ministerial staff, teachers and kaiako, learners, and whānau.

The Senior Manager, Mātauranga Māori wishes to engage with a third party supplier who has expertise and vast experience in mātauranga Māori.

The contract description continues:

The supplier will be contracted for 16 weeks and will be required to complete two deliverables:

---

<sup>5</sup> *He Kai kei aku ringa* is a Māori economic development strategy which articulates a vision for Māori economic development to 2040. Like the Creative NZ Māori arts funding strategy, *He Kai kei aku ringa* also envisages significant engagement with mātauranga Māori. See here:

<https://www.mbie.govt.nz/business-and-employment/economic-development/maori-economic-development/he-kai-kei-aku-ringa-strategy-and-action-plan/>



- A ‘thinkpiece’ report that outlines what mātauranga Māori is, why it is important, and what the Ministry can do to raise the status of mātauranga Māori in education.
- A series of three presentations (60-90min) across a two week period to Te Uepū Reo Māori staff, and wider Senior Management at the Ministry.

## 1.3 Key Questions

The contract description requests responses to the following three questions:

- ...what mātauranga Māori is
- why it is important
- what the Ministry can do to raise the status of mātauranga Māori in education.

The bulk of this report, therefore, is dedicated to addressing these questions through the following three chapters:

- 2.0 What is mātauranga Māori?
- 3.0 What is the value and significance of mātauranga Māori?
- 4.0 What can the Ministry of Education do to raise the status of mātauranga Māori?

Despite the widespread interest and use of mātauranga Māori, an agreed definition that has broad support still does not exist. The absence of an agreed understanding can cause difficulties with respect to advancing critical discussions about this body of knowledge. Hence, this report presents an ‘orienting statement’ concerning mātauranga Māori (rather than a definition) and offers it as a ‘place to start’ so that important and productive discussions and debates can proceed.

Similarly, there is a lack of definition regarding the benefits, value and significance of mātauranga Māori as well. Whilst one may assert rights for mātauranga Māori (under the Treaty and elsewhere), inevitably one approaches the question, ‘what is the value of mātauranga Māori anyway’? This report offers some ideas about how this question might be addressed, with a particular orientation toward education.

Finally, the Ministry is naturally interested in understanding its role with respect to the use, expression and application of mātauranga Māori in New Zealand’s education system. Again this report offers some thoughts in this regard - presented with the understanding that the author is not an expert regarding the role, function and work of the Ministry of Education.

## 1.4 Some Caveats and Notes

This report was written as a contribution to understanding the nature of mātauranga Māori and its value (actual and potential) to New Zealand's education system. In presenting this report, the following caveats should be noted:

- This report is a 'think piece'. It is a presentation of a range of ideas and understandings held by the author and has not been peer reviewed.
- The writer is a general researcher of mātauranga Māori (with a particular interest in the arts and humanities) and is not an expert educationist.
- Similarly, the author is not an expert on the role, functions and work of the Ministry of Education

This report makes use of and includes extracts from a number of reports and publications written by the author over a 10-15 year period. These reports and writings can be seen listed here:

<http://www.charles-royal.nz/papers-reports>

It should also be noted that in 2007, the author wrote a report entitled 'The Purpose of Education: Perspectives from Mātauranga Māori', again for the Ministry of Education. The contents of that report include the following:

- Thinking about Education
- Aspects of the *Te Ao Mārama* worldview
- The Education Journey

The report touches on a range of issues relevant to education including the nature of the learning journey and the learning moment and aspects of the Te Mārama worldview including mana, tapu and mauri. Other aspects are discussed as well. The thrust of the report is to present the concept of a 'mana inspired approach to education'. The report proposed a serious investigation of this idea and presents the following statement about the 'purpose of education':

The purpose of education is to facilitate the flow and experience of mana in the individual and in his/her community. The 'fullness' of life was considered to be a function of the degree and quality of mana at play in a person's life. The outward expression of mana in the life of the individual is evidenced not only in their skills, attributes and talents – expertise and skill is widely celebrated – but finally in their 'spiritual authority', their intuitive and wisdom filled knowledge and insight of knowing what, when, how and why to do something.

The Executive Summary of the report is reproduced in the Appendix. <sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Copies of this report can be obtained here: <https://charles-royal.myshopify.com/>

## 2.0 What is Mātauranga Māori?

Despite the widespread interest and use of mātauranga Māori, a broadly accepted definition of mātauranga Māori does not currently exist - and the absence of this broadly accepted definition can hinder debates and discussions. There is a need to create some kind of agreed definition so that a shared understanding can grow and productive discussions can proceed.

The problem, however, is that fashioning a widely acceptable definition can be challenging for two reasons: first, like knowledge, wisdom and understanding generally, mātauranga Māori can be hard to define from an epistemological perspective. Just as philosophers throughout the world debate the nature of knowledge and knowing and argue over definitions, so debates can rage regarding the nature of mātauranga Māori. It is challenging to find a comprehensive definition of a phenomenon like mātauranga Māori, one that satisfies all parties, just as it is challenging to find one for 'knowledge'.

A second reason as to why a widely agreed definition of mātauranga Māori remains challenging is the lack of opportunity to create one. By this I mean, our relationship to mātauranga Māori today is very much dominated by the quest for social justice, the desire for cultural and language revitalisation and the general survival of our culture. Consequently, our discussions are not so oriented toward assessing the value of mātauranga Māori and its worldview and epistemological foundations in favour of an ideological position (justifiable) as to value mātauranga Māori in and of itself. The majority of our limited mātauranga Māori resources (people, specifically) have been oriented toward cultural revitalisation rather toward deeper sets of questions concerning worldview and epistemology.

There is much more to be said about the challenge of 'defining' mātauranga Māori. In the meantime, my proposed solution is to set aside the question of definition for now in favour of developing what I call an 'orienting statement'. The idea is to describe the 'territory' of mātauranga Māori sufficient to enable a critical engagement with it to proceed - rather than defining mātauranga Māori outright. Further, enabling discussions to proceed recognises that our priority is to get into practical questions as to the value of mātauranga Māori and how it might be used as a positive contribution to a variety of settings including education. (For those who wish to engage with an epistemology of mātauranga Māori, that remains open to them.)

Hence, in this report, I propose an 'orienting statement' about mātauranga Māori that was developed by exploring:

- The meaning of the words 'mātauranga Māori' through how they have been used in our literature

- The 'contents' of mātauranga - how mātauranga Māori is practically expressed, utilised and applied in the culture

## 2.1 An Overview

Mātauranga Māori is a body of knowledge that can be found in Aotearoa-New Zealand today. It exists in a fragmentary and incomplete state where some parts are better organised than others. For example, mātauranga Māori concerned with weaving (raranga, te whare pora) is in a better state than our traditional knowledge concerning the making of perfumes (kakara). Similarly, our knowledge of marae protocol (whaikōrero, karanga, waiata, tikanga) is in a better condition than our knowledge and understanding of pre-European karakia (prayers, rituals). Overall, mātauranga Māori today exists in a state of recovery as our pre-existing mātauranga Māori is being revitalised in a variety of settings.

Mātauranga Māori is located in the minds and hearts of Māori people and in iwi/Māori communities, their culture and their organisations. It can also be found in written form held in public and private collections located throughout the country and the world. Following the arrival of literacy in the 19th century, a tremendous outpouring of mātauranga Māori occurred so that, today, significant collections of written material can be found in iwi/hapū/whānau collections and in public repositories such as the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington.

Expressions and applications of mātauranga Māori can be found throughout the country. As noted in the introduction, there are many 'sites' where this body of knowledge is being explored for its 'creative potential', its ability to contribute and improve a range of activities such as those in education, environmental sustainability, health and wellbeing and much.

In addition to these contemporary 'sites' in which mātauranga Māori is being explored and applied, there are numerous applications of knowledge, such as:

- Te hī ika - fishing
- Te ngaki māra - gardening
- Te tahere manu - birding
- Te whakahaere hui - the facilitation of meetings and gatherings
- Te Whakaako - teaching and learning
- Te hohou rongō - peacemaking

Mātauranga Māori finds its origins in the knowledge, perspectives and experiences of Polynesian ancestors of modern day Māori who first came to these islands in the 13th-14th centuries. Hence, it's origins are *Polynesian*. This body of knowledge grew and changed as these early ancestors adapted their culture (and created new things) in response to life in these islands. For example, they encountered new species of flora and fauna, a different climate, larger land sizes

and much more. Hence, their knowledge changed accordingly in the period between approximately 1300-1769.

This body of knowledge changed again and in very significant ways through encounter with European peoples and culture from 1769 onwards. In the initial period (1769-1840), much positive change took place as Māori actively engaged with European culture, technology and knowledge. For example, Māori took to literacy with great enthusiasm and quickly understood the new opportunities represented by the trade in labour and goods from iwi districts to domestic and international markets.

Mātauranga Māori, however, became greatly endangered after 1840 when the full force of European expansion and colonisation took hold. The detrimental impact of colonisation upon mātauranga Māori can not be underestimated as the massive alienation of iwi lands, resources and political power was accompanied by a significant language and culture loss. It was during this time that the 'locus' of mātauranga Māori shifted, and understandably so, from a preoccupation with indigeneity to resistance and protest in the face of onslaught of colonisation.

Today, mātauranga Māori exists in a fragmentary and incomplete form. Since 1975 (approximately), there has been a tremendous 'Māori' renaissance' in which interest in mātauranga Māori has grown considerably. Importantly, the mātauranga Māori tradition - including Te Reo Māori - was never entirely severed and this is catalysing a new creative period in the life of this knowledge.

It is useful to note that the terms 'mātauranga Māori' are modern and very few traditional uses of the terms can be found in our literature. Even the word 'mātauranga' is absent in the Williams *A Dictionary of the Maori Language*. It is clear that the terms 'mātauranga Māori' have become popular since approximately 1980. It was therefore in the context of initiatives such as the establishment of Māori medium education, Māori language revitalisation and the Māori language claim before the Waitangi Tribunal (and subsequent judicial proceedings) that 'mātauranga Māori', the terms, have found their contemporary meaning.

## 2.2 Usages of the terms

What do we mean by the term 'mātauranga Māori'? When we use this term, what are we trying to communicate? We shall begin our consideration of its meaning by discussing two historical usages where the meaning is as follows:

- the 'totality' of Māori knowledge – an encompassing term
- knowledge derived from an atua Māori, possessed by a tohunga Māori

On most occasions today, mātauranga Māori is simply 'Māori knowledge' – distinctive knowledge created by Māori (usually) in history and arising from their

living circumstances, their worldview and their experiences. Occasionally, mātauranga Māori means some kind of special knowledge, something distinctive, perhaps profound, that was held only by special people. We will discuss these two themes by considering their use by Sir Apirana Ngata of Ngāti Porou in 1900, and by Kipa Roera Te Ahukaramū of Ngāti Raukawa in 1915.

## 2.3 An Encompassing Term

In 1900, the well-known young Ngāti Porou leader and scholar, Apirana Ngata, wrote a letter which was published on 9 December in the Māori-language newspaper, *Te Reo o te Pipiwharaura*. The letter concerned a hui for rangatahi (youth) that was convened in Wellington. An elder, Tamahau Mahupuku of Wairarapa, welcomed attendees and spoke about the rise of new, younger Māori leaders. Ngata writes:

Ko te kupu nui tēnei o ngā huihuinga ki Pōneke i tēnei tau, ahakoa te maha o ngā kupu e puaki ana i ngā tāngata mātau i reira o ngā tikanga e hāngaia ana e ngā rangatira o te motu mō ngā pire i kōkiritia ki Te Whare Pāremata. Nā Tamahau Mahupuku i whakatakoto te take hei tirohanga mā ngā tāngata whai mahara o ia iwi, o ia iwi, arā, kia tukua ki ngā taitamariki ngā kupu me ngā whakahaere mō te iwi a ēnei rā e tū mai nei.

Among the many things said at this year's meetings held in Wellington – including many things concerning various Bills presented before Parliament – the most important statement was Tamahau Mahupuku's suggestion that the young people be encouraged into positions of leadership and responsibilities.

Inspired perhaps by the conclusion of the nineteenth century and the arrival of the twentieth, Ngata elaborated on the theme of the succession of the next generation. He invokes the well-known expression, 'Ka pū te rūhā, ka hao te rangatahi' ('the old net is exhausted and the new net goes fishing'):

Kāti ake ngā kaumātua hei tautoko. Ka haupū te kupenga tawhito ki uta, ki ngā parenga o ngā wai tauraki ai ki te rā, ka maroke, ka pakapaka. Kua taha ngā rā i hao ai i te ika o te moana, o te wai māori; ka waiho hei tirohanga kanohi, hei mihi mā nga tira e tuku ana ki te wai, 'Tēnā koutou ngā kaihao o ērā rangi, te manawa o te iti o te rahi.' Kua pū te ruha. Ka tuku ki te wai ko te kupenga hou, nō nanahi tata nei i whatua ai, he pakari i te mea e hou ana ngā whiri, kāore anō i pūngohe i te ia o te wai, i te taimaha o te haonga ika. Ka hao ko te rangatahi.

It is for the elders to support. The old nets are piled on shore, at the water's edge where they dry out and perish in the sun. Their fishing days have now passed and they are now lauded by the new fishing parties who head for the water. 'Greetings to the fishermen of yesterday, the heart of the great

and small.' They have been exhausted. The new net goes fishing, the one who was woven only yesterday. It is strong because its bindings are new. They have not been stretched and stressed through the weight of drawing up fish. The new net goes fishing.

Ngata's letter arrives at 'mātauranga Māori' in its later passages:

Kei pōhēhē te Iwi Māori, ko te mātauranga e whakawhiwhia ana ki ngā tamariki i ngā kura ko te mutunga mai tērā. Kāore, he tapatahi te āhua o tērā, ko te mātauranga o te taha Pākehā, ko te mātau ki te tuhituhi, ki te tatau, ki te kōrero pukapuka, ki te kōrero i ngā reo o ngā iwi Pākehā... Tērā atu anō te wāhi o te mātauranga e toe ana, arā, ko te whai kia matatau ki te āhua o te iwi Māori me ana tikanga. Kia taea ēnā ka āhei ai te kī, engari tēnā tangata kei waenganui e tū ana, kei te mātau ki te āhua o tētahi taha, o tētahi taha.

Lest we Māori think that the knowledge our children obtain at school is the only kind of knowledge. I say, no. This is but one kind of knowledge, knowledge of the European – writing, counting, reading and European languages... There is another body of knowledge and that concerns the Māori people and our customs. When a person has obtained this kind of knowledge, then he/she is truly knowledgeable of both 'sides'.

Finally, Ngata's letter speaks directly to the matter of mātauranga Māori and its relationship with other bodies of knowledge:

I pēnei ake ai te whakamārama kia ea ai tēnei pātai, ki hea tuku ai te kupenga, ki hea hao ai te rangatahi? Ko te whakautu, hei waenganui, kua hei ngā taunga tawhito i te wā o te Māoritanga, kua hei ngā taunga hou rawa o te Pākehā, engari hei waenganui, kei reira te mano o te ika e pōrangirangi noa ana. Ko ngā tohunga hei hao i taua waenganui nā, ko te rōpū i whakatapurua tahitia i roto i te mātauranga Pākehā, i te **mātauranga Māori**. (emphasis added) Kei runga i a rātou te kupu nei, 'E hao rā e te rangatahi.'

This explanation is offered so we may answer the question, 'where shall we set our net?' The answer is between – not in the ancient conclusions of the time of our Māoritanga, nor in the entirely new conceptions of the European, but rather between. There the multitudes of the fish can be seen gathering. The kinds of experts appropriate to fish in this area are those who are dedicated and educated in both European and Māori knowledge. To this group is directed the expression, 'Go fishing, young fishing net.'

Ngata's symbolism employs the ancient idea of fishing and fishing nets. It is a powerful symbol which speaks to our experience of searching for knowledge and understanding. The sea represents both the source of life and the abode of

knowledge. Fish provide sustenance and direction and the fishing ground is the mysterious floating ground in which this sustenance can be found. Ngata urges us not to set our nets in one fishing ground but between the European and the Māori grounds, where the fish can be seen intermingling.

Ngata's wording suggests that it is the fishing ground itself that is called 'mātauranga Māori'. This is a universal set of terms acting much like a fishing ground in which many species (the contents of mātauranga Māori) can be found. A key aspect of Ngata's symbolism is the idea that one must proceed with determination and commitment to the fishing ground. One has to exile oneself, as it were, from the land and go to sea in search of knowledge. This is a powerful metaphor about seeking knowledge upon the sea of experience.

We can conclude by noting that Ngata uses the term 'mātauranga Māori' in an encompassing way, to denote a complex body of knowledge. It does not tell us about the kinds of knowledge we can find within mātauranga Māori (the kinds of fish in the fishing ground). His key purpose is to assert that this fishing ground – this body of knowledge – exists.

## 2.4 Knowledge Derived from an Atua Māori

An alternative usage of the term 'mātauranga Māori' which is nearly contemporaneous with that by Apirana Ngata can be found in manuscripts written by the Ngāti Raukawa elder, Kipa Roera Te Ahukaramū<sup>7</sup>. Kipa was an elder of the Ngāti Kikopiri, Ngāti Huia and Ngāti Parewahawaha sections of Ngāti Raukawa. In 1915 he found cause to use the term 'mātauranga Māori' in a discussion concerning Rangiātea, the church erected in Ōtaki by Kipa's elders in the 1840s.

At Rangiātea, pre-Christian views of divinity and mana were married with the Christian worldview and faith in innovative ways. Rangiātea is a Christian church built over a pre-Christian tribal altar (tūahu). Traditionally, Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Toa and Te Āti Awa considered Rangiātea as both a tūahu and a Christian church. They value it as a sacred place of the highest order. Traditions relate that the name Rangiātea originated in Hawaiki, Polynesia. Rangiātea is both a physical place (Rai'atea in Tahiti) and a mythical location. It has long been associated with notions of the highest or deepest source of mana in the world. In the Io tradition, Rangiātea is the abode of Io, the supreme being, and the place in which the 'baskets of the wānanga' were held. Rangiātea was located in the highest heavens. This traditional expression exhorts people to acts of excellence:

Kia puta ai te ihu ki Rangiātea.  
So that the 'nose' may reach Rangiātea<sup>8</sup>.

---

<sup>7</sup> In possession of the author.

<sup>8</sup> Traditional.



In his 1915 manuscript, Kipa discusses the hallowed position of Rangīātea:

I haere mai a Tainui I Hawaiki Ka mauria mai e Hoturoa nga oneone turanga o Rangiatea Tuahu Tapu oto ratou Atua o lo Matua...

Tainui came from Hawaiki. Hoturoa brought the soil of Rangīātea, the sacred altar of their god known as lo-the parent...

Kipa explains further:

Ko Rangiatea te Temepara Tapu onga Tupuna ia ratou I Hawaiki Wananga Inga Rourou e toru hei Kauhau ma ratou Inga wa katoa

Rangīātea is the sacred temple of our ancestors when they were at Hawaiki, (its purpose was to) teach and explore the three baskets which they discussed continuously

Kipa then expresses the esteem the people hold for Rangīātea. This includes the term 'mātauranga Māori':

Kaore he whare karakia penei me Rangiatea te hanga i Niu Tireni i te Ao katoa ranei na te mana na te matauranga Maori ake i hanga Ko Rangiatea e tu nei hei pupuri hei tiaki manga uri a Raukawa a mo nga wa katoa i tenei Whare miharo.

There is no church like Rangīātea in New Zealand, nor in the whole world. It was constructed by mana and mātauranga Māori. Rangīātea stands now, to be cared for the descendants of Raukawa for all time, this amazing church.

Much could be said about Kipa's statement. For now, let us note that Kipa is saying that a certain kind of knowledge was responsible for the creation of Rangīātea, and that he refers to this knowledge as 'mātauranga Māori'. In making this statement, Kipa is distinguishing mātauranga Māori as a distinctive body of knowledge. It is Kipa's desire to say that Rangīātea is the product of a distinctive body of knowledge called 'mātauranga Māori'. He is saying that Rangīātea is not the product of European knowledge but rather of a special knowledge held by his ancestors, one that is replete with mana. Such a need to distinguish 'mātauranga Māori' is, I suggest, modern. It arises from the esteem that Kipa holds for Rangīātea and his desire to demonstrate that the great taonga called Rangīātea was created by his ancestors utilising their own knowledge, expertise and experience. It also arises from Kipa's desire to refer to the knowledge of which Rangīātea is the product, and his need to distinguish this knowledge from, in particular, biblical knowledge. It is this need to distinguish Māori from European culture, worldview and knowledge, and this urge to say that we have something unique, that is modern.

In the latter decades of the nineteenth century, the word ‘mātauranga’ was associated with biblical knowledge, literacy and the new cultural phenomenon of schooling (and education generally). Even today, ‘mātauranga Māori’ sometimes means ‘Māori education’. Because literacy often arrived in iwi communities through missionary schools – and because for many years the only written literature available to Māori was the Bible – the term mātauranga became heavily associated with schooling, the Bible and Christianity in general. By the end of the nineteenth century, if one was to ask:

Kei te ako koe i te mātauranga?

The translation of this sentence would read:

Are you learning Biblical knowledge?

It could also be interpreted to mean:

Are you attending school?

Hence, when Kipa Roera came to write his statement about Rangiatea church in Ōtaki, it made sense to follow the word ‘mātauranga’ with the word ‘Māori’.

...kaore he whare karakia penei me Rangiatea te hanga i Niu Tireni i te Ao katoa ranei na te mana na te matauranga Maori ake i hanga...

...there is no church like Rangiatea, in New Zealand, nor in the whole world. It was constructed by mana and mātauranga Māori...

Having discovered this historical association of ‘mātauranga’ with biblical knowledge, we can reveal another layer of meaning in Kipa’s statement. That is, if ‘mātauranga’ refers to biblical knowledge, then ‘mātauranga Māori’ refers to a kind of knowledge comparable in nature, quality and importance (mana) with biblical knowledge, but sourced in a non-Christian deity. Biblical knowledge is considered to be a sacred knowledge whose source is God ‘himself’, brought into our present reality through the power of the written word. Kipa is saying that his ancestors too possessed knowledge of special power and mana, knowledge that was responsible for the establishment of Rangiatea in Ōtaki – a church lauded by Māori and Pākehā alike.

On this interpretation, therefore, Kipa sees ‘mātauranga Māori’ as a specific kind of knowledge – one impregnated and suffused with mana. The implication is that not all Māori knowledge is this kind of knowledge. According to Kipa’s usage, ‘mātauranga Māori’ refers to a special mana derived knowledge. This way of using ‘Māori’ is repeated in the expressions ‘mana Māori’ and ‘tohunga Māori’, where the word ‘Māori’ indicates a non-Christian religiosity and spirituality.

A 'mana Māori' is a non-Christian divine power, the preserve of a 'tohunga Māori'. Just as the biblical meaning of 'mātauranga' refers to a special and sacred knowledge, Kipa is telling us, 'mātauranga Māori' refers to a special and sacred knowledge with a different source.

## 2.5 The Biblical Tohunga Maori

The idea that the tohunga Māori was an adept and an adherent to a non-Christian deity occurs frequently in translations of biblical passages, particularly from the Old Testament. Let us look at a few examples. Here is an extract from Genesis 41:8:

A, i te ata, na, ka pororaru tona wairua; a ka tono tangata ia ki te karanga i nga tohunga maori katoa o Ihipa, me nga mea mohio katoa o reira...

And it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled; and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof...

Here a 'tohunga Māori' is a magician. The following is from Exodus 7:1:

Na ka karanga hoki a Parao i nga tangata mohio, i nga tohunga maori: na, ko ratou, ko nga tohunga o Ihipa, i pera ano ratou ki a ratou nei karakia maori.

Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments.

Here again a 'tohunga Māori' is a magician whose 'enchantments' are non-Christian incantations. Related terms can be found throughout Te Paipera Tapu: 'karakia Māori', 'atua Māori', 'mahi Māori'.

In each case, the term 'māori' refers to non-Christian deities, religiosity or ritual. Leviticus 20:27 reads as follows:

Me whakamate rawa ano hoki te tangata, te wahine ranei, he atua maori tona; me te mata maori hoki: me aki raua ki te kohatu: ko runga i a raua o raua toto.

A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them.

The *New International Readers'* version of the Bible renders this passage:

Suppose a man or woman gets messages from those who have died. Or suppose a man or woman talks to the spirits of the dead. Then you must

put that man or woman to death. You must kill them by throwing stones at them. Anything that happens to them will be their own fault.

Deuteronomy 18:11 reads:

Tetahi tohunga whaiwhaia ranei, tetahi kaiui i te atua maori, tetahi mata maori ranei, tetahi kaiui i te tupapaku.

This is translated in the New International Readers' version as:

Don't put a spell on anyone. Don't get messages from those who have died. Don't talk to the spirits of the dead. Don't get advice from the dead.

Thus the term 'Māori' denotes non-Christian deities and mana. With the adoption of Christianity in the nineteenth century, these kinds of meanings came to be invested in 'mātauranga', in 'Māori' and in 'mātauranga Māori'.

## 2.6 Mātauranga in the Bible

Nineteenth-century translations of biblical passages also reveal contemporary ideas about 'mātauranga'. The well-known story of the Garden of Eden has God explaining to Adam and Eve that they must not partake of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, for if they do they will perish. 'Te rakau o te matauranga' first appears at Te Kenehi (Genesis) 2:9:

A i whakatupuria ake ano e Ihowa e te Atua i roto i te oneone nga rakau katoa e ahua eka ana ki te titiro, e pai ana hoki hei kai, me te rakau ano o te ora i waenganui o te kari, raua ko te rakau o te matauranga ki te pai ki te kino.

He made all kinds of beautiful trees grow there and produce good fruit. In the middle of the garden stood the tree that gives life and the tree that gives knowledge of what is good and what is bad.

The sanction against eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge is first established at Te Kenehi 2:17:

Ko te rakau ia o te matauranga ki te pai ki te kino, kaua e kainga tetahi o ona hua; ta te mea hoki ko te ra e kai ai koe i te tahi o ona hua, ka mate koe, mate rawa.

...except the tree that gives knowledge of what is good and what is bad. You must not eat the fruit of that tree; if you do, you will die the same day.

The final and deeper reasons for the sanction against consuming this kind of fruit are provided in Te Kenehi 3:5:

Erangi e mohio ana te Atua ko te ra e kai ai korua i tetahi o ona hua, katahi ka mārama o korua kanohi, a ka whakaatua korua, ka mohio ki te pai ki te kino.

God said that, because he knows that when you eat it you will be like God and know what is good and what is bad.

This sentence (uttered by the snake) is fascinating, for it refers to other types of knowledge and understanding. The first is 'māramatanga', referred to in the phrase 'ka mārama o korua kanohi'. We can translate this as 'your eyes will see'; in other words, 'you will understand'. A second level of meaning lies in the phrase 'ka whakaatua korua' – 'you will be like God'. That is, 'you will achieve a knowledge and an understanding commensurate with that of God' – you will 'know what is good and what is bad'. Knowledge, therefore, is something of profound importance by which the world is to be known and understood and through which humans will be able to assess right and wrong, good and bad. These weighty perspectives on knowledge came to be associated with 'mātauranga' through these translations of the Bible.

There are many other uses of the term in Te Paipera Tapu. Here are some examples:

Whakataukī 1:7

Ko te wehi ki a Ihowa te timatanga o te matauranga.

Proverbs 1:7

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Ngā Waiata 119:73

[H]omai he matauranga ki ahau, kia ako ai ahau ki au whakahau.

Psalm 119:73

[G]ive me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments.

Following the widespread adoption of Old and New Testament paradigms in Māori communities, 'mātauranga' became heavily associated with biblical knowledge in general, and specifically with sacred knowledge. Consequently, in some quarters 'mātauranga Māori' came to mean a special kind of Māori knowledge derived from a non-Christian deity.

## 2.7 Association with Schooling

As we have seen, the term 'mātauranga' became heavily associated with literacy and with the Bible. Elsewhere I have suggested that 'mātauranga' was appropriated by our forebears to account for the experience of 'externalising one's knowing into written form' - for this is the great 'magic' perhaps of literacy, the ability to externalise one's thoughts by creating representations of them on paper. And then to pass those representations to someone else to interpret and understand. This must have been an extraordinary experience for our forebears when they first encountered it.

The context in which this experience often took place was through the work of missionaries. Recalling that the primary text by which Māori first gained literacy in the early decades of the 19th century was the *Bible* and that it was through missionary schools and schooling that many Māori were taught literacy, the term 'mātauranga' became heavily associated with the following:

- Literacy - particularly as a manifestation of the power of the new God
- The Bible - as the 'word' of this new God expressed in literate form
- Schooling - as the context within which Māori first became literate and were acculturated into the new Christian worldview

For these reasons, mātauranga and then later, mātauranga Māori became heavily associated with schooling and education generally.

## 2.8 Types, Expressions and Applications of Mātauranga Māori

An important way by which one may perceive mātauranga Māori is by considering particular applications and expressions of knowledge. For many, this is a more meaningful way of thinking about mātauranga Māori for this concerns the practical application of this knowledge. There are a number of ways to organise these knowledge applications:

### *Material Culture and Technology*

- items of material culture like *whakairo*, *raranga*, *whare*, *waka*, *tokotoko*, *moko*, makeups, perfumes and more
- items of technology such as ways of preserving wood, ways of colouring wood, traditional adhesives, sails and oars, garden implements and much more

### *Events and Processes*

- significant events which are managed or conducted in a particular way following certain *tikanga* (e.g. *poukai* convened by the King Movement)
- distinctive processes utilising certain *tikanga* (e.g. *pōwhiri*, baptisms, wedding ceremonies, *uhunga* and so on) These can include ways of:

- organising work and people
- conducting an enterprise
- communicating
- interpreting events
- forming views
- harvesting and/or using resources
- making decisions
- informing a process
- working towards a particular outcome

### *Worldview and Philosophy*

Mātauranga Māori includes perspectives on the nature of the world and phenomenon. Here are some:

- the origin and nature of the world
- ethical and moral matters, the nature of right and wrong
- the nature of knowledge and its use
- the nature of the human being

The following list is similar to the first, however, use is made of Māori language titles and groupings:

- Ngā Kōrero: Language and storytelling as the transmitter of knowledge, speaking as an application of mātauranga Māori. As with all oral cultures, great emphasis is placed upon language and storytelling as a repository of knowledge, as a transmitter of knowledge and as a process itself for the application of knowledge. In the mātauranga Māori tradition, this includes traditional narratives such as pūrākau, pakiwaitara, kōrero tara and more. It also includes whakapapa (genealogies and stories about the world) and the work of the repository of knowledge such as the *tohunga*, the *pūkōrero* and those who are referred as *he pātaka iringa kōrero* (a storehouse of kōrero)
- Ngā Kawa, Ngā Whakahaere, Ngā Tikanga: Processes, procedures and ordered actions by which certain things are achieved or tasks attended to. These include traditional ways of harvesting resources, gardening, fishing, birding and the like. They can also include teaching pedagogy, dispute resolution, decision making and more. These can also be distinctive events such as *uhunga*. These are applications of procedural knowledge which often include a strong ethical dimension.
- Ngā Mahinga a te ringa: Items of material culture, objects, technologies and practical expressions of knowledge such as traditional clothing, buildings and seacraft of various types and more. These are tangible objects which are the product of 'know how'.
- Ārona: These are perspectives and views on various things. They could be views about aspects of the natural world (the way trees grow, for example, the nature of right and wrong) and they could also include conclusions and

perspectives created in response to new phenomena (historical views of firearms, for example). In totality 'āronga' refers to the worldview(s) of which mātauranga Māori is a vehicle. These could be perspectives on existence held historically; it could also include views developed in response to new phenomena. Āronga is expressed through *kōrero*, *kawa*, *tikanga*, *whakahaere* and in material culture and technologies, those items we have termed 'ngā mahinga a te ringa'.

Another way of organising the contents of mātauranga Māori is by use of the *whare* or institution model:

- Ngā Whare: Traditional institutions, particularly of pā society and culture, including the whare wānanga, whare rūnanga, whare tapere, whare pora, whare-tū-taua and more. These institutions are 'sites' in which various kinds of knowledge were traditionally applied such as in *kōrero*, in procedural matters such as *whakahaere*, *kawa* and so on, and in material culture such as in the construction of buildings and various accoutrements.

<b>Te Whare Tapere</b>	Games, amusements, songs, dances, story telling
<b>Te Whare Wānanga</b>	Teaching, learning, creating knowledge
<b>Te Whare-tū-taua</b>	Military arts, warfare
<b>Te Whare Rūnanga</b>	Political decision making, representation
<b>Te Whare Pora</b>	Weaving, textiles
<b>Te Whare Kōhanga</b>	Childbirth, midwifery, care of the very young

## 2.9 An Orienting Statement

On the basis of this overview of mātauranga Māori, the following 'orienting statement' is proposed:

'Mātauranga Māori' is a modern term for a body of knowledge that was brought to these islands by Polynesian ancestors of present-day Māori. Here this body of knowledge grew and changed through the experience of living in Aotearoa and Te Wai Pounamu as these forebears adapted to life in these islands. It changed again, and considerably, following the arrival of Europeans in the 18th century. The change was at first positive as Māori eagerly acquired much of what the Europeans brought with them (e.g. literacy) and adapted it for their purposes. Change became negative, however, as European colonisation took hold and endangered this knowledge and many and substantial ways. Much language, knowledge and cultural loss took place, however, all was not lost as new knowledge



was created through the encounter with the European and through the experience of the creation of the new nation called New Zealand. Although severely impacted by European colonisation, the mātauranga Māori continuum was never entirely lost as important fragments and portions – notably the Māori language - remain today. These fragments and portions are catalysing a new creative period in Māori history and culture and in the life of the New Zealand nation.

Mātauranga Māori is expressed in many ways - such as *te hī ika* (fishing), *te ngaki māra* (gardening), *te tahere manu* (birding), *ako* (teaching, learning), *te waihanga whare* (building), *te whakahaere hui* (convening gatherings), *te whakatakoto tikanga* (determining procedures, decision making) and much more. Expressions and applications of mātauranga Māori can also be understood by considering the institutions and organisations of iwi/Māori communities such as *whare wānanga* (teaching, learning, knowledge creation) *whare rūnanga* (representative, decision making body), *whare pora* (weaving), *whare-tū-taua* (military arts) and more.

There are numerous 'sites' today where mātauranga Māori is being used and applied. These include schools and universities, in health providers, in research organisations, in government departments, in environmental organisations, in social service providers and much more. Mātauranga Māori is also being used in the cultural and identity development of the nation at large.

## 2.10 Example Statements

Here are some examples of statements about mātauranga Māori from a variety of sources.

### *Te Papa National Services Te Paerangi*<sup>9</sup>

Mātauranga Māori is a dynamic and evolving system of knowledge (te kauwae runga and te kauwae raro) used by tangata whenua (people of this land by right of first discovery) to interpret and explain the world in which they live. It is framed by the whakapapa (genealogy) of all things and whanaungatanga (kinship connections) between them. Examples of mātauranga Māori include:

- the oral histories of whānau (families), hapū (extended families), and iwi (tribes)
- karakia (prayers and incantations)
- waiata (songs)

---

<sup>9</sup> National Services-Te Paerangi is a division within Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand. Their role is to grow the capacity and capability of museums, art galleries and iwi throughout the country to care for, interpret and display taonga and other treasured items.

[https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/sites/default/files/31-matauranga-maori-and-museum-practice\\_1.pdf](https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/sites/default/files/31-matauranga-maori-and-museum-practice_1.pdf)

### **Whatarangi Winiata<sup>10</sup>**

Matauranga Maori is a body of knowledge that seeks to explain phenomena by drawing upon concepts handed down from one generation of Maori to another. Accordingly, matauranga Maori has no beginning and has no end. It is constantly being enhanced and refined. Each passing generation of Maori make their own contribution to matauranga Maori. The theory or collection of theories, with associated values and practices, has accumulated mai i te ao Maori/from Maori beginnings and will continue to accumulate providing the whakapapa of matauranga Maori is not broken.<sup>11</sup>

### **Hirini Moko Mead<sup>12</sup>**

Matauranga Maori is knowledge clothed in Maori terms and categories. It is an integral part of the heritage of every Maori child, and of every other child whose parents believe in the bicultural nature of New Zealand society.<sup>13</sup>

The term ‘mātauranga Māori’ encompasses all branches of Māori knowledge, past, present and still developing. It is like a super subject because it includes a whole range of subjects that are familiar in our world today, such as philosophy, astronomy, mathematics, language, history, education and so on. And it will include subjects we have not yet heard about. Mātauranga Māori has no ending: it will continue to grow for generations to come.

Each year its knowledge is expanded through research, written papers, theses, books, seminars, conferences, debates and discussions. It would be futile to endeavour to discover the beginning of mātauranga Māori. It

---

<sup>10</sup> Whatarangi Winiata belongs to Ngāti Raukawa and for many years was Professor of Accountancy, Victoria University of Wellington. Since 1975, he has lead a tribal development programme entitled *Whakatupuranga Rua Mano-Generation 2000* for his iwi of Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Toarangatira and Te Āti Awa. Among numerous other projects, Whatarangi also lead the establishment of Te Wānanga-o-Raukawa in Ōtaki.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in *Tikanga Māori: Living by Māori Values*, by Hirini Moko Mead, pp.320-1, Huia/Te Whare Wānanga-o-Awanuiārangi, Wellington 2003.

<sup>12</sup> Hirini Moko Mead was inaugural Professor of Māori Studies, Victoria University of Wellington, in the period 1977-1990 and, like Whatarangi Winiata, a pioneer in the establishment of whare wānanga. He lead the establishment of Te Whare Wānanga-o-Awanuiārangi and belongs to Ngāti Awa, among other iwi. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sidney\\_Moko\\_Mead](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sidney_Moko_Mead)

<sup>13</sup> See *Landmarks, Bridges and Visions: Aspects of Māori Culture*, p.18, Victoria University Press, Wellington 1997.

comes with the people, with the culture and with the language. Mātauranga Māori is and will be.<sup>14</sup>

### **Te Maire Tau<sup>15</sup>**

The question is, what is matauranga Maori? Matauranga Maori is simply the epistemology of Maori – what it is that underpins and gives point and meaning to Maori knowledge...<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in *Tikanga Māori: Living by Māori Values*, by Hirini Moko Mead, pp.305, Huia/Te Whare Wānanga-o-Awanuiārangi, Wellington 2003.

<sup>15</sup> Te Maire Tau is an academic and belongs to Ngāi Tahu of the South Island. Currently he is an Associate Professor and Director of the Ngāi Tahu Research Centre at the University of Canterbury, Christchurch.

<sup>16</sup> See 'Matauranga Maori as an Epistemology' in *Histories, Power and Loss: Uses of the Past, a New Zealand Commentary*, pp.67, 68, edited by Andrew Sharp and Paul McHugh, Bridget Williams, Wellington 2001

### 3.0 What is the Value and Significance of Mātauranga Māori?

In this section, we will explore the value and significance of mātauranga Māori. One of the key challenges in addressing this question is, again, finding an appropriate way to answer it. Just as it is difficult to create a comprehensive definition of mātauranga Māori, it can also be challenging to comprehensively discuss the value of mātauranga Māori in a way that satisfies a variety of perspectives including:

- The Māori individual
- A Māori group such as an iwi, hapū or whānau
- Wider New Zealand society, culture and economy

It is also possible to consider the value of mātauranga Māori from these perspectives:

- The economic value of mātauranga Māori
- The value of mātauranga Māori to identity and social cohesion
- The value of mātauranga Māori to cultural wellbeing

In this section, I will present *one approach to assessing the value of mātauranga Māori* recognising that many different approaches are possible. First, I will discuss the value and significance of mātauranga Māori to Māori, at individual and collective levels. Second, I will discuss the value and significance of mātauranga Māori to broader New Zealand society, culture and the economy and will use, as an example, the value of mātauranga Māori to education.

With respect to the value that mātauranga Māori brings to Māori, I will discuss the following:

- As a means of understanding and expressing personal and collective identity and cohesion - how mātauranga Māori assists the Māori person in understanding identity and values and builds self-worth and self-esteem
- As the basis of cultural practices - how mātauranga Māori informs the cultural practices, perspectives and behaviours (tikanga) of iwi/Māori communities
- As an inspiration for specific cultural creativity - such as whakairo, raranga, kōrero, tā moko, taonga pūoro, karanga, and much more

Concerning the value and significance of mātauranga Māori to broader New Zealand society and culture, I will discuss the following:

- The general enrichment of Aotearoa-New Zealand society by mātauranga Māori across a variety of sectors and cultural activities
- The value of mātauranga Māori to education

This section is necessarily introductory and does not provide an exhaustive and in-depth analysis of value. Rather, the section provides a glimpse of the multi-faceted and multi-dimensional way by which mātauranga Māori remains valuable and significant in New Zealand today.

### 3.1.0 The Value of Mātauranga Māori to Māori

Of course, mātauranga Māori has always found its greatest application, value and expression in Māori communities and in the lives of Māori people. Even though this knowledge was actively undermined in history and has diminished greatly, it is remarkable how mātauranga Māori continues to exist today despite the odds stacked against its survival. The fact that it continues to exist and Māori continue to take an interest in it, speaks volumes to the enduring value of mātauranga Māori not only to Māori but to Aotearoa-New Zealand overall.

In this section we will explore the following:

- The value of mātauranga Māori to identity and values at personal and collective levels
- The value of mātauranga Māori to inform the culture and activities of a people
- The value of mātauranga Māori to inform and inspire specific cultural creativity

#### 3.1.1 The Māori Individual

The positive impact that mātauranga Māori can bring to the individual Māori person is well known and understood. Innumerable examples exist where the Māori individual has achieved a level of self-esteem and self-empowerment through gaining knowledge of their iwi/hapū/whānau background, their whakapapa. Here mātauranga Māori can contribute to the positive transformation of the individual Māori person.

At a fundamental level, whakapapa provides the individual a connection to a group of people (iwi, hapū, whānau) and taonga associated with that collective. It is this connection or these connections that become pathways of empowerment for the individual.

First, a person finds that they belong to another group of people - whānau, hapū, iwi. This in itself can be transformative as human beings love to belong to groups, to tribes, to families and to discover that they do not need to live life alone. Indeed, life is much better when it is shared. It is also important to the individual Māori

person who may know that they are ethnically Māori but are not equipped with the knowledge that confirms this *cultural identity* to them. It offers them a pathway by which they are able to explore it and eventually wield it. The experience of gaining this knowledge can be very powerful indeed.

Second, as a consequence of belonging to a group, an individual can gain access to and enjoy the taonga/treasures of their group (iwi, hapū or whānau). These treasures include deep connections with:

- An overall group identity - such as an iwi, hapū, whānau
- Illustrious and inspiring forebears (who often lived lives radically different to our own)
- Particular places, such as mountains, rivers, land and seascapes and much more
- Gatherings, events and activities which are undertaken by their group and by which the values and worldview of that group are expressed and fostered
- Particular taonga such as waiata, pepeha, haka and so much, all items of literature that express the identity and history of their group
- Particular ways of doing things, particular cultural behaviours and practices (tikanga, whakahaere, kawa)

All of this can instill a sense of pride and self-worth in a person. It shows them how they can regard themselves as being so much more than an individual; that their individuality is also constructed and informed by others. This idea of a person's prowess being deeply informed by the prowess of others is captured in numerous whakataukī (proverbs, aphorisms) such as:

Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi  
 Engari he toa takitini.  
 My prowess does not come from me alone  
 But from the prowess of many.

Third, by connecting with one's heritage/whakapapa and the taonga associated with this whakapapa, it also provides a person with values and an orientation to life, a worldview even. Ultimately, mātauranga Māori is able to bring to the Māori person a way of seeing and experiencing life that is valuable and distinctive particularly when one considers the *tangata whenua-indigenous worldview* of which mātauranga Māori is a vehicle. It is possible to argue that ultimately this is the value of mātauranga Māori to Māori.

There are many examples and illustrations of this idea. One such is the well known expression:

Ko mea tōku maunga  
 Ko mea tōku awa

Ko mea tōku iwi  
 My mountain is ...  
 My river is...  
 My people are...

In these tribal pepeha (expressions), individual identity is described by reference to one's mountain, one's river and one's people. This expresses beautifully the fundamental indigenous idea that one's identity and one's humanity is expressed through and experienced through treasures of the natural world. Hence, an individual's identity is not just informed by deep kinship relationships at a human level but also with the phenomenon of the natural world.

It is this worldview that underpins so much of iwi/hapū/whānau life and inspires numerous customs such as burying the placenta of newborn children in the land, baptising children in specific waters, partaking of the fruit of the land much more.

The key value and significance here is that connecting a Māori person to mātauranga Māori in the form of whakapapa can be tremendously powerful and transformative. There is much evidence to show that when Māori become informed of their culture and become speakers of their language, this fosters a sense of esteem and empowerment - and this sense of empowerment, confidence and esteem leads to an openness in that person. They are more likely to create positive relationships with others and they are more likely to share. When people feel threatened and compromised - such as Māori who feel dispossessed of their cultural identity - they are less likely to be open and form positive relationships. Conversely, when they feel their identity is intact and they feel positive about it, they are more likely to be open. This is why investment in Māori language and cultural revitalisation must continue - as it is an important tool for the positive development of Māori people leading to better relationships with others.

### 3.1.2 The Māori Collective

In this second category of value, we explore the application and expression of mātauranga Māori in a collective context. It can not be overestimated the significance of whakapapa (a form of mātauranga Māori) to collective Māori identity. Whole communities - waka, iwi, hapū, whānau - are arranged according to whakapapa. The primary principle (there are others) by which these communities arrange themselves is through a shared lineage from an eponymous ancestor. This is the first principle for identifying and organising a community of this kind<sup>17</sup>.

---

<sup>17</sup> Even in the case of those iwi/hapū communities who are named after a *kaupapa* or an event - Te Aupōuri, for example - the community is still organised according to descent from an eponymous ancestor.

In one sense, the 'value' of a whakapapa way of organising community is an irrelevant question for this is simply how waka, iwi, hapū and whānau communities *are* organised. This was how they were organised and defined historically and this is how they are today. And when one considers initiatives such as the settlement of Treaty claims - which are constructed upon a whakapapa defined community such as an iwi - this way of conducting community will continue for the foreseeable future at least.

This way of constructing collective identity and organising community arises from the primary *indigenous* principle that exists at the heart of mātauranga Māori. This principle asserts that all life is born from the earth and is therefore kin to each other. Life, in its entirety, consists of an enormous web of relationships, what is colloquially called 'the woven universe'<sup>18</sup>. Just as the phenomena of life are woven together, so individuals (and communities within communities) are woven together to create their communities. Kinship is therefore one of the primary principles and values of indigeneity.

The activities and institutions too of those communities are therefore established and maintained to uphold this principle. The best and most well known examples are the marae of iwi communities throughout New Zealand. These are mātauranga Māori organisations which make use of this knowledge for a host of questions including:

- Locating the site for a marae
- The design of buildings and structures
- The cultural activities that take place at the marae
- The community of the marae and their links and relationships with others
- The relationship of the marae to other structures and sites of significance to the community of the marae.

It is on the basis of this whakapapa that a iwi/hapū/whānau community can, for example, assert rights to particular places. This is extraordinarily important and powerful as this way of using whakapapa serves as the 'backbone' of contemporary claims brought before the Waitangi Tribunal. One could say that whakapapa is one of the critical components of the 'engine room' of Treaty claims - another being an understanding of the Treaty of Waitangi.

Hence, just as mātauranga Māori is extraordinarily valuable to the Māori individual - in informing identity, values and perspectives - so mātauranga Māori is important and valuable to Māori communities, particularly waka, iwi, hapū and whānau communities. Here mātauranga Māori represents not just the activities that those communities might undertake and the things that they might create, but mātauranga Māori goes to the very heart of how those communities become

---

<sup>18</sup> See *The Woven Universe: Selected Writings of Rev Māori Marsden*, edited by Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal. The Estate of Rev Māori Marsden, 2003.



communities in the first instance - how they identify themselves, how they arrange themselves. This continues to be the case today.

### 3.1.3 Mātauranga Māori inspired Creativity

Finally, in this category of value, we consider how mātauranga Māori informs and inspires specific creative activities such as:

- Tā moko
- Taonga Pūoro
- Haka
- Kapa Haka
- Whare
- Whakairo
- Tukutuku
- Kōwhaiwhai
- Waka
- Karanga

These are some examples and there are many more. Just as mātauranga Māori overall is being revitalised and re-examined, so these particular applications and expressions of mātauranga Māori are undergoing revitalisation as well. Indeed some of the most inspiring aspects of the contemporary Māori renaissance concern these particular expressions.

The value of these activities is that they provide avenues and opportunities for individuals and groups to *tangibly* apply and use mātauranga Māori. Whereas the previous categories of value concern more intangible aspects of culture such as identity and values, this category includes those ways of practically using, expressing and applying this body of knowledge - the making and playing of taonga pūoro (musical instruments), composing and performing for kapa haka, giving or receiving tā moko, building and adorning carved meeting houses with whakairo (carving), tukutuku (lattice work) and kōwhaiwhai (painted scroll ornamentation) and much more. Practical applications of mātauranga Māori provide people with ways of outwardly expressing their identity and values, in addition to the practical creativity itself.

### 3.2.0 The Value of Mātauranga Māori to Broader New Zealand Society

It is interesting to note the growing interest in mātauranga Māori in broader New Zealand society in recent years. While aspects of mātauranga Māori have been present in New Zealand schooling for a long time (eg kapa haka), the expression and use of mātauranga Māori in general New Zealand life and society is increasing significantly.

At any given time on any given day, somewhere in Aotearoa/New Zealand someone is making use of mātauranga Māori. While the execution may not always be expert, we can nonetheless find many examples of the use of mātauranga Māori throughout New Zealand society and culture. From education to heritage, from tourism to the creative industries, from the science system to public relations and marketing, we find people using mātauranga Māori for a range of purposes.

The heritage sector is a site where mātauranga Māori is used widely. Because Māori material heritage is plentiful and distinctive, mātauranga Māori is applied frequently in museums and heritage sites. The collections of the nation's museums include many taonga such as woven cloaks, and artefacts such as mere pounamu and whakairo. Much mātauranga Māori is used, including traditional knowledge relating to the construction of these objects, the stories that concern their history and provenance, and the methods and practices used in their care and exhibition.

Recently, mātauranga Māori has found expression in the health system. Here practitioners are advancing ways of thinking about health, well-being and healing that can be found in mātauranga Māori, ways that seem to be overlooked by conventional western-derived approaches. Mātauranga Māori is being used to advance notions such as the holistic nature of health, the role of identity, culture and heritage in individual and collective health, and the way environmental circumstances contribute to the well-being (or sickness) of an individual and his/her community.

The creative industries have been highlighted as an area ripe for substantial contributions from mātauranga Māori. From design to film and television, from cuisine to game technologies, mātauranga Māori is seen as a potential source of creativity and distinctiveness. Its proponents look to this body of knowledge to provide stories, narratives, plots and characters. As mātauranga Māori arises from an oral culture and a storied participation in the world, this body of knowledge contains a fantastically rich and distinctive storytelling tradition. This finds expression in internet publications such as *Te Ara*<sup>19</sup>, in television and in the arts. Mātauranga Māori has much to offer this area of human endeavour and creativity.

Tourism too makes much use of mātauranga Māori. Many stories relating to sites and places of significance to iwi communities are presented to visitors. The New Zealand Tourism Strategy 2015 includes many references to aspects of mātauranga Māori. It is distinctive in its use of mātauranga Māori concepts. For example, kaitiakitanga and manaakitanga appear as values in the strategy:

---

<sup>19</sup> <https://teara.govt.nz/en>

The Strategy is underpinned by two key values, kaitiakitanga (guardianship) and manaakitanga (hospitality). These values provide the foundation for a sustainable approach to the development of our tourism industry. If we embrace these values, we will achieve our vision for 2015.<sup>20</sup>

Other examples include the use of mātauranga Māori in the science system, where researchers are beginning to consider aspects of traditional knowledge and its potential contribution to such things as environmental sustainability. For example, Vision Mātauranga is a policy framework developed by the Ministry of Research, Science and Technology. Here is one example of its many references to mātauranga Māori:

Taiao: Achieving Environmental Sustainability through Iwi and Hapū relationships with land and sea. Like all communities, Māori communities aspire to live in sustainable communities dwelling in healthy environments. Much general environmental research is relevant to Māori.

Distinctive environmental research arising in Māori communities relates to the expression of iwi and hapū knowledge, culture and experience – including Kaitiakitanga – in New Zealand land and seascapes.<sup>21</sup>

### 3.2.1 The Evolution of National Identity and Culture - Matariki as an example

A particular 'site' where mātauranga Māori is making considerable contributions and 'adding value' is in the evolution of New Zealand's national identity and culture. There is much to say on this theme, however, let us consider one example and that is the contemporary development of the annual *Matariki* celebrations to become 'an indigenous event of national identity'. It is remarkable how Matariki has grown as a contemporary cultural event since approximately 2000. In recent years, Te Papa (one of the key institutions contributing to the contemporary evolution of Matariki) has been moving its Matariki celebrations in this direction.

The annual Matariki celebrations at Te Papa first took place in 2001. Since that time – over a period of some 16 years – Te Papa has taken a leadership role in evolving the modern day Matariki celebration. These celebrations have taken many forms including storytelling, dance, music, Māori cuisine events, lectures, seminars, celebratory dinners and much more. Te Papa's Matariki celebrations have also been supported by education resources and online offerings.

<sup>20</sup> New Zealand Tourism Strategy 2015, Ministry of Tourism (<http://www.nztourismstrategy.com/>).

Retrieved 29 April 2008

<sup>21</sup>

<https://www.mbie.govt.nz/science-and-technology/science-and-innovation/agencies-policies-and-budget-initiatives/vision-matauranga-policy/>

Since 2001, Matariki has steadily grown in stature where today it is well-known throughout Aotearoa-New Zealand. Almost every community in the country marks and celebrates Matariki in some way and it is a very popular topic of study in our schools. It is primed to be uplifted yet further as a distinctive Aotearoa-New Zealand cultural event and expression

Matariki is a midwinter event that provides diverse New Zealanders with an enjoyable and positive way to engage with, learn about and experience aspects of Māori culture. Similarly, Māori artists and creatives look forward to Matariki as it is one of the few regularly occurring events throughout New Zealand where Māori arts, music and storytelling are continuously engaged with and supported.

In 2016, Te Papa began developing a new plan to elevate Matariki to be 'an indigenous event of national identity'. Te Papa believes that Matariki can be strengthened to become a true and distinctive Aotearoa-New Zealand cultural event that can help meet the need for New Zealand to have its own events of cultural and national significance.

Te Papa believes that, in time, Matariki should find its place among significant cultural events and celebrations throughout the world such as the running of the bulls in Spain, the Chinese Lantern Festival, the Day of the Dead in Mexico and the blossom festival of Japan (to name just a few). Te Papa seeks to develop an ongoing legacy experience that all may participate in and value.

In pursuing this goal, Te Papa has also articulated the following objectives:

- Deepening the connection with indigenous knowledge and indigeneity
- Transforming the event so that is attractive and welcoming to diverse audiences and communities
- Moving the event from being a general mid-winter celebration of Māori culture to a specifically themed event about national identity and Matariki itself
- Positioning 'renewal' as the theme and purpose of the event overall
- Articulating three sub-themes:
  - Whānau+Rēhia: Families and fun, entertainment
  - Whānau+Ako: Families and learning
  - Whānau+Kai: Families and food

Te Papa's goal is to create an enduring cultural event, an event that finds its way into the hearts and minds of diverse New Zealanders and becomes part of what it means to be a New Zealander. There is an aspiration to create and sustain a beautiful and inspiring cultural event that honours and celebrates identity and our home; celebrates and honours the year that just passed and offers opportunities to express our hopes, dreams and aspirations for the future. In this way, the contemporary Matariki celebration represents the adaptation of a portion of traditional knowledge to meet a contemporary need for New Zealand's own cultural expressions.

The broader value of an engagement with mātauranga Māori in this way includes:

- It adds considerably to a 'New Zealand' way of articulating ourselves, of talking about who we are
- It increases feelings of support within Māori by wider New Zealand, it decreases that sense that Māori are not important to wider New Zealand
- It brings a sense of soulfulness to New Zealand Pākehā, it enables then to 'connect with' New Zealand in a deeper and less conflicted way
- It can provide practical and real conceptual contributions to activities eg notable use of the words such kaitiakitanga, manaakitanga in New Zealand tourism, Te Reo Māori Broadcasting and more

### 3.2.2 The Value of Mātauranga Māori in Education

Perhaps the most substantial 'site' in which mātauranga Māori is being used and applied in an ongoing way is the New Zealand education system. The potential of mātauranga Māori to contribute to the education of New Zealanders generally is substantial and need not be limited to the education of Māori only.

Mātauranga Māori appears in education, from pre-school to tertiary levels, and there are two aspects to consider:

- The use of mātauranga Māori to enrich and support general New Zealand schooling and education
- The use of mātauranga Māori to inform a particular philosophy and practice of education, teaching and learning

In the first aspect, we find mātauranga Māori being used inside mainstream schooling where for many decades New Zealand children have been taught aspects of Māori language, history and culture, including songs and games such as tītītōrea. The pōwhiri ritual is used often in our schools, and haka are ubiquitous. There is much to say about the use of mātauranga Māori in New Zealand schooling and there are a large number of studies that can be consulted. An example is:

*The indigenous factor: exploring kapa haka as a culturally responsive learning environment in mainstream secondary schools*

A doctoral dissertation by Paul Whitinui, completed at the University of Auckland 2008.<sup>22</sup>

The work of Professor Russell Bishop of Waikato University is a significant source of knowledge regarding the use of mātauranga Māori in schooling. His celebrated project entitled 'Te Kotahitanga'<sup>23</sup> concerns how to improve the success of Māori students in New Zealand's schools. It includes the use of mātauranga Māori in those schools that is broadly valuable to all children and students. Together with

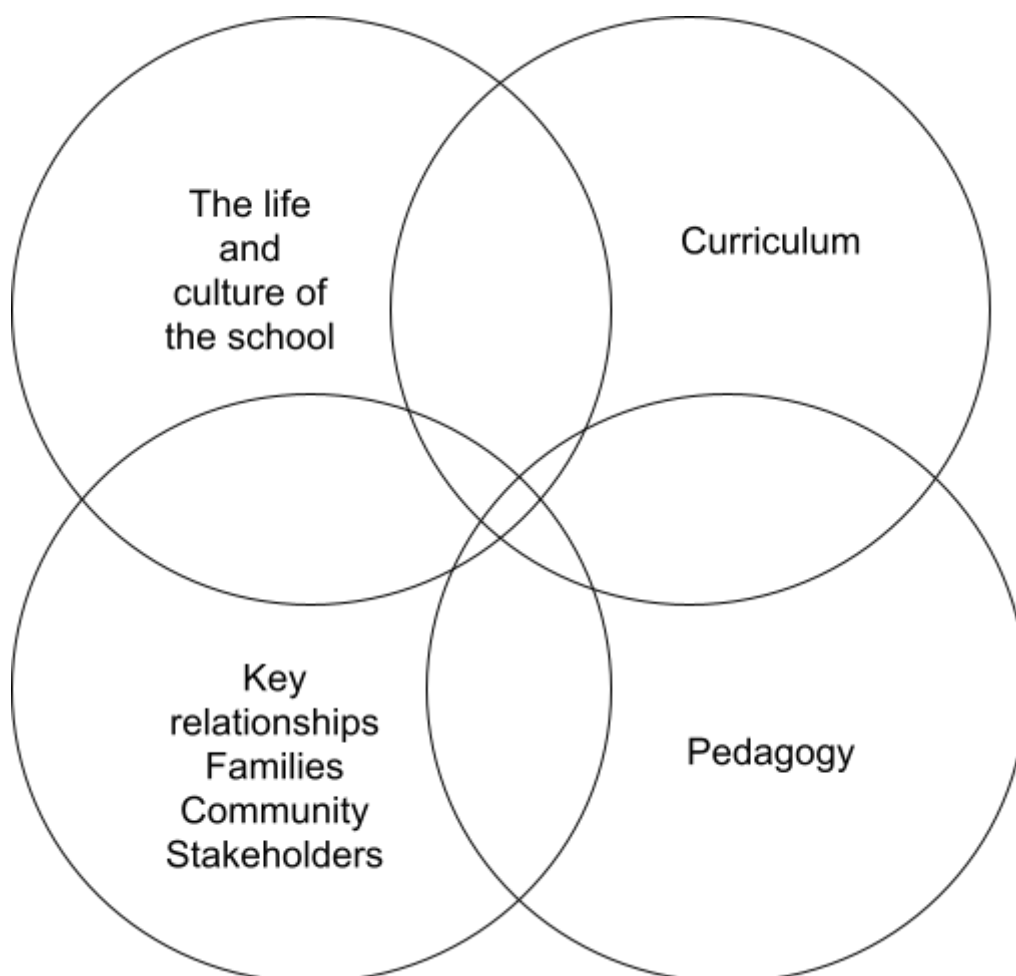
<sup>22</sup> <https://researchspace.auckland.ac.nz/handle/2292/2377>

<sup>23</sup> <https://tekotahitanga.tki.org.nz/>

Ted Glynn, he has also published *Culture Counts: Changing Power Relations in Education*<sup>24</sup> which discusses the critical importance of the right kind of culture required in New Zealand education to enable student success, including the use of mātauranga Māori to inform that culture.

In this instance, mātauranga Māori is used to enrich and support mainstream schooling. Here mātauranga Māori contributes in a number of ways:

- School Life and Culture: Assisting ways by which a school may conduct important rituals, events and gatherings (eg welcoming new students)
- Key Relationships: Assisting the fostering of relationships between the school and its community
- Curriculum: Mātauranga Māori as a dimension of curriculum
- Pedagogy: Mātauranga Māori used to inform and enhance teaching practice



---

<sup>24</sup> Zed Books 2003

A second aspect regarding the value of mātauranga Māori is its use in Māori medium education – kōhanga reo, kura kaupapa Māori, whare kura and whare wānanga. Here mātauranga Māori is taken very seriously and where a deeper engagement with mātauranga Māori can take place. The possibility and opportunity presented here is to experiment with the development of an approach to education that commences from a very different starting point.

In my 2007 report<sup>25</sup> referred to earlier, I discussed the idea of a ‘mana inspired approach’ to education and explored concepts like mana, tapu and mauri to educational practices. The report includes the following statement:

The purpose of education is to facilitate the flow and experience of mana in the individual and in his/her community. The ‘fullness’ of life was considered to be a function of the degree and quality of mana at play in a person’s life. The outward expression of mana in the life of the individual is evidenced not only in their skills, attributes and talents – expertise and skill is widely celebrated – but finally in their ‘spiritual authority’, their intuitive and wisdom filled knowledge and insight of knowing what, when, how and why to do something.

The report also discussed these aspects of the learning journey:

- Education is transformative
- Education is a journey of learning events
- The learning journey is marked with milestones
- Mentors and teachers are critically important
- Education is a constant negotiation between the interior world of the individual and the knowledge which society deems important
- The nature of the learning moment

The report contains a variety of mātauranga Māori perspectives and ideas about education and this is discussed further in the next section.

### 3.3 Mātauranga Māori as a Vehicle for Indigeneity

It is possible to suggest that the deepest value and significance of mātauranga Māori is as a vehicle for indigeneity, the *tangata whenua* worldview. Mātauranga Māori is a body of knowledge whose central foundation is the idea of a kinship based participation in natural world environments. This is the central tenet or fundamental principle of indigeneity - that all life is birthed from the earth, consequently:

---

<sup>25</sup> See here:

<https://charles-royal.myshopify.com/products/the-purpose-of-education-perspectives-from-matauranga-maori>

- The earth is our 'mother' and our destiny is inextricably bound up with the fate of earth
- We ought to relate to, interact with and cherish the earth as we would our own mothers
- All things are birthed from the earth and, hence, all things are kin
- As things are kin, all things live in a web of relationships, the 'woven universe'

The value of this worldview is that it offers an alternative to the worldview that prevails in the world today (at least in the 'west'). That is, the worldview which states:

- 'Man shall have dominion over the earth', hence, all things are inferior to humankind
- Phenomenon exist as separate, autonomous entities which may exist in relationship with one another, but it is their autonomy and independence that is most important
- Hence, the most important thing in human relationships is the autonomy and sovereignty of the individual (rather than relationships)
- Because humankind exists in a superior relationship with life around us, we are therefore free to make use of and exploit everything around us as we wish

There is much more to say about this worldview prevailing in the world today and the comments above are a generalisation and a simplification. We now know the problems of this worldview where an unbridled exploitation of resources (and the unchecked disposal of our waste) does indeed have its limits. It is extraordinary to see the lengths with which some will resist initiatives and even reject outright the notion of climate change. And it is also notable to see that resistance to these ideas is based upon or arises from a perceived threat to the sovereignty, autonomy and wealth of private/individual property rights.

An indigenous worldview provides an alternative way of thinking about life. It suggest such things as:

- The individual exists/lives in a complex set of relationships
- Life is to be lived within these relationships
- Relationships are vitally important and therefore the *capability* to create and maintain positive relationships is vitally important

The point here is that mātauranga Māori is an avenue into this way of thinking about life and this remains important and valuable today. The education system is well placed to explore these ideas for possible application in our educational organisations, from pre-school to tertiary levels.



## 4.0 What can the Ministry of Education do to raise the status of mātauranga Māori?

The purpose and vision of the Ministry of Education is summarised as follows:

### *Our purpose*

We shape an education system that delivers equitable and excellent outcomes.

### *Tā mātou kaupapa*

He mea tārai e mātou te mātauranga kia rangatira ai, kia mana taurite ai ōna huanga.

### *Our vision*

Every New Zealander:

- is strong in their national and cultural identity
- aspires for themselves and their children to achieve more
- has the choice and opportunity to be the best they can be
- is an active participant and citizen in creating a strong civil society
- is productive, valued and competitive in the world.

New Zealand and New Zealanders lead globally.

### *Tō mātou moemoeā*

Ko ngā tāngata katoa o Aotearoa:

- he pakari i roto i ō rātou ake tuakiritanga, ā-motu, ā-iwi anō
- e whai wawata ana mō rātou ake mē ā rātou tamariki kia nui ake ai te whai
- e taea ai te whiri, te whai huarahi hoki e tino taumata ai te puta
- he tangata takatū, e kirirarau ana ki te whakapakari i te hapori
- he tangata whai hua, whai mana, tauwhāinga anō i te ao.

Ko runga kē a Aotearoa me ōna uri i te ao<sup>26</sup>.

This purpose and vision is pursued by the Ministry in multiple ways including the following (not exhaustive):

### *Strategic leadership in the sector*

We develop strategic policy for and deliver services to the education sector.

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/our-role-and-our-people/our-purpose-and-vision/>

We undertake education research and analysis and monitor education sector capability and viability.

This involves coordination with other sector and government agencies and forums and some cross-sector work programmes.

#### *Support and resources for the community*

We deliver policies, programmes and services focused on improving the community's knowledge of and participation in the education system.

This involves working with parents, iwi, and Pasifika advisors and community groups to:

- get greater participation in education
- provide information to enable decisions to be made about education options
- provide education programmes for stakeholders to support the education system.

#### *Support and resources for education providers*

We make sure that education providers have the resources and support they need to deliver services to students. We:

- administer a range of legislative and regulatory controls
- determine and deliver funding and other resources
- provide services that support the governance, management and operation of education providers
- monitor and intervene in providers that are at risk in relation to financial viability, student achievement and participation.

#### *Interventions for target student groups*

We deliver policies, resources and services focused on targeted students groups' or individuals' participation in education. We deliver:

- targeted interventions
- specialist support services
- funding and other resources, and
- special education services to children and young people with special learning and developmental needs.

#### *Strategic leadership in the tertiary system*

We deliver policies and services focused on our leadership role in the tertiary sector. We:

- develop strategic policy for the tertiary sector and international education

- undertake relevant research and analysis
- monitor the performance and capacity of Crown entities<sup>27</sup>.

Given these statements, there is ample scope and mandate for the Ministry to engage with mātauranga Māori and in numerous and substantial ways. In this final section, I will present a range of introductory ideas and proposals for consideration by the Ministry of Education. As mentioned, I am not an expert on the work of the Ministry and so these views will need to be read with this understanding in mind.

The first point I wish to make is that mātauranga Māori - as fragmented and disorganised as it might be - does represent a significant opportunity for our education system and New Zealand overall. I say this for the following reasons:

- Mātauranga Māori is able to enrich and support New Zealand schools and education providers in valuable and distinctive ways thereby making a significant contribution to the success of children and students. If, for example, one of the Ministry's goals is to ensure that New Zealanders are 'strong in their national and cultural identity', we can note how essential mātauranga Māori is to Māori cultural identity (individual and collective) and how valuable it is to the evolution of a shared national culture and identity which all New Zealanders may share in and benefit from
- Mātauranga Māori offers a range of distinctive and valuable perspectives about education and a host of relevant topics. From the philosophical - what is the purpose of education? What is the nature of learning and understanding? - through to the specific - such as pedagogy and curriculum. Mātauranga Māori contains ideas about the role of community in the education process, about the use of elders as teachers, the use of the natural world as a classroom and much more.

On this basis, there are three areas of activities that I suggest the Ministry could and should do (the Ministry is already working on some of these things):

- Continue investments in Māori language and cultural revitalisation as it builds positive relationships in society and for these reasons:
  - It contributes significantly to building self-esteem and empowerment in Māori people, building positive Māori identity wherever Māori learners and students may be educated, it contributes to the success of Māori people in education
  - It contributes to the evolution of shared culture within schools and educating settings, the evolution of a shared national identity and ways of expressing that identity that all New Zealanders may connect with and be empowered by
- Make specific investments in a critical and meaningful engagement in

---

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/our-role-and-our-people/what-we-do/>

ideas, perspectives and approaches to education (teaching, learning) that can be found in mātauranga Māori. This project is concerned to investigate mātauranga Māori perspectives, theories and practices on the nature of education and associated activities for eventual application in New Zealand education

- Develop resources and a communications strategy to be applied in educational organisations such as schools and universities to advocate for mātauranga Māori and increase general knowledge among all New Zealanders about it. There is a need to increase general knowledge held by all New Zealanders concerning mātauranga Māori.

## 4.1 Māori Language and Cultural Revitalisation - Enriching New Zealand Education

The Māori renaissance has been taking place since 1975 and is motivated and inspired by two primary themes:

- The Quest for Social Justice
- The Desire for Cultural Revitalisation

The quest for social justice is well known and has been operative and influential in iwi/Māori communities since the 19th century. Its most well known contemporary expression takes the form of advancing and settling claims concerning breaches by the Crown to the Treaty of Waitangi. It is also expressed through the general theme of protest that emanates from iwi/Māori communities.

The desire for cultural (and language) revitalisation is a different yet overlapping theme. Here the motivation is toward reclaiming and recovering pre-existing mātauranga Māori, particularly Te Reo Māori, for the purposes of reclaiming and strengthening Māori identity and empowerment. There is also a strong social justice dimension to language and cultural revitalisation.

The New Zealand education system is supporting and assisting this theme in many ways, most notably and substantially through Māori medium education. This is deeply important for, as discussed earlier, this is really an investment in the empowerment of Māori people to be Māori. And this leads to a greater sense of peace and harmony as Māori feel less threatened culturally.

Continuing to support Māori language and cultural revitalisation is also important for non-Māori too for it increases their understanding of the Māori world and, more particularly, how it impacts upon general New Zealand society. More non-Māori, particularly Pākehā, learning Māori again leads to greater harmony and understanding. It also offers Pākehā a way of thinking about and articulating their experience of Aotearoa in entirely new ways.

This theme is about how mātauranga Māori can be used to enrich, expand and support teaching theory and practice and educational administration. Here the idea is to think about how a school, for example, can be assisted by mātauranga Māori as it conducts its business. There are a host of matters where mātauranga Māori may assist general schooling, for example, such as:

- The relationship between a school and a community and how that relationship may be conceived of, expressed, ritualised, articulated and so on
- How meetings are conducted
- Welcoming visitors
- School assemblies and staff meetings
- Encounters with other schools

## 4.2 Developing a Mātauranga Māori Philosophy of Education, Teaching and Learning

I particularly recommend to the Ministry of Education that it invests in research and professional development activities designed to engage directly with mātauranga Māori for the purposes of understanding its contribution to distinctive education, teaching and learning practice. Studies of this kind would address ideas such as:

- A mana inspired approach to education
- The nature of a heritage inspired knowledge system and its relationship to creativity and innovation
- The role of community in the education of the young person and student
- The role of elders in teaching
- The impact and process of cultural loss to revitalisation to creativity
- A perspective on the knowledge and learning in our experience of the world
- What it means to be 'educated'

Another area of inquiry to be explored includes those cognitive faculties and capabilities that are particularly favoured in the mātauranga Māori tradition. They include (not exhaustive):

- The place of memory and *mahara*
- E tere ana ngā mahara (quick minded, alert)
- E ū ana ngā whakaaro (committed to one's thoughts)
- He kakama ki te whai i ngā mahara (quick to pursue one's thoughts)
- Kōrero (the ability to condense and assimilate knowledge into narrativised/storied forms)

There are many more to consider,

The key point is that mātauranga Māori does possess a range of ideas and perspectives on education that are worthy of in-depth investigation. This is the exploration of mātauranga Māori not just to enhance, illustrate and strengthen existing education activities (which is important) but rather to open up the possibility of constructing an education philosophy and practice from entirely different premises altogether. This avenue of inquiry is not about addressing Māori success (or underachievement in education) but rather the investigation of a distinctive approach to education that might be of benefit to anyone.

### 4.3 Increasing New Zealanders general knowledge of mātauranga Māori

One of the critical challenges facing race relations in New Zealand is the generally low levels of knowledge and understanding among New Zealanders about mātauranga Māori, Te Reo Māori, Māori generally and New Zealand history. There has been a general underestimation of the cost of a lowly educated population about its own history and culture to New Zealand's cultural development and social cohesion. Many tensions exist in society because of the low levels of understanding and knowledge and I feel it is important and urgent that New Zealand's education system responds to this issue and comprehensively so.

I recommend that the Ministry of Education funds a significant information sharing campaign regarding mātauranga Māori. In addition to supporting the use of mātauranga Māori in education settings outlined above, an information sharing/communications strategy is targeted at schools and communities where this investment in mātauranga Māori is and could play out. The idea is to ensure that the context (ie community), for example, in which a school is engaging in aspects of mātauranga Māori has information about these initiatives.

I suggest that such an information sharing campaign would align with other similar initiatives and ideas such as those raised in the recommendations of the 2013 report of the Constitutional Advisory Committee which states:

The Panel recommends the Government

- develops a national strategy for civics and citizenship education in schools and in the community, including the unique role of the Treaty of Waitangi, te Tiriti o Waitangi, and assign responsibility for the implementation of the strategy
- note the implementation of the strategy could include the co-ordination of education activities; resource development,

including resources for Māori medium schools; and professional development for teachers and the media. note the implementation of the strategy could include the co-ordination of education activities; resource development, including resources for Māori medium schools; and professional development for teachers and the media<sup>28</sup>

The New Zealand education system is well placed to consider its role in educating New Zealanders generally about mātauranga Māori through a targeted knowledge sharing initiative to accompany existing and planned activities.

## 5.0 Conclusion

This 'think piece' report presents a range of ideas and perspectives concerning mātauranga Māori. It is introductory in nature and does not provide an in-depth and exhaustive discussion of the points raised. It is hoped, nonetheless, that the report is a useful contribution to the Ministry's work concerning mātauranga Māori.

---

<sup>28</sup>

<https://www.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/Constitutional-Advisory-Panel-Full-Report-2013.pdf>

## Appendix:

‘The Purpose of Education: Perspectives from Mātauranga Māori’, an executive summary of a 2007 report written by Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal for the Ministry of Education.

### ***Thinking about Education***

The report is introduced by a discussion concerning aspects of the education journey in the life of an individual. This introduction presents certain features of the education journey which strike the author as being especially important and which will assist the reader when considering various interpretations of aspects of mātauranga Māori that are presented later in the report. Additionally, the report includes a discussion of ‘Māori education’ and contrasts the theme of ‘Māori development’ with that pertaining to mātauranga Māori. Finally, the introduction discusses the contemporary education of Māori males. It is his view that particular attention now needs to be paid in New Zealand education to the education of males generally and Māori males specifically.

### ***Aspects of the Te Ao Mārama worldview***

The report contains a discussion of the traditional Māori worldview. A number of interpretations of this worldview are possible and, in this report, an emphasis has been placed upon mana, tapu and mauri which are central and foundational concepts in the traditional worldview. Attention is paid to the way in which these concepts relate to the maturation of the individual and the education journey.

### ***The Purpose of Education***

The report presents a view as to the ‘purpose’ of education. This view was developed through an interpretation of the Te Ao Mārama worldview – the traditional Māori worldview - and how this found expression within traditional institutions dedicated to teaching and learning particularly the traditional whare wānanga. The report presents the following statement which represents a mātauranga Māori derived perspective on the purpose of education:

The purpose of education is to facilitate the flow and experience of mana in the individual and in his/her community. The ‘fullness’ of life was considered to be a function of the degree and quality of mana at play in a person’s life. The outward expression of mana in the life of the individual is evidenced not only in their skills, attributes and talents – expertise and skill is widely celebrated – but finally in their ‘spiritual authority’, their intuitive



and wisdom filled knowledge and insight of knowing what, when, how and why to do something.

This idea forms the basis for a proposal concerning 'state of being education' which is discussed in the report.

### ***Curriculum Design***

The report discusses three traditional models of curriculum design:

- The atuatanga model
- The kete model
- The whare model

It suggests that curriculum design principles have to negotiate the relationship between the knowledge that society deems important to pass on to learners and the natural energy, talents and qualities arising out of the learner. These two themes are captured in the atuatanga and whare models.

Curriculum reflects the worldview of a people and a note of caution is raised in the report concerning cultural retention which is singularly focused upon imparting certain knowledge to learners (the retention and repatriation of mātauranga) and equipping learners with knowledge of the world of their actual experience.

The report touches upon iwi based learning and 'future proofing' curriculum so that learners obtain pre-existent knowledge with an awareness and openness to new learning, to new experiences (thus leaving the creation of knowledge as a future possibility.) Three key ideas presented are as follows:

- In using iwi knowledge, cultural and experience to inform curriculum (within kura for example), this needs to be developed in harmony with an emerging vision concerning the role and place that iwi culture can play in the lives of its members (and other people too) in the future. That is to say, iwi cultures need to present experiences and activities that can really speak into and be relevant to the lives of individual members today understanding that individuals and their families have many options as to the communities in which they can participate
- Iwi knowledge and culture should be presented as an Aotearoa located response to universal human experiences (for example, birth, marriage, love, conflict, dying and so on). This is so that iwi members may understand the deep human foundations lying at the heart of their culture as well as how their culture uniquely and distinctively approaches and explains these universal human experiences
- Iwi based education settings should be imbued with a sense of creativity as much as the imperative of cultural retention. Iwi education should not only be concerned with the imparting of traditions, customs and knowledge but

also with fostering an openness about the world and a willingness to engage it. That is to say, to act creatively in the world should be seen as a traditional customary practice (as it has been in many periods in Māori history). Children in these settings (as in all settings) should be imbued with a wonder about their world, a respect for their ancestors and ancestral knowledge, and a freedom to engage the world of their actual experience and to create knowledge accordingly.

The report concludes with the note:

Wānanga is my tradition as much as mātauranga.

Creativity is my tradition as much as knowledge.

# Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal

BMus(Hons), MPhil, PhD

Dr Charles Royal (Te Ahukaramū) is an independent researcher, composer, teacher and advisor. He has been a long time researcher and thinker of mātauranga Māori and is deeply interested in the 'creative potential' of mātauranga Māori, particularly with respect to the development of the new *tangata whenuatanga*, an indigeneity for the world today and tomorrow.



Previously, Charles was a Director at Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand (2016-19), Professor of Indigenous Development, and Director of Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga, at the University of Auckland (2009-2014) and Director of Graduate Studies and Research at Te Wānanga-o-Raukawa, Ōtaki (1994-2002). Charles has received numerous awards for his ground-breaking work in mātauranga Māori and indigenous knowledge. He has been a Fulbright Scholar (2001), a Winston Churchill Fellow (2001), a Resident at the Rockefeller Study and Conference Centre, Bellagio, Italy (2004) and a Visiting Fellow at the University of London (2011-14) attached to a programme entitled 'Indigeneity in the Contemporary World: Performance, Politics, Belonging' and lead by Prof Helen Gilbert.

Charles has published six books and ten monographs - all on aspects of mātauranga Māori and iwi histories and traditions – the most recent being *Te Ngākau* (2009), a text in Māori on the nature of knowledge and knowing. Charles is a graduate of the Victoria University of Wellington School of Music and he also completed a doctorate in theatre and film studies from Victoria University in 1998.

Website:

[www.charles-royal.nz](http://www.charles-royal.nz)

Webstore:

<https://charles-royal.myshopify.com/>