

# The Creative Potential of Mātauranga Māori

Simplifying/Clarifying

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# Contents

- What is Mātauranga Māori and what can we find there?
- Thinking about learning pathways into mātauranga Māori
- Some deeper matters



# 1. What is Mātauranga Māori and what can we find there?



Mātauranga Māori are terms used to refer to a body of knowledge

- Old Polynesian Origins
- Grew and changed through life in these islands
- Changed again, seriously impacted upon through the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century
- still exists today in a fragmentary and somewhat disorganised state



The Kete of Mātauranga Māori contains many things.

Some parts of mātauranga Māori are better organised than other parts.

Some parts are in a state of recovery yet others are in better condition.



# Kinds/Applications of Mātauranga Māori

- **Ngā Whare** – traditional institutions
- **Ngā Mātau** – applications and expressions of knowledge
- **Āronga** – worldview, perspectives on phenomenon



# Ngā Whare/Institutions

- Whare Rūnanga – decision making
- Whare Wānanga – teaching/learning
- Whare Pora - weaving
- Whare Tapere – performing arts, games
- Whare-tū-taua – military school
- Whare Kōhanga – childbirth, midwifery



# Ngā Mātau/Applications

- Te Hī-ika – fishing
- Te Ngaki Māra – gardening
- Te Tahere Manu – birding
- Te Hanga Whare – building
- Te Whakaora Tūroro – healing
- Te Whakaako Tangata – teaching/learning
- Te Hohou Rongo – dispute resolution



# Ngā Mātau/Applications

- Taonga Pūoro – musical instruments
- Tā moko – tattooing
- Whakairo – carving
- Haka – dancing
- Rongoā – medicinal plants
- Kawa, whakahaere – processes
- Whaikōrero, karanga



# Some Newer Fields/Applications

- Kaitiakitanga
- Te Reo Māori
- Āronga
- Hauora



# Sources of Mātauranga Māori Today

- Oral Sources – e.g. kaumātua
- Written texts – public and private collections
- Material Culture – taonga in museums
- Hui – gatherings of various kinds
- Visiting significant places – maunga, pā etc
- Internet sources



There is great interest in mātauranga Māori today

- Identity
- Cultural creativity such as tā moko, haka and so on
- Institutions and organisations (e.g. Māori medium education)
- Contribution to national cultural, identity etc



# Current State

- Fragmented
- Disorganised
- Some parts better organised than others
- Reorganisation and the redefinition of mātauranga Māori is already taking place



## 2. Some Thinking about Learning in Mātauranga Māori



Like mātauranga Māori generally...

...the pathways into learning and acquiring mātauranga Māori are not as well organised as we would like.

Similarly, recognition of achievement in learning in mātauranga Māori is not as well organised as we would like.



# Three themes/dimensions of learning in Mātauranga Māori

- Te Pātaka Iringa Kōrero – the repository of knowledge
- Te Tangata Mātau – the skilful person
- Te Tangata Whai Mahara – the creative person



# Te Pātaka Iringa Kōrero

- Repository of knowledge
- Rote learning
- Acquisition of pre-existing knowledge
- Acquiring items of knowledge such as waiata, karakia, whakapapa and more
- Acquiring kōrero



# Te Tangata Mātau

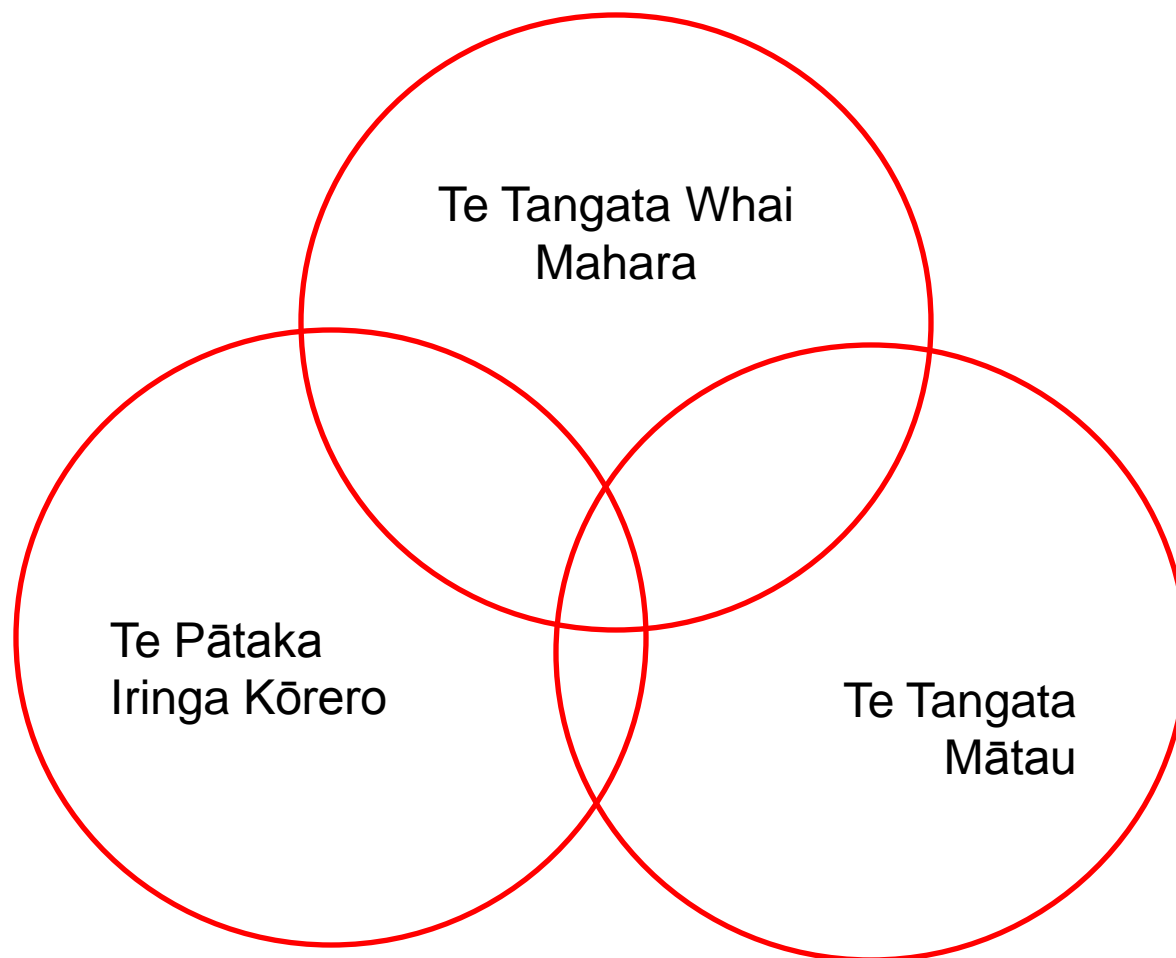
- Acquiring and fostering skills and talents
- Knowing how to listen, speak, write, count etc.
- Knowing how to garden, fish, prepare food, fix a car etc.
- Knowing how to relate to others (facilitate hui, dispute resolution, fashion and articulate a vision)



# Te Tangata Whai Mahara

- The awakening of a creative consciousness (te hiringa i te mahara)
- A person who is alert to the detail of the world, its problems and possibilities
- This is the beginning of the wānanga process
- E tere ana ngā mahara (quick minded)
- E ū ana ngā whakaaro (committed to their thoughts)

# A Possible Model for Mātauranga Māori pathways of learning



# Overlapping Themes

- These three themes may be present in each learning pathway
- The methods of assessing achievement in learning in each pathway may be different



# Te Pātaka Iringa Kōrero

- Getting the student to demonstrate their acquisition of pre-existing knowledge



# Te Tangata Mātau

- Getting the student to demonstrate their skill in a particular area



# Te Tangata Whai Mahara

- Getting the student to demonstrate their creativity by showing the issue, question, problem, opportunity they identified and then its resolution



# Some Conventional Principles

- Student achievement is assessed by experts in the field
- Demonstrating achievement may be done by a variety of means (writing, speaking, creative work)
- Generally the transition from youth to adulthood is a move from acquiring pre-existing knowledge toward the creation of new knowledge



# 3. Some Deeper Matters



# A Mana Inspired Approach

- Understanding, skills, talents are seen as expressions of mana in the person
- Mana is measured in the minds and hearts of others
- We seek students who are ‘harmonising of community and of life around them’



# A particular perspective on knowledge

- Knowledge arises from the natural world and flows into the human person (tohu)
- Hence, knowledge is about harmonising with life, with the natural world



# Some Particular Features

- Memory
- Oral Ability
- A holistic encounter with the real world
  - Valuing spirit, mind and physical,
  - Valuing epiphanies, intuitions as much as rationality
- A Heritage inspired knowledge system
- Place of elders
- Place of community



# The Difference between tohu and tohu: A Perspective on Qualification



# A Mana inspired view of education

- Tohu – to endue
- An adjective used to describe the arrival of mana in an individual
- Tohunga – a vessel of mana, an individual so endued
- Evidence of mana – their ‘authority’, their talents, skills



# Tohu

- ‘An outward sign of inward grace’  
(sacrament, Augustine)
- ‘An outward sign of inward mana
- Graduation ceremonies as rites of passage

