

Te Marautanga o Aotearoa: Visions of a national Māori curriculum

TAUĀKĪ IHO - ABSTRACT

Ko tā tēnei tuhinga he whakaahua i te whanaketanga o Te Marautanga o Aotearoa (TMOA) te marautanga ā-motu i hangaia hei ārahi i ngā kura reo Māori. Ko mātou ngā kaituhi he kaiako i te kura tuatahi, i te kura tuarua me te whare wānanga hoki. Whakatakotoria ai i roto i tēnei tuhinga o mātou whakaaro me ā mātou tirohanga ki ngā take i pā ki te hanganga o tētahi marautanga Māori taketake, ahurei hoki. This commentary article is about Te Marautanga o Aotearoa (TMOA), which is the official statement of Māori-medium school curriculum policy. From our perspective as three Māori educators who have been involved in its development for over 20 years, we combine our experiences, looking back and also into the future, to tell the story of this unique indigenous Māori curriculum.

KUPU MATUA - KEYWORDS

Hangarau, Hauora, Kura Kaupapa Māori (KKM), Ngā Toi, Pāngarau, Pūtaiao, Te Marautanga o Aotearoa (TMOA), Tikanga-ā-Iwi, Te Reo Māori.

He Kupu Maioha

E tangi ana, e mihi ana ki a koutou e ngā whakaihu waka o te ao mātauranga kua riro ki te pō. Nā koutou i whakawātea, i para te huarahi e whakatangata whenuatia ai te reo me ngā tikanga i roto i ō tātou kura, puta noa i Aotearoa. Ko koutou ngā poutokomanawa, ngā whakaruruhau hoki mō te whakawhanaketanga o Te Marautanga o Aotearoa i roto i ngā tau. E kore rawa koutou e warewaretia, heoi ka tiaho iho mai mō ake tonu atu.

WHAKATAKINGA - INTRODUCTION

The emergent research field of curriculum studies recognises that school curriculum development is much more than a technical exercise carried out by objective experts: it is beset by competing ideological forces and conflicting influences (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995). Curriculum studies theorises the nature and meaning of school curriculum as both philosophical and political, reflecting ongoing sociohistorical processes of personal and national identity-building (Pinar, 2012). The recent history of curriculum development for English-medium schools in Aotearoa-New Zealand from 1990 onward has been fairly well documented (see e.g. Abbiss, 2014; Brown, 2006; Mutch, 2012) but little has been published about the history of the Māori-medium

curriculum, Te Marautanga o Aotearoa (TMOA, Ministry of Education, 2008), a gap this article addresses.

In Aotearoa-New Zealand, curriculum development has been the catalyst for robust debates between various interest groups and stakeholders in education, and for the emergence of a vigorous local strand of educational research, including the inauguration of *Curriculum Matters* as a specialist academic journal (Abbiss, 2014). Clive McGee emphasises the futility of believing that logic alone can guide these debates: “Curriculum development is political; it is value-laden; it is both rational and irrational” (McGee, 2004, p. 82). We start from these principles (a Māori perspective on curriculum could hardly do otherwise) to tell the story of Te Marautanga o Aotearoa and discuss these three questions: How significant is TMOA? Who is its intended audience? What is the relationship between TMOA and NZC?

TE HOROPAKI ME TE HĪTORI O TMOA - CONTEXT AND HISTORY OF TMOA

Before the 1990s, individual syllabi guided teaching in New Zealand schools, each subject developing independently with its own history and policy trajectory. The new neoliberal influences on education policy as part of the 1980s transformation of the public sector demanded a complete overhaul of school curriculum policy. This happened in the 1990s with the development of the first mandated national school curriculum, the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC). When the NZC curriculum writing process started, there was no provision made for schools teaching in the medium of Māori, which caused considerable consternation in the Māori-medium schooling community (McMurchy-Pilkington & Trinick, 2002, 2008). Extensive lobbying by stakeholder groups including Kura Kaupapa Māori (KKM) met with somewhat unexpected success: the Minister of Education agreed to the development of Maori-medium curricula. Elizabeth McKinley records how this development ‘took many Māori educationalists a little by surprise’ (1995, p. 2). This was the first time in the history of schooling in Aotearoa-New Zealand that Māori educationalists had achieved some authority, however delimited, to develop state curricula (McMurchy-Pilkington, Trinick, & Meaney, 2013).

A small-scale parallel Māori version of the English-medium curriculum development process got underway, in which key Māori educators (including some who had been involved in NZC writing groups) played leading roles (McKinley, 1995; McMurchy-Pilkington, 2008). The first learning areas developed were Pāngarau (Mathematics), Pūtaiao (Science), and Te Reo Māori. For those involved in the writing groups for Pāngarau and Pūtaiao, initial excitement was tempered by the detail of the contract, which required the structure of the document to mirror the English-medium curriculum by including all its achievement objectives across eight curriculum levels. Despite these restrictions, the

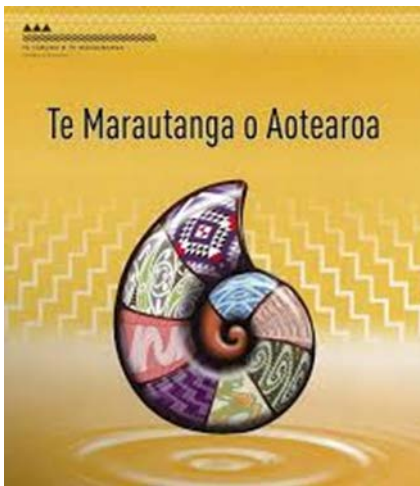
Māori-medium curriculum writing teams used the opportunity to advance Māori goals for te reo such as lexicon development, as part of the wider language revitalisation movement (Trinick, 2015).

The other learning areas followed over the next few years: Hangarau (1999), Tikanga-a-Iwi (2000), Ngā Toi (2000), Hauora (2000). For each learning area except Hauora, the draft curriculum document was written, followed by a period of trial and consultation with the kura sector, before the final document was published. Hauora, last to be developed, was still in draft form when the next round of development began, under the Curriculum Marautanga Project (CMP) (Heaton, 2011; Ministry of Education, 2017).

The CMP came about as a result of intensive curriculum debates and teacher lobbying on a national level, sparked by the 1990s curriculum development process. The Government agreed to undertake a curriculum stocktake once NZC and TMOA had been implemented, and as a result of the stocktake process in 2003, launched the CMP to revise both curricula in the mid-2000s (O'Neill, 2004). Despite the clear intention of CMP to include both curricula, again the TMOA process was not initiated until the NZC writing had proceeded to draft stage. While Ministry guidelines included keeping the basic structure set in the original TMOA, some restrictions were removed. This time around, the Ministry of Education were more relaxed and accommodating about difference. While the tenets of neoliberalism still underpinned education policy, the sector capacity for developing Māori-medium curriculum had grown significantly during the 15 years since TMOA first began. Thus, to date there have been two rounds of development of TMOA: the inaugural staggered development of each learning area in the 1990s, and the redevelopment as a coordinated project in 2007-8 resulting in the current version (Ministry of Education, 2008) of which the cover image is shown below in Whakaahua 1.

In the current version of TMOA the generic 'front end' of the curriculum assumed an important role in stating the core aims and aspirations of Māori-medium schooling. It was also the site of considerable disagreement amongst the members of Te Ohu Matua, the advisory group appointed to oversee the redevelopment of TMOA. A graduate profile, for example, was contentious because of the different ideas, and the wish to avoid hierarchising some choices, such as going to university, above others. Similarly, it became problematic to define a set of 'universal' Māori values. For these reasons, TMOA refers to values but does not spell out what these are; rather it is left to each school and community to define.

Whakaahua 1: TMOA cover image (Ministry of Education, 2008)



The physical form of TMOA has changed since development first started. In the 1990s each learning area was published as a separate book of 100-plus pages. As well as specifying learning objectives for each level, each curriculum document also contained examples of learning and assessment activities. Word lists were also an important aspect of the work of the writing group for each curriculum document. The redevelopment of TMOA in the 2007-8 began with a strict limit of only 10 pages per learning area. The final outcome - the current version of TMOA - is published as a ring binder that contains the generic front end followed by all the learning areas, as well as fold-out charts and electronic versions on DVD tucked inside the cover. The cover image shown above features versions of the original kōwhaiwhai patterns that were designed for each TMOA learning area during the 1990s development process. These designs were shared with NZC at a late stage of the CMP redevelopment, as part of the Ministry of Education's response to the protest from English-medium teachers over the lack of 'te ao Māori' reflected in the draft NZC document (discussed in Stewart, 2011).

The conditions under which TMOA has been developed have also changed significantly over time. As noted above, for Pāngarau and Pūtaiao the writing contracts stipulated that all the learning objectives in the respective English-medium curricula had to be maintained in the reo Māori version (see discussion in McKinley, 1995). Needless to say, this condition imposed significant and perhaps undue influence on the writing and framing of the documents. This condition was loosened for the remaining learning areas, but pressure to adhere to NZC remained: pressure coming from the English-medium sector but also from within the Māori-medium community itself. Not least among these pressures is the awareness of the curriculum writers of the rights of Māori-medium students to access all the benefits of global knowledge represented by NZC. Serious limitations on what can be achieved are imposed by the small scale of the project, and the pressure imposed by contractual obligations

that dictate the pace and framing of the writing. Beyond these logistic and technical limits, the biggest challenge is the lack of history of Māori curriculum writing: like writing curriculum ‘in a vacuum.’

The second round of development of the TMOA in 2007-8 had a different starting point. It was a significantly smaller task to redevelop and refine an existing curriculum document. Most of the writers had been involved in the previous development, and the sector had had a chance to work with the first marautanga documents, so the sector also started from a different position compared with the original development. Collectively, the TMOA writers decided to keep eight curriculum levels as schools and the sector had become familiar with this structure, and since Māori-medium teachers face significant linguistic demands that can impede the implementation of any new curriculum development. The redevelopment was a chance to refine and improve the original TMOA; for example, in Pūtaiao the achievement objectives that dealt with astronomy were moved from the physics strand into the nature strand. The project to redevelop TMOA was made more overtly political by the intent for it to be ratified by Cabinet, to produce a curriculum mandated under the Education Act against which Māori-medium schools could be held accountable.

ĒTAHI WHAKAAROARO KI TMOA - REFLECTIONS AND PERSPECTIVES ON TMOA

The status of TMOA in relation to NZC can best be described as ‘contested’. NZC writers work within a tradition of curriculum development that dates back to the beginnings of schooling in Aotearoa New Zealand, and connects to international networks of curriculum knowledge. By contrast the TMOA writers initially operated in a complete vacuum, most having had little if any experience of curriculum development. There has been the understandable tendency to ‘start from Rangī and Papa’ so that the work is less like ‘curriculum development’ and more like attempting to articulate Māori worldview and philosophy—to establish the canons of ‘mātauranga Māori’ within the framework of school curriculum, while at the same time paying due regard to a veritable host of educational factors and influences. In this context the writing teams have often found it helpful to refer to NZC for examples and models. Development of some Māori-medium learning areas have been impacted by events in the relevant English-medium learning area. For example, the development of Tikanga-a-Iwi in the 1990s was sandwiched between phases of the major national controversy over the Social Studies curriculum (Dale, 2016; Openshaw, Clark, & Hamer, 2005).

One of the questions shadowing the development of TMOA has been its intended audience. On one hand, the Ministry of Education wanted one curriculum for all Māori-medium schools. This view sees TMOA as parallel to NZC, as a mechanism to achieve the large goals of the state. These national goals include, for example, having a society of numerate and scientifically literate citizens; aims

pursued in the reforms of schooling from the 1980s onwards, in response to economic challenges in competitive markets, including the aspiration of a knowledge society (Gilbert, 2005). Such state policy drivers undoubtedly help explain why Pāngarau and Pūtaiao were the first learning areas along with Te Reo to be developed.

On the other hand, Māori want to determine their own curriculum, and do not necessarily see the TMOA development as meeting the educational needs of their children and whānau. KKM in particular wanted their own curriculum: as the Māori-medium sector has divided over time, the curriculum debates have followed. Today Māori-medium schools include several types including KKM, Kura-ā-iwi, Kura Taiao, and immersion and bilingual units. These types differ structurally and in terms of history and philosophy: differences that fundamentally influence ideas about curriculum (May & Hill, 2005). Māori-medium curriculum is the symbolic battleground of indigenous education and critical pedagogy. For example, there has been some engagement by KKM teachers in TMOA development over the years, but the national KKM representative group announced early in the 1990s that in time they intended to produce their own curriculum. Two decades later in 2015 they launched their Te Aho Matua curriculum, a privately owned policy document that outlines how Te Aho Matua, the legally mandated founding document of KKM (Te Rūnanganui o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori, 2008), guides the teaching and learning programme: conceivably useful as a supplementary curriculum statement in combination with TMOA. The situation in 2017 is one of ‘watch this space.’

TMOA could be accused of representing state educational interests, yet it has been useful for Māori interests and has acquired mana over the years through use. The mana and mauri of TMOA also derives from acknowledging those people who led its development who have since passed away (Trinick & Dale, 2012). Legislation required Māori-medium schools to implement TMOA, so the government was obliged to support schools and teachers with professional development and resource initiatives. Unsurprisingly, the support provided was insufficient to address all the major challenges of teaching the newly-created disciplines, but through the discursive activities undertaken in these initiatives, terminology and register development accelerated and became more systematic (Trinick, 2015). This accompanied the extension of Māori-medium teaching to higher levels of schooling as the kura population grew older, accompanied by the need for further language elaboration. Māori determination to revitalise te reo meant taking advantage of the opportunities in the TMOA development process, even within the constraints of the state (McMurchy-Pilkington, 2008). As a country, Aotearoa-New Zealand can feel justifiably proud of this national Māori-medium curriculum policy, which puts us at the forefront of the international indigenous education community. In this sense, the significance of TMOA can hardly be overstated.

But it is equally important to acknowledge the challenges and limitations of TMOA. From the beginning, the expectations of TMOA have been diverse and often unrealistic: it has been hailed as a panacea for various aspects of Māori education, often with little to no evidence and flimsy reasoning. The work of developing TMOA has involved treading a difficult path between conflicting forces: on one side, the dream of a curriculum based on revitalising ‘Māori language and knowledge’ to reverse the colonising effects of a history of ‘mainstream’ schooling—seemingly a fitting example of an ‘irruption of subjugated knowledge’ in the language of Foucault (Webster, 1996, p. 234). On the other hand, there is a widespread belief that TMOA can overcome the historical inequities for Māori students in terms of ‘mainstream’ achievement outcomes.

Conflicting forces are always present in any school curriculum development, given the importance of schooling in our society. These forces are greatly intensified in the TMOA development compared with NZC, to an extent that far exceeds the acknowledgement made by the conditions in which we worked. We were dealing with a language that had been excluded from schooling for over a 100 years until recently and so had only a small corpus of literature; after generations of suppression it was nearly dead in the communities; and it had never before been standardised on the scale required to teach all subjects in the medium of Māori to at least the upper secondary school level. The supposed beneficiaries were an ethnic group in society with few resources, beset by socioeconomic disadvantage of all kinds. Yet one of the subtle effects of neoliberal education policy discourse with its fixation on ‘process’ is to make everything seem ‘the same’ leading to expectations that everything about NZC is mirrored in the case of TMOA. This tension between ‘doing something different’ and ‘doing the same better’ plays out at many levels in the history of TMOA, and in Māori-medium education in general.

The role of mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) has been a significant challenge throughout the development of TMOA, and remains so today. TMOA (like NZC) is a state-mandated curriculum, and like NZC, it is permissive rather than prescriptive in terms of the ‘knowledge’ that schools should ‘actually teach.’ The learning outcomes are broad and written to promote the learning process, in alignment with constructivist learning theories. Consequently, the knowledge that students should be learning is undefined, and the concomitant idea of ‘school curriculum’ that adapts the broad outlines of TMOA to suit local conditions has become entrenched in kura. Teachers in English-medium can default to the enormous corpus of existing resources that defines the norms for support and help to interpret the learning outcomes. This resource does not exist in Māori-medium for various reasons, not all permitting of simple or technical solutions. There is tension, for example, over what some term

the ‘commodification’ of mātauranga Māori for inclusion in a national curriculum. Many iwi groups are reluctant to make ‘tribal’ knowledge publicly available. Here the permissive nature of TMOA is helpful as it allows individual schools and teachers to apply their own interpretation of mātauranga Māori in their programmes.

TMOA seeks to base curriculum on mātauranga Māori, despite the ineffability and non-standard nature of the meaning of this term, but comes under pressure to veer towards translation of NZC. Each learning area faces compromise between basing their curriculum document on mātauranga Māori, and other aims such as ensuring students are not disadvantaged in terms of future study and career options. Such clashes of purpose produce different results in each of the learning areas in TMOA, and means the required compromises differ in kind, as well as in degree. Yet this difficult knowledge work, on top of the ongoing language work, is significantly under-acknowledged by the state education systems that provide for and support TMOA.

Attempts to include a more authentic Māori worldview included specific sections in the front end to acknowledge Māori values and aspirations. Māori imagery and metaphor was also used (see cover image shown above in Figure 1), often accompanied by lengthy debate about appropriateness. Tribal knowledge, identity and intellectual property often extrapolate debate well beyond knowledge related to the curriculum. The difficulty of restricting debates is one challenge of developing national Māori curricula when one of the key tenets of the te reo Māori language revitalisation movement is preservation of iwi dialect and knowledge. TMOA development, as part of a wider indigenous language revitalisation movement, walks a difficult path between language standardisation and language decline.

KUPU WHAKATEPE: HE TIROHANGA KĒ - CONCLUSION: VISIONS OF TMOA

Curriculum metaphors shed light on the model or thinking behind their use in educational texts, and it is interesting to reflect on some of the metaphors that have featured in the development of TMOA over the years, including those already mentioned. From a non-Māori or perhaps a Ministry perspective, to see TMOA as a **mirror** of NZC is a ‘safe’ model of curriculum, understood as a Māori language translation that means ‘the same.’ The second metaphor is to see TMOA as a **parallel** to NZC, though this carries the implication of never meeting, but always running alongside (and possibly yoked to NZC). Favoured Māori metaphors for curriculum include **kete**, the ‘baskets of knowledge’ idea, and **whare**; both ideas soaked with cultural meanings. More recently, talk has turned to TMOA as ‘te hoa marautanga’ or the **partner** curriculum to NZC, ‘hoa’ meaning

‘companion’ - a metaphor for the bi-lingual national curriculum of Aotearoa-New Zealand that seems to work well in both languages.

In telling this story of TMOA, we have aimed to present a balanced view not only of its achievements and potential, but also acknowledging its challenges and limitations. At the very least, TMOA denotes a visibly Māori space in the school curriculum of Aotearoa-New Zealand. TMOA serves to allow Māori a sense of ownership over curriculum, but it needs to be considered in combination with NZC, and with cognisance of larger overall changes in education. As a key policy in Māori-medium schooling, TMOA affects the work of other education sectors and agencies, such as initial teacher education (Stewart, Trinick, & Dale, 2017, in press) and the Education Review Office. The process of developing TMOA has provided significant opportunities for Māori educators to gain valuable knowledge, skills and experience of curriculum development work. The overall story of TMOA is one of Māori agency; it has been, and will continue to be, a site of Māori strategies for tino rangatiratanga in education, within the constraints of the prevailing socio-political context.

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