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An Immersion Planning Studio with an Indigenous Community in New Zealand: Case Study

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Abstract

This article shares good practice lessons relating to the running of an immersion studio designed to introduce planning students to working with an indigenous Māori community in New Zealand. The indigenous tribes of Aotearoa New Zealand are collectively known as Māori and represent the indigenous inhabitants who occupied New Zealand for hundreds of years before European contact (Fleras & Spoonley, 1999). In 1840, Māori chiefs and representatives of the British Crown signed Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the Treaty of Waitangi which are the foundational documents of Aotearoa New Zealand. These treaties set out rights, obligations and responsibilities between Māori and the Crown that, in part, have been incorporated into New Zealand's statutory planning framework.

The studio formed part of the four year undergraduate programme in planning, accredited by the New Zealand Planning Institute, and running in semester one of year three. The studio involved students working with the Te Hana Community Development Charitable Trust and its community, a grassroots initiative, and with the help of their teachers identifying outputs which would be most useful to the community. The first of the outputs was delivered during a three-day stay on the marae on week five and the second set of outputs on week twelve at a presentation to community representatives at the University marae.

In terms of good practice, the immersion studio demonstrates that mutual benefits can be achieved through the development of a partnership approach to learning. The relationship with the community was based on the rangatira ki te rangatira (chief to chief) principle which ensured that the status, reputation and mana (authority) of the teaching team indicated the high value placed on the relationship by the University and equally the high status accorded to the studio by the community. The studio also demonstrated how to prepare students to ensure they respected the tikanga (protocols) of the marae and did not cause offence. It makes an important contribution to the limited literature on immersion studios with indigenous groups.

Keywords: Immersion Studio, Māori Indigenous Community, Community Based Approach, Te Hana Te Ao Marama, Partnerships

Introduction

This article shares the good practice points relating to the running of an immersion planning studio designed to introduce students to working with an indigenous Māori community in New Zealand. The course on which this article is based had been led for two years by Lena Henry as course co-ordinator and involved the other two authors as support teachers. The authors discuss the rationale for and structure of the course, describe the learning outcomes and related assessment and reflect on the experience of delivering the course from the perspective of the students, teachers and community.

Approach

This paper builds on and extends work carried out by colleagues at The University of Auckland as part of an earlier studio review by addressing indigenous culture and the possibility of immersion studios, to which the previous work made no reference (Higgins *et al.*, 2009). The paper is based on a reflection on the studio as it ran in 2009 and 2010. It is underpinned by a literature review and a study of the students' journals. The authors also had access to and made reference to the student portfolios and exams produced for the courses running in parallel to and integrated with the studio; the planning management elective (Reeves, 2011a) and the governance and planning core course (Hucker, 2011). Finally the case study drew on the student evaluations of the courses and the reflections of the course co-ordinator and teaching team.

The Educational Context of the Studio

The Bachelor of Planning degree provides a general planning education within which the studio focuses on how planners 'respond to a planning issue in a diverse society with particular recognition of cultural difference' (The University of Auckland, 2011). Students of planning programmes accredited by the New Zealand Planning Institute (NZPI) must have:

an understanding of Māori knowledge and environmental perspectives and be aware of cultural, social, economic, ethical and political values, including New Zealand's bicultural mandate for planning and its implications for planning practice; resource and environmental law and treaties; plan development; and management of resources.

(NZPI, 2009, pp. 2, 6, 7)

The University Charter stresses the role of the University in recognising a special relationship with Māori under the Treaty of Waitangi.' (The University of Auckland, 2003a, Section 1). This is reflected in The University of Auckland Graduate Profile describing the personal qualities, skills and attributes a student is expected to obtain by the end of an undergraduate degree programme at the University. These include:

- An awareness of international and global dimensions of intellectual, political and economic activities, and distinctive qualities of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

- An ability to access, identify, organise and communicate knowledge effectively in both written and spoken English and/or Māori, in effect enabling students to communicate in either or Maori or English.

(The University of Auckland, 2003b)

Course delivery

The studio is 12 weeks in length and involves 36 hours of guided learning and 64 hours of independent learning on the part of students. The co-ordinator describes the essence of the course as 'bringing students out of the theory cloud' to learn through experience how to deal with new situations involving uncertainty, complexity, diversity and change.

From experience the co-ordinator knew that communities could benefit from engaging with planning students, even to learn what planners do. Secondly, she knew students would benefit from studying a 'real situation' and hoped that it would raise their interest and knowledge of marginalised communities and their responsibilities with regard to the declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples (United Nations, 2007). Thirdly, as a student she had wished that studios had been more hands on providing opportunities to work with real issues rather than dealing simply with scenarios. Taking studios out into the community raises the profile of both the profession and the university and students can get to know a community they might otherwise never be exposed to. Fourthly she saw the studio complementing other courses including Māori and Resource Management that in the past students have found challenging since they have little knowledge of New Zealand's planning history, Māori interests and aspirations and Māori planning values and practices.

Leading and co-ordinating a studio requiring students to work with a Māori community did pose some potential risks that needed to be managed appropriately to mitigate any major issues. It required careful consideration of both the community and the students to ensure that relationships were strengthened by the experience. The teaching staff considered the skills, knowledge and learning objectives to develop a challenging yet supportive programme of activities. The added dimension of working with a Māori community meant the programme needed to be developed in a way that considered the inexperience of some students in working with a Māori community on planning matters. The teaching staff agreed to focus on further developing the technical skills students had learnt in previous studios and applying them to a new and specific context. The starting point for planning the studios was to assume that the majority of the students would be inexperienced. The teaching team therefore adapted the programme to ensure that the students experienced a soft entry into community engagement and cultural protocols were thoughtfully explained and discussed with them.

The potential risks that can occur when taking educational projects out into the real world to work with communities were minimised and managed by carefully selecting

the community. The Te Hana community was approached because the co-ordinator was familiar with their culture and had already established links with key persons. Te Hana was already known as friendly and hospitable and had a plan to transform their community. Te Hana had an interest and understanding of non-Māori and Māori students learning on marae (tribal meeting grounds) so this was an ideal fit for the studio. Preliminary discussions were held with leaders of Te Hana community and expectations and responsibilities expressed. A major concern of the teaching staff was managing the expectations of the community and this was addressed by agreeing realistic sets of tasks between the teaching staff and the Te Hana Trust. This involved discussing time constraints, student capability and capacity limits, the geographical distance (85 kms) between the University and Te Hana and the general makeup of the class. Learning outcomes were developed after these discussions.

The learning outcomes state that on completion of this course a student should be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of community development and identify important planning issues and challenges that exist for third sector or community-based organisations.
2. Demonstrate an ability to interact confidently and engage effectively in processes developed and driven by Māori to achieve community aspirations.
3. Have a critical understanding of the politics of diversity and difference; how attitudes, behaviours, codes and legislation influence planning processes and outcomes.
4. Understand and apply a range of tools and techniques in planning for diversity.
5. Develop/design/implement a planning project that contributes to advancing the aspirations identified in the Te Hana Community Outcome Plan.

(Te Hana Community Development Charitable Trust, 2007)

To achieve these goals, the studio course was designed around interactive learning forums, such as hui (Māori meeting practices) and wānanga (conscious thought-processing discussion), immersion learning experience on a marae (tribal meeting grounds), lectures and self-directed study.

Students are also required to reflect on their own attitudes, values and perspectives by documenting their learning experiences. Assessment was by way of two assignments. Assignment one was an individual piece of work involving the student producing a journal to record relevant research, readings, action, reflections while undertaking this studio (Reeves, 2011b). Initial thoughts and feelings are important, however as set out in the marking schedule for assignment one, a significant portion of the mark for assignment one was based on informed reflections on readings. Assignment two involved students working individually and in groups to deliver tangible outputs identified by the community.

The method of teaching is reflected in this korero (statement) quoted by Lena Henry (2011) in the studio course outline:

Ma te whakaata, ka mohio

Ma te mohio, ka marama

Ma te marama, ka matau

Ka matau, ka ora.

By discussion cometh understanding

By understanding cometh light

By light cometh wisdom

By wisdom cometh life everlasting.

by Pa Henare Tate (Barlow, 1996, pp ix-xi)

The preparations involved the teachers acting as facilitators (Peel, 2000), introducing students to the idea of working with a real community with its own history, culture, values and aspirations. Through facilitated korero and workshops the teachers encouraged students to: verbalise their ideas about what planning is and what planners do; explore the meaning of diversity; assess their own knowledge, understanding and interest in diversity; talk about their own backgrounds and what they think New Zealand culture is; and clarify the roles and responsibilities of planners in relation to human rights in providing equal access in the built environment, policy that recognises human rights and the right to live as Māori.

In a session before proceeding to the marae at Te Hana, one of the teaching team and authors, Bruce Hucker, a Pākehā (a person of predominantly European descent) spoke about the privilege associated with their being able to work with the Te Hana Trust that was striving to regenerate its community. He said that students could develop insights about planning if they were prepared to move outside their comfort zone, listen before speaking, reflect, look through the community's eyes, walk a mile in their shoes, and discuss with them how to act together for mutual benefit. He assured them they would also have the opportunity to increase the different kinds of intelligence they possessed such as their capacity for rationality, their emotional, social, cultural, environmental, spatial, bodily, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence.

Situating the Case Study: Literature Review

In order to situate the case study the authors undertook a literature search on studios, indigenous peoples and planning covering the period 2000-2010. A key finding was that there is still a surprisingly limited literature on studio-based learning following Reardon's landmark article in 1998. Looking at some of the general literature, Dalton (2001) and Brocato (2009) talk about the studio involving a collaborative problem solving learning environment and enabling inquiry into a problem. Dalton (2001) acknowledges the importance of content and that studio courses cover techniques such as projecting trends and devising plans and strategic planning considerations.

Tyson and Chung (2010) further expand on this, describing studios as a shared learning environment led by academic staff. They further explain that because studio based learning is set within a framework in which ideas can be explored and reflected upon, methodologies can be developed.

Higgins *et al.* (2009) explain that the conventional studio model is one in which practical projects with workshop-type classes and tutorials are taught in-order to prepare students for professional practice focusing on developing the necessary skills needed. Dalton (2001) stated that studio based learning can be based on real communities. Higgins *et al.* (2009) go beyond this point and note that studio learning has become strongly focused on design and community engagement.

Generally studios are seen to be an effective way to learn to deal with situations of uncertainty and complexity which planners face in real life (Coiacetto, 2008). In this context they are one way of simulating or replicating a professional environment (Cameron, *et al.*, 2001). Higgins *et al.* (2009) and Duggan (2004) have discussed issues relating to traditional studio based courses suggesting that each institution needs to develop its own creative response to their own situation.

When it came to the more specific literature on immersion studios with indigenous communities in a planning context the search revealed limited contemporary literature with none relating to New Zealand. The search revealed some work relating to two other professional areas; pre-service teaching in Alaska (Boylan and Munsch, 2007) and counselling in the USA (Canfield *et al.*, 2009). Both studies highlighted the importance of cultural immersion as an approach to deepening understanding.

Writing about Australian aboriginal culture in particular, Semchison (2001) argues that the only true way to understand and communicate with indigenous populations is through cultural sharing; hearing experiences, music, song and dance and through story telling. Reflecting on experiences in Australia, Kwitko and Thompson (2002) acknowledge that to bring about cultural understanding within planning, there is a need to reach beyond academia.

Learning by immersion is consistent with the spiral learning curriculum framework as described by Andrade (1999) and underlying planning studios at The University of Auckland in which students learn about the theory and practice of policy and planning through lecture sessions whilst studios concentrate on learning by doing. In that way they build on understanding and skills introduced in other parts of the curriculum. Learning by immersion is therefore an extension of learning by doing and a means of encouraging students to become more reflective practitioners. The following section explains why the teachers decided to work with Te Hana.

Why Te Hana?

The decision to work with the Te Hana project, a grassroots community initiative founded on Māori values, knowledge and practices added a completely new dimension to the planning studios at The University of Auckland. It allowed for the development of

immersion learning and for the first time involved working with a Māori community to enable students to develop their ability to interact confidently and engage effectively in Māori processes to achieve Māori aspirations, and to develop/design/implement ways of advancing those aspirations identified in the Te Hana Community Outcome Plan. The community group hoped they could use the outcomes of this studio exercise to advance their aspirations and achieve their goals in relation to their own development plans and the Auckland Spatial Plan (Auckland Council, 2011a).

The geographical setting of Te Hana, its distance (85 km) from the University of Auckland campus and the ability of the Te Hana Community Development Charitable Trust to offer both facilities and persons for an extended period of time, made possible a three day live-in intensive studio. Students travelled by bus, and slept communally on mattresses in the meeting house, and also helped in the kitchen preparing and serving food, along with local Māori.

Learning by immersion was also made possible since the Te Hana marae is a Māori cultural centre. It does not fully function as a traditional marae. A marae is a tribal meeting ground where people gather and meet. Tauroa and Tauroa (1986) explain them as places of refuge for Māori people with facilities that enable Māori to continue with their way of life:

We, the Māori need our marae so that we may pray to God; rise tall in oratory; weep for our dead; house our guests; have our meetings; feasts, weddings and reunions; and sing and dance

(Tauroa and Tauroa, 1986, p.19)

Tangihanga (ceremonies for mourning the dead) are not held on the Te Hana marae, Māori cultural practices associated with grieving for the dead provide that tangihanga take precedence over any other occasion that may be occurring on the marae. Te Hana marae as an extension to the traditional marae at Oruawharo, north of Te Hana, means all tangihanga will be held there. Therefore, the activities held at Te Hana do not include all the traditional cultural obligations of a marae and therefore provide certainty that studio work and learning by immersion is not subject to cancellations due to unexpected cultural priorities. In addition the trust is made up of local iwi (tribal) members and Pākehā residents who are supported by a council of Māori elders who are connected through a shared vision and committed to a set of Māori values that include kaitiakitanga (guardianship) and manaakitanga (respect and kindness).

The students and staff involved in this studio were privileged to enjoy the warmth of the greetings and the tangible sense of being incorporated into the Te Hana community. This course represented a step change in that for the first time in recent years at The University of Auckland, a studio involved working with a Māori community and understanding te ao Māori (the Māori world). It also involved students understanding how the special moral relationship between New Zealand's governmental authorities and tangata whenua (the people of the land) actually affected communities on the

ground. Te Tiriti o Waitangi and its English version the Treaty of Waitangi form the basis of this relationship.

To give an idea of the student profile, the 2010 the class was made up 17 Pakeha/European, 14 Asian, three of whom were international, five Pacific Islanders and three Maori students. Two thirds or 28 students had not been on a marae and overall 34 students or 83 per cent had not stayed overnight on a marae. Consequently only a small proportion of students had experienced living on a marae and in this way come to understand its underlying tikanga (or customs and rituals). Nor had they been exposed to the shadow side of Māori/Pākehā relations through listening to real Māori communities relate stories and grievances related to historical breaches of te Tiriti o Waitangi that had shattered the social and economic basis of Māori life in the past with continuing impacts on the present.

Relevant background of the Te Hana Project

The following background has been distilled from documents and the DVD produced by the Te Hana Community Development Charitable Trust and from korero with the kaumatua or elders of the community trust. A primary source has been the *Te Hana/Oruawharo Community Outcome Plan* (Te Hana Community Development Charitable Trust, 2007). Material drawn from this has been checked against releases from different funding agencies from public, private, and philanthropic trust sectors identified through an online search. Newspaper reports have also been used for the same purpose, as well as participant observation by university staff and students during visits to the area. Students were introduced to much of this material during the studio immersion in week five of the twelve week studio.

Te Hana is a rural centre just north of Wellsford, a satellite urban settlement serving a wide rural catchment. It is approximately an hour's drive from Auckland's central business district, New Zealand's largest city – region. As a community, Te Hana is on the boundary between Auckland and Northland regions. It has links with a range of rural communities where there is a strong Māori presence. Oruawharo, for example, with its marae and meeting house, serves about 700 adults. Its hapu (sub-tribe) with more than 6000 members is Te Uri a Hau. Its iwi (tribe) is Ngāti Whātua ki Kaipara. Te Hana/Oruawharo are 90 per cent Māori. Young people (under 19 years of age) make up 36 per cent of the residents. Of the adult population over 15, 83 per cent have no educational qualifications. In 2002 in Te Hana alone the unemployment rate was 20 per cent.

Te Hana, like other rural communities, has experienced decline. In the 1980s it lost a major source of employment when the local dairy factory closed. In the present downturn 550 jobs were lost in late 2009 in adjoining Wellsford when Irwin machine tools factory closed down (*Sunday Star Times*, 2011). During the 1990s and in to the early 2000's Te Hana was characterised by a high Māori population, high unemployment, crime, drug and alcohol abuse, school truancy, vandalism and graffiti.

A culture of rock throwing at passing traffic on State Highway One developed among its young people. There were poor housing conditions, and cross-contamination of water and sewerage systems. The local river was polluted and the township unsightly.

In 2002 members of the local community formed the Te Hana Community Development Charitable Trust. Its first priorities were to take responsibility for dealing with the social and physical infrastructure problems of the Te Hana community, starting with its water and sewerage infrastructure with its damaging effects on people's health. The water and sewerage issues were remedied, after major expenditure decisions of the Rodney District Council. Since its inception the trust has nurtured the spirit of self-help and mutual aid locally, along with a determination to exercise more creative forms of social control in the community to deal with the damaging behaviour of some of its members. At the same time the trust developed more sophisticated and effective approaches to lobbying and obtaining support from institutions outside the immediate area. These included central government ministries, the local authority, tertiary educational institutions, and charitable trusts.

Te Puni Kōkiri (the central government ministry for Māori development) funded a full-time community liaison officer employed by the trust from 2004 to 2007. Northland Polytechnic and later Te Wānanga o Aotearoa (both tertiary educational institutions) provided and funded courses in Te Hana. The ASB Community Trust donated \$NZ549, 532 for the development of a modern marae and meetinghouse and a 17th century Māori village which was to serve as a focal point for tourists and provide local employment opportunities.

By 2011 the face of Te Hana had changed. It had a strong base for community economic development and radiated a sense of self-esteem and quiet confidence. Its social and cultural infrastructure was in place. It included a combination of buildings incorporating a shop providing locally produced Māori arts and crafts for tourists, a community radio station and a set of classrooms, and playing fields and community gardens. Added to this were a marae and meeting house, a large and connected whare kai (with kitchen and dining room) and a 17th century traditional Māori village. The last of these is also open to groups of tourists and is linked with cultural performances employing local Māori young people.

Governance and Planning Context

Critical to the success of the studio was the students' understanding of the context in which they and the community worked together. Major changes had taken place in the Auckland region's governance arrangements. On November 1, 2010 there was a new mayor in office with enhanced powers. There was a new governing body, the Auckland Council, with 20 councillors elected from thirteen one or two member wards. Also 21 local boards had been elected in the region and seven Council Controlled Organisations set up. The latter were corporatised bodies responsible to a council committee and responsible for about 75 per cent of regional expenditure (Hucker,

2010). Other governance institutions included an appointed Independent Māori Statutory Board and two ethnic advisory panels.

There were also a series of planning and policy instruments. These included a 20-30 year spatial plan, a 10 year long term plan combining policy, programme and project priorities with funding decisions, a unitary plan, and an annual plan, along with local board plans and planning agreements. If that sounds like a plethora of plans there were also more than 700 additional plans and strategies.

There were significant overarching themes in the governance reforms involving radical rather than incremental change. They emphasised historical discontinuity, as opposed to historical continuity and focused on the centralisation of power at a regional level rather than decentralisation.

In addition there was no road map for communities to negotiate these newly established institutions and instruments. Who filled the positions in them, how they filled them, and what they sought to achieve was not yet known. The network was only just beginning to function. The Te Hana Community Development Charitable Trust approached the local board in neighbouring Wellsford only to find that its newly elected members were unaware of the exciting developments that had occurred in the Te Hana community. Likewise Auckland Tourism, Events, and Economic Development Ltd, a Council Controlled Organisation (CCO), made no mention in its draft Statement of Intent of Māori tourism, of Te Hana as the gateway between Auckland and Northland regions. The latter was a key aspiration in Te Hana as it implemented the next stage of its business planning.

Community Development, Covenant, and the Two Baskets

The agreement between the three staff involved in the third year BPlan studio and the Te Hana Community Development Charitable Trust featured a commitment to achieving mutual benefits and mutual well being. Based on a partnership and relationship approach it involved working with one another as well as for one another acknowledging that capacity building is a two-way, not a one-way street. The approach was consistent with Jonathan Sacks definition of a covenant:

We create co-operation not by getting you to do what I want, but by joining together in a moral association that turns you and I into “We”. I help you; you help me because there are things we care about together. Covenant is a binding commitment, entered into by two or more parties, to work and care for one another while respecting the freedom, integrity and difference of each. What difference does it make? For one thing, it gets us to think about the common good, the good of all-of-us together.

(Sacks, 2007, p.151)

From a Māori perspective this is encapsulated in a proverb: ‘Nāu te rourou, nāku te rourou, ka ora ai te iwi’ (with your food basket and my food basket, the people will be

nourished). The building of good relationships within this framework owes more to working together on common tasks, by walking the talk and talking the walk, by practising what you preach and preaching what you practise. It is about doing things together that contribute to the wellbeing of both parties and indirectly to the growing development of mutual respect and trust and the sharing of common experience. The students need to understand what has happened since they need to do the same when they are establishing similar relationships with communities in the real world as they enter their careers. The early studio sessions briefed students on the amount of preparation that had already gone into building the relationships to the point where the students can then engage. Certain principles and conditions need to be in place; trusting the process and having undefined expectations, trust between the tutors.

The two food baskets

What then were the separate food baskets that the Te Hana community and the University of Auckland third year BPlan studio were able to contribute to an inclusive common good so that the people would be nourished? The Te Hana community brought to the task a successfully developed set of facilities and assets that constituted a social, cultural and economic infrastructure. It nurtured the hope of building on these for the sustainable development of the community through the execution of strategies related to education, tourism, and private functions including weddings, 21st birthdays, and business retreats. It also had a strong sense of self-esteem springing from its history of struggle and its excellent record of lobbying and persuasion. The Māori values of guardianship, hospitality, and care for people and the environment were present in the warmth exercised as a host. The Te Hana community was fortunate to have long term, consistent and high quality leadership that had developed over time legitimacy among its people. What it lacked was an understanding of the implications of the Auckland governance reforms, how to negotiate the new institutional frameworks and its priorities in dealing with the hierarchy of planning and policy instruments

The students' food basket contained some of the elements derived from the integration of the university courses they were participating in at the same time. Drawing on the work of Fisher (2004) Higgins et al noted that studios are seen as 'an opportunity to integrate and apply learning from various courses.' (Higgins *et al.*, 2009, p11). In the University of Auckland this immersion studio sought to and achieved a level of integration in a number of ways. Students were working in four courses during the semester. They were able to integrate their learning because of the inter-relationships between the design of the courses and their differing modes of delivery. Also three of the course co-ordinators came together as part of the studio at Te Hana, during the reflective activity in a second studio, and in the final presentations by students to members of the Te Hana Trust and community on the University of Auckland Marae. Students participating in a course on planning for community and economic development (Gunder, 2011) explored international and New Zealand case studies and were introduced to the rudiments of business planning.

Both the lecturers and community members were struck by the enthusiasm, and energy of the students and their imagination and spirit for creativity and innovation. As part of the digital generation, skilled in accessing information and analysis from the internet, and employing excellent graphic design, they had the ability to prepare a bevy of attractive resources that exceeded the wildest dreams of the Māori community who themselves set up their own face book page as a result of the studio (Te Hana Te Ao Marama, 2011). The students also brought critical skills to the reading of policy and planning documents. This enabled them to select the pegs on which the Te Hana community could hang its aspirational caps in relation to its future directions. The community provided a generous and safe learning opportunity, sharing their knowledge, their wisdom, their hopes and their dreams. And the people were nourished.

A second studio on planning management, led by the non-New Zealand Pākehā, encouraged students to understand cultural differences and to analyse how perceptions of different cultures might impact on actions (Reeves, 2011a). Immediately before the weekend visit to the Te Hana marae they were asked to identify ways in which they were different from and similar to the people they would meet there. They also reflected about the impacts these similarities and differences might have on their behaviour. The fourth course, entitled governance and planning, was led by the New Zealand Pākehā member of the team. It focused on a critical examination of the Auckland governance reforms and the analysis of the hierarchy of planning and policy instruments. It encouraged students to reflect on community development approaches and how in symbolic and practical ways we can continue to build a multicultural city on a bicultural base with more respect for the dignity of difference, more tolerable harmonies, more social cohesion and an enriched sense of a more inclusive common good (Hucker, 2010; 2009).

The two food baskets from the community and the students complemented each other beautifully.

Mutual Benefits

The Te Hana community received benefits from the 2010 and 2011 planning studios. Less than one week after the studio gathering at Te Hana in 2011, the newly elected mayor of Auckland, Len Brown, visited the marae. The work of the staff and students on the mayoral discussion document 'Auckland Unleashed', which prepared the way for the formulation of the draft spatial plan, (Auckland Council, 2011b) along with informal discussions with leading elders were of real assistance to the trust in focusing its presentation to the mayor and council staff. They were able to draw on strategic summary points from the discussion document and use them to Te Hana's advantage.

The mayor after the meeting confirmed Auckland Council support for Te Hana as the northern gateway to the city. In the Rodney Times he was quoted as saying:

The amazing and inspirational project is an example to other tribal areas of what could be accomplished. Māori culture is unique to this country, and Auckland has been missing this potential in tourism. This is what we need to take hold of that potential, get other tribes to take this on board and help bring about a renaissance for Māori.

(Dickey, 2011, p.3)

This comment from the mayor encouraged the members of the trust. It indicated to them a political willingness to confirm Te Hana's gateway status, to see their project as an exemplar for other Māori communities, and to recognize its tourist potential and implications for a broader Māori renaissance. It was seen implicitly as an acknowledgement by the mayor of the intrinsic value of a fundamental bicultural relationship from the Auckland Council's perspective.

The willingness of the Te Hana trust to commit itself to the task of entering into a joint Memorandum of Understanding with the university was a tangible indication of the value it placed on the studio. It saw a strengthened relationship as part of its future.

This was also expressed in comments made by two important leaders in the trust. After the 2010 presentations, by students in the University of Auckland marae, Linda Clapham, the Chief Executive, said:

Working with the students has been an uplifting experience for the local whānau (family). We have been excited to have fresh faces and ideas fuelled with enthusiasm looking at issues our small community has been grappling with for many years.

(Scoop News, 2010)

This view was reiterated in 2011 by Thomas de Thierry, the trust chair:

Working with the students is re-energising and uplifting. Often a community group can get stuck on what hasn't been achieved and the students remind you of how far you've come. It's motivating to see the project through their eyes as they bring a new set of ideas for us to consider.

(Thierry, 2011)

A final benefit to Te Hana and part of its continuing story was the first of three visits to marae in the region by the newly appointed Independent Māori Statutory Board. This board had been set up as part of the Auckland governance reforms. The hui (meeting) was attended by two of the university teaching staff who gave their support to the strong representations made by the Te Hana community.

Benefits to Students

By comparing students' expectations before the Te Hana studio stay with their reflections, we can start to get an insight into how they saw the experience. The Māori

studio co-ordinator had prepared the students by focusing on the importance of listening skills and listening on a number of levels essential to understanding the context and developing an understanding of what would be useful to undertake as a project. By writing on-going journals students could capture their thoughts, emotions and experiences reflexively as well as reflectively (Schön, 1991). The journal provides students with the opportunity to demonstrate that they are developing the skills needed by an effective practitioner including the need to reflect critically and creatively. The studio builds on prior knowledge and reflective writing helps students to develop and clarify the connections between what they already know and what they are learning, between theory and practice and between what they are doing and how and why they do it (Reeves, 2011b).

The students expressed 'anticipation', 'hope', 'excitement' and 'anxiety' in equal measure.

"I'm super excited that this semester we will be dealing with a REAL Māori community – making REAL life outcomes." [Student emphasis]

Excitement was also tinged with anxiety.

"About doing something wrong" and "hoping that interactions would be positive."

In addition many expressed a genuine desire to experience the protocol of a marae for the first time, in particular the pōwhiri (welcome ceremony). Many comments expressed belief that:

"Having an actual immersive experience in the community ... Will help us to develop a more effective planning project."

After the Te Hana visit, (see Figure 1 for a montage of photos of the studio), students wrote about their experience. One student reflected the views of many in saying:

"this was my personal highlight in many ways."

The recurring themes were learning the value of working in a collaborative and collective way. With this comes an obligation on the group, something students appeared to be truly grasping for the first time even though it was their third year on the programme. Not only did they comment on learning about the protocols and the significance of symbols, they also observed and learnt about the role of women in relation to men in this community; and the importance of those that prepare food and serve others. Students learnt about the value of experiences. One put it this way:

"It cost me a week's wages, pushed me into overdraft, a small price in the scheme of things."



Figure 1: Te Hana Studio Montage

Many of the comments demonstrated the deep emotional learning and life changing nature of the experience.

“The things I learnt are hard to describe in words but for me it involved a change in the way I see Māori communities and a change in myself.”

Students said they learnt about:

“The importance of history, people place, stories connections iwi and hapu”
“the importance of tenacity”and “not making assumptions.”

In terms of fulfilment, the journal comments were overwhelmingly positive. Many students stated that the studio confirmed that they wanted to be a planner; many also mentioned the “insightful and eye opening” nature of the overall experience, the warmth of the welcome.

Comparing the formal and sanitised student evaluations and the emotional journeys reflected in the journals proved useful, in that the immediate evaluations of studios like this can seem less positive, whereas the journals reflect the deep learning taking place.

The student portfolios produced as part of the planning management elective provided students with an additional opportunity to explain how the studio had helped them develop their cultural competence skills. Before the weekend on the marae and in the planning management elective, students completed a cultural competence self-assessment activity (Reeves, 2011c). They were asked to identify ways in which they are different from and similar to the people they would be meeting at Te Hana and what impact these differences and similarities are likely to have. For example, one student listed the following differences; protocols, customs, ideologies, education, collectivism individualism, family values, age and socio economic backgrounds. The same student then listed the following sets of similarities; New Zealand culture, working towards the same goal at Te Hana, willing to collaborate, and that both the students and people at Te Hana are in fact Aucklanders. From this process the student identified (i) the need to be able to listen and learn without making judgments, (ii) the need to understand the protocols of the marae to reduce fear and enable a focus on working with the community, (iii) the need to highlight common goals and understanding to foster cooperation and (iv) the need to realise that the community will be understanding of mistakes.

Having worked with the community a common response from the students was that the marae visit was enlightening and enjoyable. One student said in their portfolio that:

“It was interesting to see how my initial preconceived ideas of the Te Hana community were changed after actually getting to know the locals and community on a personal and emotional level.”

Finger Painting was one medium the students were encouraged to use to explore their experience. It is a very tactile free flowing medium that is both fun and creative and helps students and staff step outside the box. Finger painting has been successfully used in other related disciplines (Baillie, 2002) and having used this activity as a reflective exercise for a number of years, Dory Reeves had found it to be a highly effective way of engaging students. One student's explanation of the finger painting in Figure 2 describes the trip to Te Hana.

“The blue, green and yellow vertical lines on the left represent different cultures, ideas, communities of our class. The horizontal lines represent the journey of our class at Te Hana and the gradual collaboration of these cultures, values and ideas with each other and the Te Hana Community. The handprint represents my personal input and experience in this journey.” (Student quote)



Figure 2: Example of student work

Summary, Conclusions and Key Lessons

This paper has been about a journey of mutual learning and working for mutual benefit. It started with an introduction to the studio and its unique features. It ends with this conclusion about lessons and issues. It has traversed on the way methods and approaches, the planning studio itself, how the course was run, a literature review, the decision to work with the Te Hana community, as well as its history and background. It explored the governance and planning context and the underlying values in what was described as a community development, covenant, and the two-food baskets approach. The planning system of Aotearoa New Zealand has a dual planning tradition (Māori and European) that is examined, in part, during this studio. This studio provides the students with an opportunity to go beyond the historical and political narrative of planning law and policy and the impact it has on Māori communities. It enables students to work side by side with the Te Hana community on a contemporary planning issue which can be both rewarding and mutually beneficial.

The next stage involved consideration of the food baskets themselves, and the mutual benefits resulting from the studio itself.

What are the lessons? What needs to be done?

There are clear lessons to be drawn from this case study of an immersion planning studio with an indigenous community in New Zealand. They are relevant for academic and educational institutions wishing to work with Māori communities. They also have broader international significance for working with indigenous communities in other countries, although an understanding of different contexts remains essential.

The lessons may be categorised in terms of the quality of relationships, the need for good preparation, and the implications for planning and other professional curricula.

The quality of relationships

A key to working effectively with the Te Hana community was the joint understanding of the nature of the relationship of mutual commitment, mutual benefit, and an inclusive common good sought by both parties. The metaphor of the sharing of two food baskets epitomised the closeness of the collaborative relationship envisaged. Students learned and grew through their engagement in kaupapa Māori processes to achieve Māori aspirations and to help implement ways of advancing these aspirations identified in the Te Hana Community Outcome Plan. The Te Hana community hoped they could use the outcomes of the studio to achieve their goals in relation to their own development plans and the eventual Auckland Spatial Plan.

This understanding was based on a partnership and relationship approach of working with one another as well as for one another. The capacity building was a two-way, not a one-way street. The model employed a community development approach and was enhanced by the forming of a covenantal relationship. The challenge was how to apply the insights of Jonathan Sacks in this specific context:

I help you; you help me because there are things we care about together. Covenant is a binding commitment, entered into by two or more parties, to work and care for one another while respecting the freedom, integrity and difference of each. What difference does it make? For one thing, it gets us to think about the common good, the good of all-of-us together.

(Sacks, 2007, p.151)

The values embedded in the relationship were an antidote to the history of more powerful academic institutions undertaking research that served their interests but made little difference to the wellbeing of the subjects of the research. The approach adopted was more consistent with the Kantian dictum, 'Never treat persons simply as means to an end, but always as ends in themselves'.

The key words characterising the relationship were 'things we care about together' and 'a commitment to work and care for one another while respecting the freedom, integrity and difference of each'.

This entailed the development of a high level of empathy, walking a mile in another person's shoes. Fortunately in the Te Hana community there was a willingness to engage with the students, as was expressed in the gratitude shown for the quality of their work. Both parties sought to transcend the limits of their own experience and used their imagination to identify with the perspectives of the other.

What then are some of the defining elements in developing good mutual relationships and how can they be given practical expression?

- Identify the things we care about together and make a joint commitment to work with and care for one another, while respecting the freedom, integrity and difference of each. Flesh can be put on these bones by talking face-to-face and working side by side. In this way what is implicit can be made more explicit. From the standpoint of the academic institution care becomes the dominant value, as a relational good is accorded priority in the studio.
- Hear with your eyes, see with your ears, and walk a mile in another person's shoes and learn how to do things together for mutual benefit. In te reo Māori aroha means reciprocity or mutual love where koha (gifts) are returned at another time and place.
- These injunctions are important ingredients of good cross-cultural communication, one of the building blocks of good relationships. They are even more significant when one of the cultures represented is more strongly oral in character as is the case in Māori settings. This is true also of other indigenous peoples.
- The understanding of different cultural values, of the meaning of body language, of the presence of silence or of levels of noise in meetings, of varying patterns of decision making is a key to hearing, seeing, perceiving, and working together for mutual benefit.
- Acknowledge the rangatira ki te rangatira (chief to chief) principle in staffing the studio. In the Te Hana case the status, reputation and mana of the studio teaching team indicated the high value placed on the studio by the university. Had the course coordinator simply been assisted by student tutors, the reverse message would have been given. This principle applies also in other first nation communities.
- Build high quality collegial relationships among all of the teaching staff that model the relationship sought between the planning studio and the indigenous community. It is a case of do as I do, not do as I say. Students learn how to work in these settings from the example set by their teachers. This can help guide them through unexplored terrain. The three teachers involved were firmly committed to one another and to the studio design.
- Understand that the benefits to all parties often stem from strengthening relationships, from the processes employed and from the act of working together on common issues. In the intensive planning studio, this emerged from according priority to the interactive learning processes embedded in the Te Hana community's kaupapa (Māori processes) and tikanga (customs, rituals) of the marae as a venue for hui and wānanga. The experience of the teaching staff in trusting and following the processes contributed to the quality of the students' learning experience and at the same time gave proper recognition to the community.

- Focus on a longer term future and on how in practical ways to deepen relationships between the studio and the indigenous community. This entails making sure that the planning studio is not a one-off event, but is part of a continuing relationship. A concrete expression of that intent was the move to create a joint Memorandum of Understanding between the University of Auckland and the Te Hana Trust and community.

The need for good preparation

Preparing well for an immersion planning studio with an indigenous community is essential. While this does involve trusting the process, and not predetermining the outcomes, some of this preparation will occur before the studio takes place. The hui or gathering itself will be enhanced if earlier discussions have been conducted on a joint basis, as was the case in Te Hana. At the same time both parties guided by the process should play things by ear and be flexible in their responses. Actions to be undertaken in this category include:

- Paying special attention to preparation, discussing issues and processes with the host community, remembering that you are there primarily on their terms. Prepare well together for immersion learning, remembering that the devil is often in the detail.
- Understand the community's stories, its histories, its struggles, and its values in order to understand where it has come from, where it is now, and where it hopes and wants to go.
- Begin to fill the students' food basket so that they bring something to contribute to the encounter and engagement with the indigenous community, without pre-determining the form and content of that engagement.
- Provide a setting in which members of the studio are able to respect and honour the community's food basket. It contains taonga (treasures) from the past.
- Prepare students adequately to avoid culturally offensive behaviour, and at the same time leave enough room so they can experience fully what it is like to be outside their comfort zone. In the Te Hana case this involved practical advice about the customs, rituals and expected behaviour on a marae from respected elders.
- Interpret the governance and planning context critically. Do not be afraid of uncertainty, complexity, diversity and change. Contribute to jointly charting a course with the community, seize the day (*carpe diem*), be nimble and responsive. Reinforce the view that community led planning is not just about interpreting the world, but about changing it.

The implications for planning and other professional curricula

As they enter their professional careers, planning students in Auckland, and in other cities and nations, will have to deal increasingly with situations with bicultural and multicultural dimensions. An essential professional skill will be the ability to communicate cross-culturally, to learn how to negotiate cultural barriers, and to work with and not simply for others in order to make a difference.

While the focus in this paper is the immersion studio in the University of Auckland, its ramifications for planning education generally and for the education of other professions should not be overlooked where learning by doing enjoys pride of place. This case study points to further things to be done:

- Analyse the functions of the Te Hana studio as part of a spiral learning approach in a four year planning curriculum. This involves cumulative processes where the different parts of the degree course reinforce each other and contribute to the whole. Currently the University of Auckland BPlan document does not yet articulate the level of knowledge and understanding required of Māori culture and background at each stage of the programme. This needs to be remedied.
- Provide adequate budgets for immersion learning and working with first nation peoples. This is to avoid exploiting their hospitality, their generosity, and their willingness to give. They should cover their time and costs and the value of their educational contribution.
- Do proper reviews of immersion planning studios with a view to renewing and improving them as has occurred in the Te Hana project. Debrief during the studio itself, and sometime after it has taken place. It is a sign of courtesy that part of this process should occur on the turf of the indigenous host community.

Our reflection on this case study is a recapitulation of one of the guiding statements of intent:

Nau te rourou, naku te rourou, ka ora ai te iwi.

With your food basket and my food basket, the people will be nourished.

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Pro Vice Chancellor Māori, The University of Auckland, Jim Peters

Tania Pene, Researcher

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Appendix 1

Glossary of Māori words and terms

aroha	love and respect
hapū	sub-tribe(s) that share a common ancestor
hui	Māori meeting practices
iwi	tribal kin group; nation
kaitiakitanga	guardianship
koha	gifts
korero	quotation/discussion
kaumatua	elder
kaupapa	Maori principle / processes
mana	prestige, status, authority, influence, integrity; honour, respect
manaakitanga	respect and kindness
marae	tribal meeting grounds; village common
Pākehā	a person of predominantly European descent
pōwhiri	to welcome; welcome ceremony
rangatira ki te rangatira	chief to chief
taonga	precious; an heirloom to be passed down through the different generations of a family; protected natural resource
te ao Māori	the world view of the indigenous people of New Zealand
te reo Māori	the language of the first people of New Zealand
tikanga	customs, rituals and protocols of a marae
tangihanga	the ceremony of mourning the dead
wānanga	conscious thought-processing discussion; transmitting the knowledge of the culture from one generation to the next; Māori houses of higher learning, tertiary institute.
whanau	family
whare kai	eating house

Appendix 2

Teaching Team

The teaching team was led by Lena Henry, Ngāti Hineamaru, Ngāpuhi and Te Rarawa, and assisted by Dr. Bruce Hucker, a Pākehā (non-Māori, New Zealander as defined by King, 1985, p.12.) and Professor Dory Reeves, a non-Māori, non-New Zealander who had arrived in New Zealand four years previously. Lena Henry brought practical experience as a planner, having established an extensive Māori network through her employment in Pae Herenga Tangata, the Māori section of the Auckland City Council directly responsible to its Chief Executive, and was an active member of a Māori collective lobbying for Māori seats on the newly established Auckland Council. Dr Bruce Hucker had worked in Māori communities as a minister in Auckland for the Presbyterian Māori Synod, and served as an Auckland City Councillor from 1986 to 2007, including two terms as Deputy Mayor. One of his political roles was to build relationships between the council and Māori communities. Professor Dory Reeves brought extensive international research and teaching experience in planning for diverse communities, understanding cultural difference, and community development. Upon her arrival in New Zealand, she had taken courses on Māori language and culture to enable her to incorporate Māori content into her course (Hall, 2011).

The two other members of the team, drawn from Lena's whānau (extended family), were Whaea Huri Henare and Matua Mokena Peeni (esteemed Māori elders). They played an invaluable role in preparing the students culturally for their encounter with the Māori community at Te Hana. All five knew one another well and in the past had worked together co-operatively. They enjoyed a special relationship and bond. An indirect contributor to the studio was a Māori from a distinguished family from the North of the North Island of New Zealand, Jim Peters. As Pro Vice-Chancellor (Māori) he contributed a \$NZ5000 grant which ensured the financial viability of the studio.