



Relational and culturally responsive supervision of doctoral students working in Māori contexts: Inspirations from the Kingitanga

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Abstract

There is much to celebrate in the greatly increased number of Māori and non-Māori students in New Zealand tertiary institutions undertaking doctoral research on issues of importance to Māori. However, in honouring their commitments to the Treaty of Waitangi, tertiary institutions need to ensure that Māori doctoral students and their Māori communities maintain their right to define their own research questions, research paradigms and methodologies. As supervisors of doctoral research students investigating issues of significance to Māori people, it is essential that we learn to position ourselves as visitors in someone else's cultural space, as partners in the Treaty of Waitangi, and as co-constructors of knowledge and research methodology rather than as experts and gatekeepers (Berryman, SooHoo, & Nevin, 2013; Glynn, 2012).

This paper was occasioned by an invitation from the organisers of the annual Kingitanga Day cultural and educational programme at the University of Waikato. The Kingitanga movement has much to teach us about how to frame and conduct research that responds to long-standing injustices that have marginalised Māori people. The Kingitanga has inspired us through the resistance, resilience, agency and humility of its leaders in asserting their right to define the effects of historic and contemporary injustices, and the right to define their own responses to these injustices.

In this paper, we explore some of the relational and culturally responsive understandings we have arrived at from supervising the research of four doctoral candidates in Education (two Māori and two non-Māori). This research has been designed to promote the success and wellbeing of Māori students in mainstream schools, addressing historic and ongoing injustices experienced by Māori students and their whānau and communities.

Keywords

Relational and culturally responsive supervision; research in Māori contexts; research supervisor positioning; Kingitanga movement

Introduction

The Kingitanga movement, begun in 1858, is an initiative led by Waikato-Tainui (supported by several other iwi) to establish a high level national forum for Māori to engage with colonial and settler governments, as envisaged within the framework of the Treaty of Waitangi. However, successive



governments have largely ignored their power sharing responsibilities carried within the Treaty. Instead they have engaged in a series of land wars and rapacious land confiscations, resulting in the massive loss of tribal lands and resources essential to the survival and *mana motuhake* (autonomy and self-determination) of Māori.

Nevertheless, over the years since 1858 the Kingitanga movement has continued to develop and maintain its important leadership role in challenging and negotiating with New Zealand governments *kanohi ki te kanohi* (face-to-face). It has done this from a steadily strengthening position of *mana motuhake*. As part of its more recent struggles to reassert the *mana* and sovereignty of Māori *iwi*, the Kingitanga, led by an outstanding woman Te Paea Herangi, established a *marae* (Māori cultural institution) sited on traditional Waikato-Tainui land at Ngaruawahia. This *marae*, Turangawaewae, embodies the *mana* of Te Kingitanga, handed down since 1858 through the legacy of seven inspirational monarchs, who have supported their people through times of adversity and injustice. Turangawaewae is now celebrated as a *marae* of national importance by Māori and non-Māori alike.

Over the 50-year life of the University of Waikato, the Kingitanga movement has demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to supporting Māori students and scholars at tertiary level. Inspired by the leadership of the Kingitanga, Waikato-Tainui have forged a close and supportive working relationship with the University. Indeed, the University of Waikato stands on land confiscated from Ngāti Wairere, an important Waikato-Tainui *iwi* who hold the traditional *mana whenua* (guardianship) status over much of the land area that is now encompassed within the city of Hamilton.

Kingitanga Day is one of those rare opportunities for both Māori and non-Māori university staff and students to celebrate the historic and contemporary academic achievements that have been inspired and supported by the the Kingitanga movement. It was an honour for us to be invited to participate in the annual Kingitanga Day celebrations, and to contribute from our experience working with four doctoral students, all working to promote the success and wellbeing of Māori students in mainstream schools. We acknowledge these four students as contributors to this article because we saw their research, and our relationships with them around their research, as constituting a collaborative power-sharing metaphoric *whānau* (Metge, 1990), or a community of practice (Wenger, 1998) or *whānau-of-interest* (Bishop, 1996).

Supervisors and doctoral students

Ted Glynn

I am a Pākehā researcher of Irish Catholic (County Galway) descent who was brought up within the New Zealand Catholic education system of the 1950s. I trained and taught as a Primary teacher in the early 1960s, and then gained a PhD in Applied Psychology from the University of Toronto (1969). I was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand in 1998. Early in my university career I became conscientised around the injustices evident in contemporary major political events. These events included the 1975 *hiko*i (land march) from Te Hapūa to Parliament led by Dame Whina Cooper, who called for an end to the sale and alienation of Māori land, and the 1978 Takaparawhau (Bastion Point) enforced eviction of Ngāti Whatua people from their own land, deploying the full might of police and army resources. Events like these exposed me to the major disconnects between Māori and non-Māori Treaty discourses and perceptions and experiences of social justice and racism in New Zealand. I have learned the central importance of positioning myself as a *teina* (junior) Treaty partner, but none the less responsive and accountable to Māori (Glynn, 2015). I am comfortable working in both Māori and non-Māori cultural contexts.

Mere Berryman

I am of Ngāi Tūhoe and Ngāti Awa descent. I completed my PhD at the University of Waikato and I am currently an Associate Professor in the Kura Toi Tangata Faculty of Education, engaged with school reform. In my own schooling, I experienced first hand the ongoing alienation of being Māori in New Zealand's education system. I succeeded in that system by leaving my Māori self at the school

gate, a process that resulted in marginalisation by non-Māori and Māori alike. I trained and taught as a Primary teacher from the 1970s to the 1990s when I turned to education research. I now support schools to take responsibility for improving the wellbeing and success of their Māori students *as Māori* (Durie, 2004, 2015).

I have collaborated with practitioners, community members and other professionals in developing culturally responsive and relational pedagogies for helping Māori students succeed at school. I am currently the Director of Kia Eke Panuku, a national Ministry of Education funded school reform initiative reaching almost 100 secondary schools nationwide.

We two have worked together as authors and researchers in Māori and bilingual education for over 25 years. We have developed an enduring and respectful professional research partnership. We have shared research interests and experiences, supporting each other in developing and trialling programmes in Māori and bilingual literacy (Berryman & Glynn, 2003) and in developing a student, teacher and whānau programme for improving the learning and behavioural outcomes for Māori students in mainstream schools (Glynn & Berryman, 2005). We are founding members of the Ministry of Education Poutama Pounamu research whānau-of-interest in Tauranga. This group came together for the purpose of research and resource development to assist educators working with Māori communities. We have both contributed to the delivery and teaching of the national training programme for RTLB (Resource Teachers Learning and Behaviour). Currently we are engaged in a collaborative partnership with the following four doctoral candidates, whose research we are supervising either separately or jointly.

Therese Ford

Therese is of Ngāi Takoto descent. She has extensive experience in classroom teaching and senior school leadership. The first author and Therese met through the delivery of a University of Waikato Special Topic Science Education Masters course (Glynn, Cowie, Otrell-Cass, & Macfarlane, 2010), focused on improving the engagement and learning of primary school Māori students in science. Mere and Therese similarly met through her postgraduate study. Therese currently works with Mere as an academic director, researcher and professional development facilitator in Kia Eke Panuku. Therese's experience and learning in this project is informing and framing her own PhD investigation into how schools in New Zealand go about connecting with Māori whānau and communities in order to improve Māori students' chances for educational success at secondary school and beyond.

Renee Gilgen

Renee is of Tainui descent. Her relationships with her mother, siblings and cousins influenced her cultural commitment as Māori from a very early age. She has had wide experience as a teacher working in mainstream primary schools, including automatically being held responsible for "fixing" every misdemeanour and every challenging behaviour of every Māori student in the school. Renee attributes her strong commitment to helping Māori survive and succeed as Māori to her mother's high expectations for her. Renee's mother expected that her children would succeed within the Pākehā education system, and be able to advocate for Māori rights from within the very societal system which she herself had experienced as marginalising.

Renee's PhD research is framed within a Treaty of Waitangi discourse, and draws from socio-historical and sociocultural perspectives to understand existing Māori and Pākehā relationships as Treaty partners. Renee is particularly concerned with exploring how these relationships play out between Māori and non-Māori teachers in mainstream schools.

Margaret Egan

Margaret is a Pākehā woman of Irish (Catholic) and Scottish descent. She grew up in the 1960s and 1970s and was educated in the Catholic school system. Margaret was socialised by themes of respect and social justice for others. She began her career as an educator in mainstream secondary schools in

the 1980s. At that time, there was a marked spike in awareness of the Treaty of Waitangi among Pākehā. *Project Waitangi* was a national anti-racism programme that aimed to educate New Zealanders about the Treaty's place in present-day New Zealand society (Consedine, 2012). Margaret started to make sense of the principles of protection, participation and partnership that the Treaty of Waitangi incorporated. She understood the challenges and resistances that were being played out in the public domain amid emotionally charged advocacy for, and protestations against, the need for non-Māori to honour the Treaty. Margaret is also a researcher and an academic director/professional development facilitator in the Kia Eke Panuku project. Her PhD research seeks to understand how relational and culturally responsive pedagogy evolves across a school, expanding from classroom pedagogical practices to expanding school leadership practices, so that Māori students can achieve education success *as Māori*.

Paul Woller

Paul is a Pākehā man married to a woman of Ngāi Tamarawaho descent, and living as part of this hapū community in Tauranga Moana. Paul and his wife are very active participants in marae affairs. He has been a trustee of this community's education and health service organisation for over 25 years. He has also provided assistance with researching hapū history and in providing other support when called upon to do so. However, Paul has consistently avoided positioning himself as an *expert* within the hapū. Paul's own PhD research explores the intergenerational educational experiences of whānau members of the Ngāi Tamarawaho community, from the introduction of literacy by the early missionaries in the 1830s, to the present-day engagement in education by descendants of those whānau members. Paul's thesis traces the important stories of resistance, resilience and determination of this one hapū in responding to the cumulative destructive impacts of education policies and practices of successive New Zealand governments.

Throughout the process of supervising the research of these four doctoral students within our community of practice, we engaged primarily in qualitative methodologies, such as participant narrative and storytelling. These methodologies maximised space for the voices of Māori students' whānau and community members to be heard and understood throughout the research process. These methodologies enabled us to appreciate the breadth and the depth of knowledge and experience that Māori students and their whānau and communities bring as participants within the research process, and how much we have to learn from this.

We learned to value the impact we had on each other's work, in the contexts of our different cultural identities, and of our identities as university faculty and students, and our identities as researchers and as participants. We found that engaging and participating in responsive and collaborative bicultural relationships did not threaten or undermine either our cultural or our institutional identities, but rather clarified and strengthened them.

Building power sharing and inclusive relationships

Long-term relationships of collaboration and interdependence have developed between us, extending over 25 years in some cases. Relationship-based research whānau-of-interest do not simply spring up overnight. The formation of a research whānau itself reflects the culmination of years of trust and respect, building on the basis of shared knowledge and experiences gathered in both Māori and non-Māori cultural contexts. These relationships have remained grounded in shared experiences and shared understandings of the imbalances in power and privilege within New Zealand's education system. Collectively we understand that ignorance or rejection of the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi continue to drive the imbalances in power and privilege between Māori and non-Māori in New Zealand education. We have each, in our own way, positioned ourselves as advocates for the partnership, protection and participation principles embedded in the Treaty of Waitangi, and as responsible Treaty partners (Glynn, 2015).

Our interdependent research initiatives have developed from mutual interest, and respect for the sociocultural knowledge bases and life experiences that we each bring to the various communities of practice (Wearmouth & Berryman, 2009) that we participate in. Indeed, our participation in research

projects has underscored for us the relationship between identity and practice: “We know who we are by what is familiar, understandable, useable, negotiable; we know who we are not by what is foreign, opaque, unwieldy, unproductive” (Wenger, 1998, p. 153). We believe this understanding is crucial when researching in Māori contexts.

These are the kind of enduring collaborative and reciprocal relationships we believe are vital in supervising the research of students working in Māori contexts, particularly in the contexts of the communities in which students are undertaking their research. We hope that these relationships will encourage our students to undertake research that embodies the qualities of resistance and resilience carried within the Kingitanga movement.

Our research, including the research of our four doctoral students, is informed and guided by the whakatauaākī (proverbial saying) of the second Māori King, Tāwhiao (1825–1894): “I will build my own house. Its backbone will be of hinau. Its support poles will be of Mahoe and Patate.” In building his own house, Tāwhiao is wanting to draw on resources available to him rather than on resources begged from settler governments. He refers to trees found in his local community, thus representing the importance of not overlooking or underestimating the humility, strength and resilience of the local people.

Our research is also informed and guided by Kingi Mahuta (1854–1912), who argued that it was not sufficient (for the Pākehā Parliament) to open up more Māori land to be worked by European settlers, but that Parliament should enable Māori to work their own lands. He engaged with the Pākehā Parliament, strongly resisting the injustice of further sales of Māori land, for the benefit of more and more settlers. He argued for Parliament to provide the resources for Māori to work and develop their own lands. He asserted Māori rights to access opportunities and resources to solve their own problems and define their own solutions; and he expected that Government would support Māori to do this in their own way. We believe this message of asserting independence and agency applies just as critically within the context of designing and conducting research in Māori contexts.

Our ongoing relationships with our doctoral students have made us keenly aware of what Māori researchers and their communities, as partners in the Treaty of Waitangi, are entitled to expect of their tertiary institutions and of supervisors of students researching in Māori contexts. They are entitled to expect institutions to support them to identify research questions and methodologies that are important to them, and to the wellbeing of their whānau and communities. They are entitled to expect their supervisors not to routinely and unilaterally privilege research strategies, methodologies, analytic tools and solutions that are located within the Western European worldview and of benefit to that world. More specifically, Māori researchers and communities are entitled to expect tertiary institutions and research supervisors not to exclusively privilege the written word as the sole authentic medium for investigation, assessment and reporting on their research progress. This amounts to one Treaty partner imposing its own set of academic values and practices on the other.

Doctoral researchers working in Māori communities are also entitled to expect their supervisors to invest time and energy getting to know and understand them, their whānau and researched communities so as to better appreciate the issues and challenges involved in working in those communities. Getting to know a person and a community requires more of a tertiary institution than signing off agreement to a research contract and maintaining a formal contractual relationship. Building and maintaining respectful interpersonal relationships is also crucial to the authenticity and success of the research.

This claim is strongly supported by decades of sociocultural theory and research, and particularly by recent theory and research into culturally responsive and relational pedagogy as a powerful way to improve educational outcomes for indigenous and other minoritised students (Berryman et al., 2013; Glynn, 2013). Supervising the research of students working in Māori contexts requires supervisors to cross boundaries between professional and personal identities and responsibilities (Berryman, 2008). Māori students and their communities are entitled to know that their supervisors not only care about their work but also care for them as culturally located people. What happens in their lives and communities outside what can easily become a culturally daunting and seemingly alien institution is vitally important to their wellbeing, and it should be just as important to their supervisors as well.

Supervisors' commitment to attend and participate in cultural events, to get to know and care about their students and their whānau, greatly assists their students, and themselves, to make affirming and respectful connections between the two different worlds. This is an issue of cultural safety. Māori researchers' cultural safety and success in the tertiary academic world should not have to come at the cost of their cultural safety and success in the Māori world. This issue needs to be understood by supervisors of non-Māori students as well, for their cultural safety and success in the two different worlds needs protecting also.

From supporting the four quite different research projects of our four students we have learned that supervision cannot be defined simply as an expert-novice or master-apprentice relationship, where the *authentic* knowledge and expertise resides solely with the supervisor as a representative of the institution. There are also relationships between Treaty partners to take into account. Effective supervisors of researchers in Māori contexts need to be wary of constraining a supervisory relationship by privileging Western epistemology over indigenous (Māori) epistemology.

Culture counts in supervising research in Māori contexts

Supervisors of research in Māori contexts need to appreciate that the different cultural values, practices and experiences their students bring to the supervisory relationship form part of their cultural identity and cultural toolkit (Bruner, 1996). They need to appreciate also the importance of indigenous ways of knowing, learning, teaching and researching. They need to understand why indigenous people find so alien and disconcerting the idea of a researcher as a neutral observer/recorder and interpreter of findings who is *intentionally* disconnected from hands-on engagement and participation in specific cultural contexts. Indeed, in many Māori research contexts, the researcher may not even be *in charge* or *in control* of the research process at all but nevertheless will be fully included within it.

In an earlier study on researching in Māori contexts, Russell Bishop analysed five researcher discourses where non-Māori and Māori researchers had conducted research in Māori contexts and had positioned themselves in ways that constructively addressed the power and control issues inherent within the researcher/researched relationship (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). These researchers

spoke of different forms of understanding and knowing, indeed a different form of consciousness that comes from participation in the sense making processes of the research participants ... [Such a] form of consciousness appears to be the outcome of a slowly evolving cyclical process of lived experiences and reflections upon these experiences within the cultural context of the research participants. (p. 179).

This is the kind of fully inclusive and reciprocal supervisory experience that we believe is important for supervisors if they are to understand and affirm the research questions their students want to explore with whānau and Māori communities. However, the nature and degree of inclusion of researchers and their supervisors within Māori whānau and communities must be defined and determined by those whānau and communities themselves (Glynn, 2015), and not by institutions. For institutions to try to control and manage this process would be to deny whānau and communities their rights as Treaty partners.

Both supervisors and students need to become competent and comfortable in theorising and researching within both Māori and non-Māori discourse frames, and in understanding the use of the powerful icons and metaphors that make sense and carry weight within both cultural worldviews. The same events and experiences may be understood in entirely different ways and can look vastly different within different cultural discourse frames and worldviews.

In our Kingitanga Day presentation we discussed comments from Witi Ihimaera on a painting by Robyn Kahukiwa of a Māori Adam and Eve at Rongomai marae. The paintings depict Māori people and non-Māori people together. Ihimaera (2004) contends:

The paintings were once seen as symbolising the twilight years of the Māori, but these are interpretations which come from a colonised mind. Decolonise that same mind and you will see these paintings for what they really are: petroglyphs of resistance,

iconographs of resilience, statements of Māori surviving within the colonial world. (p. 176).

This example shows the different thinking, interpretations and value judgments that come from people bringing different cultural tool kits to make sense of specific experiences. What many non-Māori might see and understand as a picture of Māori culture in decline, many Māori see and understand as a picture of Māori resistance, resilience and survival. *Interpreting* research data on Māori student achievement, whether quantitative or qualitative, poses similar challenges for supervisors and students alike. One example is understanding and explaining negative statistics on Māori student achievement in terms of deficits in their students or their whānau, versus understanding and explaining these negative statistics in terms of deficits in school resourcing, pedagogical expertise and school management. A second example is found in identifying and defining contemporary Māori students and Māori society in general as problematic, or even pathological, versus identifying and defining the enormous *potential* today's Māori students represent not just for the advancement and wellbeing of Māori but for the advancement and wellbeing of all New Zealanders (Durie, 2015).

If Māori epistemological and pedagogical values and practices are to be included as appropriate and authentic in the context of doctoral research, then two things are essential: well-informed tertiary institutional leadership and trusting respectful relationships between research supervisors and their students.

From reflecting on our collective experiences of participating in our community of practice to date we have identified five culturally located principles and practices (listed below) that are clearly informing and guiding the way we work. These principles are closely reflective of the way in which the Kingitanga movement has established its enduring legacy. We have learned that these five principles are not separate and discrete but interrelated, interconnected and mutually enhancing.

1. Taonga tuku iho, a kuia ma, a koro ma: This principle is a powerful assertion of respect for the culturally located epistemology passed down from the ancestors that informs and guides contemporary living. The annual Kingitanga Day demonstrates how the knowledge, wisdom and achievements of Waikato-Tainui tupuna (ancestors) is the first place many Māori go to when seeking solutions to the challenges of today and tomorrow.
2. Mana motuhake: This principle has a range of meanings to do with either individual or collective autonomy, independence, authority, and agency and responsibility. We acknowledge each other's mana motuhake and agency when we create space and opportunities for each of us to represent our own opinions and understandings in our own way, and to take responsibility for acting, or not acting, on information available to us. Respect for each individual's mana motuhake, and for the culturally located ways in which it is expressed, underpins the way we try to make decisions.
3. Whanaungatanga: This principle concerns establishing and maintaining respectful and affirmative relationships with each other by participating in and reflecting on cultural experiences that help to define and reinforce our cultural identities. Whakawhanaungatanga (the acts of *establishing* these relationships) creates opportunities for culturally safe and appropriate ways for us to engage and participate in institutional (university) and Māori whānau and community events, and to reflect on and learn from them together. Again, in this context, it is essential to acknowledge and respect Māori Treaty partners' right to define and determine who they will work with and how they will work with the other Treaty partner. Appropriate ways of establishing and maintaining whanaungatanga must be determined and defined by Māori whānau and communities themselves, and not prescribed by institutions.
4. Manaakitanga: This principle involves enacting our cultural obligation to express hospitality, love and respect, and to afford unstinting holistic care and support for each other. Manaakitanga may mean that the hosts will go without or position themselves last so that the guests are properly looked after. Manaakitanga is a principle that extends beyond the time we are in the supervisor-student relationships. Manaakitanga requires us to call on our networks of friends and colleagues, and our knowledge of what is happening in our research fields, to walk our students through the processes of academic writing, getting published, preparing CVs, seeking employment, preparing for job interviews, being present to support them and,

when they succeed in gaining a position, handing them over to their new employers as valued colleagues. Manaakitanga therefore is about supporting our students to their own position of mana.

5. Mahitahi, nohotahi, haeretahi: This principle encapsulates a powerful expression of unity of purpose and collective responsibility. We understand these words as meaning to work as one, to live as one, and to journey as one (Glynn, 2013). These three elements summarise the collaborative actions we undertake as members of a whānau-of-interest. Being a member of a whānau implies responsibilities as well as benefits. Being a member of our whānau-of-interest requires us, as supervisors, to provide holistic care, give unstinting mutual support and commitment to each other and to our work, and to accept our responsibility to research in ways that enhance our collective and not just our individual wellbeing.

Conclusion

This paper has emphasised the importance of establishing and maintaining power-sharing and affirming interpersonal and institutional relationships between doctoral students and their research supervisors working in Māori contexts. The community of practice approach taken by the participant supervisors and students in this paper has emphasised the need for supervisors and their tertiary institutions to not exclusively privilege the epistemology and worldviews of non-Māori in the process of designing, conducting and supervising research in Māori contexts.

The community of practice approach has shown also that creating spaces for Māori student, whānau and community voices to be heard throughout the research process can facilitate Māori Treaty partners to exercise their rights to define and determine what are appropriate and acceptable research questions and methodologies, and how they might be implemented. This approach can also facilitate important cultural values and messages that impact on the research being understood and taken on board by supervisors and institutions. Our collective experiences as supervisors and doctoral students in this community of practice have provided important insights into what a culturally responsive and relational approach to doctoral research supervision could look like in practice.

Finally, our experiences in research supervision have highlighted the contemporary importance of the role and re-positioning of Māori and non-Māori individual researchers and research institutions as partners under the Treaty of Waitangi. It is the framework of the Treaty that created the space for the Kingitanga movement to challenge and resist destructive and hurtful policies and practices imposed by one partner on the other. And it is within the space created within the Treaty that the Kingitanga has been able, with strength and humility, to persuade recent governments to own and to redress some of the harm they have done to Māori. Through working collaboratively and continuously the Kingitanga is growing in mana and in its ability to negotiate meaningfully with its Treaty partner. Ki te kotahi te kokahu, ka whati. Ki te kāpuia, e kore e whatu (A single reed is broken. Bound together, they are unbreakable). For tertiary institutions and supervisors of research in Māori contexts the Treaty of Waitangi, and the Kingitanga's ongoing response to it, has much to teach us about designing and conducting research in Māori contexts.

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