

Weaving *kaupapa Māori* and e-Learning

Terry Neal

Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics of New Zealand (ITPNZ)

[terrbyn@itpnz.ac.nz]

Hohaia Collier

Te Wānanga-o-Raukawa

PO Box 119, Ōtaki

[hohaia.collier@twor-otaki.ac.nz]

Abstract

This paper describes the creation and design of an online professional development course that aims to help educators in New Zealand to weave *kaupapa Māori* and e-Learning approaches together. The team sought to model weaving of *kaupapa Māori* and e-Learning approaches in how they worked together and the educational design for the material. The authors propose that educators with these skills are crucial if we are to effectively meet the needs of Māori learners, more than that, of all New Zealand learners, in the 21st century.

Introduction

In April 2004, the Tertiary Education Commission funded a project within their e-Learning Collaborative Development Fund (eCDF): Critical success factors for effective use of e-Learning with Māori learners. This project aimed to explore the synergies between effective *kaupapa Māori* education approaches and effective e-learning approaches, sharing the knowledge and understanding gained with that with educators across the New Zealand tertiary sector.

Initially, it was assumed that the main beneficiaries would be those working with Māori learners. However, during the workshops conducted as part of the project, it became clear that participants believed that all learners could benefit from understanding and applying the two bodies of knowledge. Thus the vision (*tirohanga whakamua*) of the project became, *Bringing together Māori and non-Māori knowledge and experience to forge a new and better future for all New Zealanders*.

Exposure to the new options made possible by the tools of technology causes us all to rethink how we teach and learn (*akoranga*). In this process of rethinking how and why we do what we do, there is an opportunity to understand, in some cases rediscover, and, seek to apply the enduring *kaupapa* dear to Māori hearts for centuries.

In their review of literature on *kaupapa Māori* and Māori education pedagogy, Pihama et al. (2004, p. 53) conclude that “the ability and commitment to look to the past for answers to present (and future) Māori educational achievements is perhaps the most critical factor to Māori educational achievement”. They add that “in order for success to be the experience of Māori students there is required a fundamental need for the affirmation and validation of Māori people, language, culture and Māori aspirations”. Similarly, a review of literature on e-Learning pedagogies (New Zealand Council for Educational Research, 2004) provides examples of e-Learning that are successful because they work “within a Māori framework that emphasises and values being Māori”. The review concludes that the “use of e-learning in tertiary courses has reached the stage where the question is not whether it is as good as classroom-based

approaches; but which uses are the most engaging for students – and teachers – most likely to motivate and support good learning, and most sustainable”

The focus of this paper is the professional development phase of the project which built on the previous work within the project, such as, for example the literature reviews. The course material aims to assist in developing educators who understand *kaupapa Māori* and e-Learning approaches and can apply them with all their learners to improve the effectiveness of the teaching and learning.

Development

In developing the course, the team aimed to apply the following principles, both in relation to how they created the material and how the participants in the course would learn together:

- *Manaakitanga*;
- *Whanaungatanga*;
- *Kotahitanga*/building new knowledge together;
- *Pūkengatanga*; and
- *Rangatiratanga*.

Manaakitanga

We sought to express *manaakitanga* through equally valuing Māori and e-Learning perspectives. At every step in developing the course, the project manager sought to recognise the importance of the two perspectives through encouraging equal involvement by individuals and groups with expertise in one or the other.

The original development team consisted of the project manager, a *kaupapa Māori* education expert, a British e-Learning expert, a Māori person with experience in Māori education and e-Learning, a non-Māori instructional designer and a Māori graphic designer. The first four members of this group met to develop the learning objectives of the course and the general approach. All members of the team then attended a two day workshop run as part of the project, the result being the building of relationships, and, consequently, of some measure trust among the participants. This trust was, however, tested at times as issues upon which members of the group had differing views were raised. Even so, a mutual commitment to the vision enabled the team to continue in spite of some differences in perspective.

The general approach and final learning objectives were further refined in consultation with an Advisory Group whose members included representation from across the tertiary sector (another expression of *manaakitanga*) and had expertise in both Māori and e-Learning. It was decided that the material should be made freely available on the Internet at no cost.

Due to other work commitments, neither the *kaupapa Māori* education expert nor the person with experience in Maori education and e-Learning who were initially selected for involvement in the project were able to be involved in developing the course material as originally envisaged. Therefore, two others with similar skills and understanding joined the team.

Both the course material and the supporting guide for facilitators recognized the importance of valuing effective *kaupapa Māori* education approaches and effective e-learning approaches equally. The course begins with face-to-face activities, which recognise the importance to Māori of sharing breath and establishing links. The activities seek to build awareness of differences in a respectful way, a way that values *te ao Māori* (the Māori world) and explains it without assuming that that everyone will necessarily be at the same point of understanding, or arrive simultaneously at the same stage of understanding. Throughout the course, both Māori and Western approaches are valued and explained and participants are able to benefit from considering the differences and sharing different perspectives with one another.

Whanaungatanga

One of the recurring themes during the development process of the project was developing synergy. The word ‘synergy’ is derived from the Greek word ‘synergos’, meaning ‘working together.’ In the field of education, the word ‘synergy’ can be used to refer to the ability of societies with competing world views to generate greater educational value to by working together rather than in isolation. The synergy generated from the sharing of knowledge, skills and resources and the pooling of educational insights can add value to our knowledge and understanding, leading to economies of scale, avoidance of duplication of effort and, ultimately, new and more powerful systems.

In a purely Māori environment, the principle of *whakapapa* or kinship relationships based on genealogical descent would define relationship-building. In a more general context, such as a learning environment, *whanaungatanga* is a more appropriate term. The root word *whānau*, which can be loosely translated as ‘family’, gives a hint as to how Māori see the learning environment. The classroom is referred to as *te whare ako* or ‘house of learning’ where, as well as teaching and learning, we consult and give or take counsel. Those within that house are *whanaunga* or ‘family members’. Thus, learning in a Māori worldview is a collective activity, one that is enhanced when the participants know, and are comforted by knowing, with whom they are learning.

Whanaungatanga is very closely related to another *kaupapa*, that is, *kotahitanga*, which can be defined as unity of purpose. It is *kotahitanga*, as an outcome of the relationship-building exercise that best expresses the synergy pursued in this project.

Kotahitanga: Building new knowledge together

Where possible, we have drawn on existing experience and expertise, drawing on Te Wānanga-o-Raukawa’s initial efforts in the area of videoconferencing and the use of various online tools to support learners, Te Whare Wānanga-o-Awanuiārangi’s blended approach (partly online; partly face-to-face teaching) to the design of some of their programmes and the experiences gained in some other institutions. We have also used resources developed as part of other relevant eCDF projects. One such resource is a Table (see *Appendix*) developed by participants in the six face-to-face professional development workshops that were part of the project. In these workshops, participants listened to short presentations about e-Learning and the story of Te Wānanga o Raukawa’s use of e-Learning. They then worked in groups to explore synergies between *kaupapa Māori* and e-learning, developing a framework that included *kaupapa*, *tikanga*, and e-Learning techniques. The facilitator’s guide for the

course (Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics of New Zealand, 2006) has, as an appendix, a table that includes all of the principles discussed in the workshops.

The same activity can occur online using different e-Learning social software tools (e.g., blogs, wikis, discussion forums, chat, etc.). These tools encourage and enable teachers to move from the role of expert to that of facilitator, sharing their own knowledge and experience and building new knowledge together.

Specifically, the course material takes students and the facilitator through the processes involved in working together, using wikis, blogs and discussion forums etc., to build an online community whose aim is to generate greater knowledge about teaching expertise and innovation. This synergistic approach enables the creation of:

- shared knowledge and skills (by an aggregation of insights into particular processes or functions);
- shared resources (either tangible or intangible); and
- coordinated strategies, where institutions share best practice.

Rangatiratanga

The processes seek to recognise the *rangatiratanga* within the partnership as participants apply their learning to their own learners. There is no fixed view about the right way of proceeding. The resources seek to support students (who are teachers themselves) in developing their own ideas about what is particularly valuable in their context through assisting them to work through by stepping them through possibilities.

The project also sought to demonstrate *rangatiratanga* by encouraging participants to understand and identify relevance in terms of their own situation. The individuals involved in the project chose to participate because of their own and their institutions' commitment to meeting the needs of Māori learners and a belief that the tools of technology are relevant to this commitment. They had a desire to link with others in building on what they already knew in order to do a better job 'back home'.

Another expression of *rangatiratanga* within the project is encouragement for the customization of the online material and the delivery. We developed the material in the authoring system eXe (available free from <http://www.exelearning.org/>) in such a way that it can be readily changed by individuals to meet their own needs. Similarly, the facilitators' guide aims to encourage users to think about customizing how they support their own learners through a course. The guide outlines the developers' thinking in designing the approach, gives facilitation hints and, in some cases, offers a range of options.

Pūkengatanga

The professional development course includes a video of Hohaia Collier telling Te Wānanga-o-Raukawa's story of developing and using a video conferencing model of subject delivery to remote sites (supported by other technologies such as file sharing, notice boards, chat rooms, mass texting, and Skype to enhance tutor/student relationships). This story shares this institution's expertise and is intended to inspire the students (who are teachers) with a real example of something that works.

Next, course participants work together on theoretical activities, using the framework illustrated in the *Appendix*. Here they are *pūkenga* (experts) with part of the solution, learning by interacting with *pūkenga* with different expertise. Sixty percent (60%) of the course assessment relates to application of what has been learned with real learners. However, assessment criteria do not include the specification that a particular innovation should actually work in practice. Participants need to show how their new approach links back to the *kaupapa*, *tikanga*, e-techniques and western principles of learning and what they have learned from the experience in terms of what they would do to improve the next application. The course takes participants through a design and evaluation process, encouraging them to think about their teaching and about learning in a new way. It is for their students to decide whether or not a particular innovative approach is effective.

Reflection

One thing that this project demonstrates is that a significant factor in the successful application of e-Learning techniques in the case of Māori learners is the quality of the relationship between individuals who understand *kaupapa Māori* and those who understand e-Learning. Within the context of respect for one another's different knowledge, skills and understanding, participants can build new knowledge, skills and understanding, learning from their experiences and continuing the improvement cycle together.

References

- Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics of New Zealand (2006). *Toi whakaoranga, effective use of e-learning considering Māori principles. Facilitators' guide, He wahanga kaiwhakaora*. Retrieved September, 2006, from http://elearning.itpnz.ac.nz/files/Facilitators_guide_Arial_single_page_fmt.pdf
- New Zealand Council for Educational Research (2004). *Critical success factors and effective pedagogy for e-learning in Tertiary education*. Retrieved September, 2006, from http://elearning.itpnz.ac.nz/files/NZCER_Final_Report_Critical_Success_Factors.pdf
- Pihama, L., Smith, K., Taki, M. & Lee, J. (2004). *A literature review on kaupapa Māori and Māori education pedagogy*. Retrieved September, 2006, from http://elearning.itpnz.ac.nz/files/IRI_Final_Report_Literature_Review_on_Kaupapa_Maori.pdf

Appendix: Exploring synergies

| Principle | E-techniques | Tikanga | Kaupapa |
|---|--|---|--|
| Deeper learning | Discussion forum 'he not te' <i>Wiki</i> Student-centred approach | <i>Tikanga</i> <i>Hohonutanga</i> <i>Tautoko</i> | <i>Whanaungatanga</i> <i>Pūkengatanga</i> |
| Understanding and encouraging deeper learning | Moodle Text Email Chats (mixed mode — pictures and photos) Mentoring Coaching One-to-one Study group | <i>Whakatohungia</i> <i>Whakama</i> <i>Whakaihiihi</i> (blowout) <i>Whakamōhio</i> <i>Purakau</i> — indigenous narratives <i>Whakamanamana</i> | <i>Manaakitanga</i> <i>Pūkengatanga</i> (student / teacher) |
| Production and distribution of resources | Access to internet and hardware Reliability of services Collaboration with other institutions (resources, personnel) Technical skills (software specialist) Students build knowledge (e.g., portfolios) Case studies Resources available electronically or in print (hard-copy) Design Contingency resources Materials for learning (e.g., upload, downloads, web page, <i>wiki</i> , images) Technical barriers (environment) Student ability Role models | <i>Ohaoha</i> Intellectual Property Design of material | <i>Kaitiakitanga</i> <i>Pūkengatanga</i> <i>Manaakitanga</i> |