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# **Coaching for the Game of Life: Driving Coaching with Mana**

A thesis  
submitted in partial fulfilment  
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THE UNIVERSITY OF  
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## Abstract

Coaching needs to account for culture. This indigenous autoethnography explores personal experience to show how I, a young Māori male coach in Aotearoa New Zealand, navigates the complex nature of coaching. By weaving together Kaupapa Māori, established coaching knowledge, and experiences from my playing and coaching journey to date, a Kaupapa Māori coaching framework emerges – Driving Coaching with Mana.

As I reflect on the teachings of my coach, Mr. Mel Young, combined with my cultural identity, I reconnect to critical moments in my life that have shaped the person I am today and the values I hold, elevating the centrality of culture through the practice of Kaupapa, Ako, Manaakitanga, Whanaungatanga, Wairuatanga, and self-reflection as Āta-kaiako (a reflective coach).

Driven to enhance the development of rangatahi (youth) through sport, and informed by literature and experience, Driving Coaching with Mana is personally and culturally grounded – a way of thinking about coaching differently and in a more holistic way. There is more to the people we coach than their lives as athletes. Coaching is more than skill acquisition.

## Acknowledgements

Having the opportunity to bring personal experiences to life through this kaupapa rangahau (thesis) has been a rewarding and emotive experience. My life journey and the people travelling with me have contributed to the person I am today, and the opportunity to share my experiences in this mahi is a privilege. I hope that this kaupapa rangahau will add value to the coaching field and provide a pathway to thinking differently about coaching, one that is inclusive of our cultural contexts.

Firstly, I want to acknowledge my whānau (family) for their unwavering aroha (love), manaaki (care) and tautoko (support). Without your consistent love and belief in me, I would not be here today. In the words of Coach Jim Valvano, your 'bags have been packed' - to be there for me, through thick and thin, awaiting my success, wherever that may lead. You have been the strength that I needed to complete this mahi. My love for you all cannot be articulated in words. You are everything to me, and always will be.

My supervisors, Dr. Will Roberts and Dr. Gloria Clarke – thank you for all your time, effort, and belief in me, and this kaupapa. I remember sitting at the Village Green with you both, thinking 'there is no way I will get this mahi done' and all the advice that I needed was to 'colour by number', recentre, and believe I will get through. Piece by piece we got this done. Thank you.

I want to express how grateful I am to be a recipient of The University of Waikato Masters Research Scholarship (2022) which has supported me on my education journey.

To my basketball whānau, who have dedicated much time and effort to support me to complete this mahi, thank you. You organised my 'basketball life' so there was less stress on me, ran trainings in my absence, and pushed me away when I needed to focus on this important kaupapa. All your efforts (full stops and nicknames included, IYKYK) have meant so much to me.

To the “Yung 43z” who allow me to live my dreams every day, I appreciate you all for believing in me, telling me to get this done or else I’ll get the ‘jandal’, and allowing me to share my mahi with you. I am truly blessed and honoured to be part of your journeys. You have all stepped up, running trainings, dealing with a tired and sometimes hōhā (frustrated) coach during this period, but you all mean a lot to me. This mahi is about helping more coaches like me, be better for young athletes like you.

Lastly, to Mel Young – the coach who changed my life. The experiences we shared together are extremely special to me and I am eternally grateful for the role you played in shaping who I am today. Even though you didn’t do what you did for acknowledgement, I hope that this kaupapa rangahau makes you proud.

## Ko Wai Au?

Tū ana ahau ki te Kūraetanga o te ihu o Tamatekapua, te ūnga mai o tōku waka. Ko Ngatororangi te ariki ihorei, te poukaiāwha o Te Arawa. Ka whakarongo rua aku taringa ki te puhi o te hau e rere mai ana i a Rotoruanuiakahumatamomoe. E oma atu i te taipua, tū mai rā te maunga whakamarumarū o Tongariro. Taka rawa au ki te kōhanga wai o Taupō-nui-a-Tia, ngā wai tuku kiri rangataria o Tūwharetoa. Mau rawa taku rere ki Motutaiko ko Te Heuheu te tangata nānā i tuitui ngā mana o te motu ki te rimu o Pōtatau Te Wherowhero, ka whakataukitia “Hīnana ki uta, hīnana ki Tai!”

Whakamau ana te haere i te tūāone ki Murupara kāinga, mai i te whakatakerenga o Rangitaiki awa ki te keokeonga o Tāwhiuau maunga. Ngāti Manawa iwi, Tangiharuru tangata, taku kāwai hekenga nō Mataatua. Ka huri whakarunga te kano ki Tūwatawata, e aruaru ana i a Ngāti Whare, tērā te kato o Whirinaki awa e pūheke atu rā, ko Wharepakau te tangata e!

Me tohe a wairua ki te Tairāwhiti ki te tihi o Puketapu. Tau mai rā te Manu i Tū Kē ki tōna papa tipu i te ara o Tuaraki. Ka titiro whakararo ki a Waipaoa e tere kōrikoriko mai nā ki te Moana nui a Kiwa e. Rere atu rā ki Kōtirana, ka rere whakarunga ki te hiku o Fife, tau, tau, tau mai rā taku manu e.

**I descend from iwi and hapū across central Waiariki that originate from Te Arawa and Mataatua waka, Horouta waka of the East Coast, and Scotland. I acknowledge the coming of my ancestors from Hawaiki to Aotearoa and landmarks I am intrinsically linked too. I acknowledge the Kīngitanga through relationships forged with Tūwharetoa, one of my iwi, and as I was raised in Waikato-Tainui under Te Arikinui Te Ātairangikāhu and Kīngi Tūheitia Pōtatau Te Wherowhero te Tuawhitu.**



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<sup>1</sup> This tohu was designed by Matangireia Yates-Francis in 2020, reflecting the legacy of my eldest sister that passed away the year before, whom I also honour through my coaching.

When I was born, my father gave me the name Brandyn - spelt with a y so it would be unique to me. A premature baby, my parents also gave me the middle name, Māia. Māia is a kupu Māori (Māori word) reflecting the strength, bravery, and confidence, demonstrated as a warrior.

Who I am as a person reflects the values and lessons my parents have instilled in me. What I love most about Mum is that she is a loving and caring soul. Everything she does is for others. In her work as an Evaluator, she enhances people's quality of life by helping whānau and hāpori (community) to value and realise their kaupapa (vision, aspirations), and as our māmā, she has taught our whānau the power of aroha (love and compassion). Dad is also caring and hardworking – and a direct but respectful man. A man of few words – but his words are gold. He works as a manager in an architectural profile business, where he embodies the values of care and respect and leads by example. Whenever I'm frustrated with the world, it is Dad who reminds me about the different reasons people might do what they do.

My big sisters' combined qualities and ways of life have supported me to walk the path I travel today. I am humbled to have them in my life and in my heart. My oldest sister was strong-willed, courageous, bubbly, and genuinely excited about life. She lived with complex disabilities and always pursued happiness and joy. I love and thank my sister for looking after me for the first 18 years of my life, showing me how to live with purpose, respect, determination, and love for whānau. I know she is in the capable and loving hands of her Nannies, Koros, Uncles and Aunties in Paradise. My other tuahine (sister) is strong-willed, opinionated, driven, and caring. In service to others, she has a degree in Psychology and teaches te reo Māori and continues to pursue other dreams and aspirations. Even though we have our moments, I love my sister more than she knows, and I look forward to being part of her and her new husband's life.

Growing up, my whānau has had the privilege of sharing our home and our lives with my paternal grandparents, Nan and Koko, who are a source of great pride and richness in my life. Nan is caring, positive, and a no-

nonsense type of person. A teacher at heart, she is meticulous in her preparation and desire to get the best out of her students. Nan has shown me the intentionality that it takes to truly care for others. Koko is witty, personable, and loves a good joke! A diesel mechanic by trade, he loves working with his hands and is always building and fixing things. Koko always encourages me to give things a go and learn through trial and error – a lesson I have not quite picked up yet through my desire for perfection.

Raised in Kirikiriroa (Hamilton), a city in the centre of the North Island of Aotearoa New Zealand, my whānau is disconnected from our iwi and whenua (tribal lands). However, I feel that the things we do as a whānau, and the values that are important to us, are informed by and grounded in our culture. The bedrock of my identity. Personally, I aspire to grow more connected and in touch with Te Aō Māori (the Māori World) and to make it the centre of my life. This kaupapa rangahau (thesis) is one pathway towards that goal.

When I was 5 years old, my parents sent me to a Catholic primary school and from there I went on to attend a Catholic high school, Saint John's College (SJC). Although I was educated through the Catholic faith, I never had the desire to attend church on Sundays. However, there are elements of the faith that call to me. In particular, 'treat others as you wish to be treated' is a teaching that resonates and is significant to me.

It was in my last year at primary school that I discovered basketball. Funnily enough, this happened when I was kicking a soccer ball at the backboard of the school's basketball hoop. A boy came up to me and said, "You know that's not what the hoop is meant for aye?" We became friends fast and he taught me how to shoot a lay-up and to shoot the ball properly. He was so fast and used to run circles around me and my slow feet. But that did not matter because I was hooked!

My high school is located on the east side of Kirikiriroa, a city located in the heartland of the Waikato farming region. The school sits upon a hilltop, where on a nice clear morning you can see all the way to Raglan (a coastal

town 40 minutes away), and on the horizon you can make out the wind turbines that operate in the distance. At the heart of our city runs the Waikato River that connects the east and west sides together. The Waikato River has importance for our people and is a source of spiritual sustenance. The wairua (spirit, soul) of our tūpuna are said to be present in the awa (river) and the river itself has its own mauri or life force. This can be understood through a Tainui whakataukī (saying) '*He piko, he taniwha*' which translates as '*At every bend a chief*' and signifies the timeless connection and relationship between Māori, the environment, and the spiritual significance of the Waikato River. In addition to this, the Waikato River originates in Taupō (about an hour and a half drive from Kirikiriroa), the homeland of one of my iwi, Ngāti Tūwharetoa. Our kura, Saint John's, is therefore, near an awa (river) of special significance to me.

'Brotherhood' is the term we use at SJC to describe our culture. I remember at my school interview I was told, "When you come to Saint John's you become one of the family, one of the brothers. We look after our family here at Saint John's."

In my first year at SJC I went to the trials for the school's premier basketball team, and it was here that I met coach Mel Young. After the trial, he approached me and asked, "Can you dunk?" I responded with an emphatic, "No." To which he replied, "Not yet. Yet is the word you missed." Feeling encouraged that he thought that I was an actual athlete, I said, "Thank you" and put out my hand to shake his. But Mel put his hand up for a high-five instead. This is one of the 'awkward yet awesome' moments I will remember forever.

43 is a number synonymous with SJC and our basketball program. You will often see our players hold up 43 with their hands as a symbol of our program. The number represents the 43 years of dedicated service that Mel gave to the students and the community of Saint John's. He was a teacher, coach, Assistant Principal, and mentor for so many young men at the kura (school) during his tenure. Mel didn't originally come to SJC with the goal of being a basketball coach, but the Marist Brothers told him, "Basketball

needs you more.” So, Mel answered the call. Mel and his basketball teams trained on the outdoor courts for years, and I think that outdoor training gave Mel a true appreciation for the gym that was built for the school in 1991. He was fiercely protective of the wood floor he fought so hard to get. I wish that the walls of ‘Mel’s Gym’ could talk and share all the history of Mel’s time on this earth to the next generation of “Johnnies boys” so they have a deeper connection to the ethos of Saint Johns.

When I think of SJC, I think of Mel. He epitomised the Marist Man that students are encouraged to be on their journey through to becoming young men prepared for life. Mel also inspired my love of basketball; so much so that I have paid that love for the sport and for the school forward by becoming a coach myself in Year 11. Five years after completing high school, I am still here coaching, playing my part in continuing Mel's legacy since he has been welcomed into the loving hands of the Lord above.

In this thesis, I share and examine the relationship I had with coach Mel because the experience that I had with him, is an experience that I believe all rangatahi (youth) should have. Through indigenous autoethnography Mel and I walk alongside one another as I examine my journey as an athlete and coach - remembering, reconnecting, and reflecting on critical moments in my life that have shaped the person and coach I am today. This reflective indigenous autoethnographic process has also provided an opportunity to link existing Kaupapa Māori and coaching bodies of knowledge, to inform a Kaupapa Māori coaching framework.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

They stand staunch as a rōpū<sup>2</sup> – kanohi ki te kanohi, tangata ki te tangata, eye to eye with their opponents. The calm before the storm. A haka then suddenly erupts – the victorious team full of passion and joy, their opponents in sadness, but passionate just the same. These rangatahi are expressing the pride they have for their iwi, culture, and one another after a hard fought kēmu (game) of poitūkohu (basketball).

Whānau and friends flood the court to stand tall with their brothers and sisters, sons, and daughters, mokopuna (grandchildren).

“HE TANGATA, HII! RANGATIRA, HII!. AU, AU, AUE, HA, HII!”

I look up and observe the court, crowds of people in my view. Proud faces beaming. Proud that two teams of competitors have shown the ultimate sign of respect by performing a haka for one another - coming together at the end, connecting with one another, through their shared culture. And what a special culture it is. When I watch or perform haka myself, I am moved by emotion, immense pride, and the feeling of the ‘goosebump chill.’ Haka provides a unique platform where we can be unapologetically ourselves. I love it! And I love that the National Aotearoa Māori Basketball Tournament creates the space for the expression of original, raw moments of cultural identity.



Coaching at Māori Nationals is the source of some of my fondest memories. This event brings together Māori culture and basketball – the sport I love so much – and being part of a kaupapa that prides itself on connecting our people to our culture is amazing to be part of. However, outside of these tournaments I have noticed and experienced a significant gap between our

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<sup>2</sup> Rōpū is the kupu Māori for group.

culture and the sport – when we return to our schools and clubs, where our cultural ways of being and thinking are not as bold or the norm. Would it not be fantastic if we, as coaches, could utilise the great sources of personal identity and pride that culture provides? Weaving it into our everyday practice in the pursuit of being our best for the rangatahi we have the privilege of working with. Using sport to not only develop athletes, but people with strong cultural values and skills that will prepare them for life outside of sport and into the future.

Inspired by Mel Young – my high school basketball coach, and the motivating force for my journey into coaching – has led me to explore my own coaching practice so I can better understand how to impact positive change in the lives of the young people I work with.

In this kaupapa rangahau (thesis) I present a Kaupapa Māori approach to coaching. Weaving together mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) and coaching bodies of knowledge, a culturally grounded approach to coaching that positively impacts young peoples' lives emerges. An approach that understands the value that culture has for personal growth, and its unique ability to connect people to who they are. Transforming our coaching practice from purely a sport-specific focus to an identity focus could further enhance the value of coaching. Harnessing and valuing the special essence that culture brings to our lives will add value to the experiences our rangatahi have through sport; enabling coaches to support them to be the best versions of themselves. The rangatahi who walk through the gym doors across our country are more than athletes, they are people who deserve the absolute best experiences and learnings in sport.

This question underpinning this kaupapa rangahau is:

How can I create positive, culturally inclusive, quality learning experiences for rangatahi (youth) through sport, that supports their holistic development as people?

My position is that bringing Kaupapa Māori (see Chapter Three) coaching frameworks to life in our country is important. My lived experience of coaching, both as a player and a coach, has highlighted positive connections between cultural values, an indigenous worldview, and coaching practice.

My objective is to indigenise coaching practice through the articulation of a personally grounded, Kaupapa Māori coaching framework. I will draw on my journey with Mel, my values and coaching practice, and interrogate the constraint-led approach through a Kaupapa Māori lens. I argue that developing rangatahi through sport can be enhanced when coaches weave together the constraint-led approach, within a framework upheld by Māori values.

This kaupapa rangahau focuses on developing a conceptual framework for coaching that can support the development of young people through culturally grounded sport. This thesis will be grounded in Māori values and look to indigenise the coaching space. Continuing the legacy left by Mr Young and ensuring that all kids have a positive learning experience through sports, this framework aims to stimulate and expand practitioners' coaching practice and thinking. *Driving Coaching with Mana* means combining sport specific knowledge and cultural values to provide a holistic view of development through sport for players, coaches and whānau alike. If coaches choose to adopt this conceptual framework, it can be modified to suit their environmental, cultural, and sporting contexts. I have often heard people speak about New Zealand basketball saying that in order for our players to develop to the next level, our coaches must improve to guide them there. The kaupapa rangahau I present here is one way in which

coaches can achieve this vision. We must all remember who matters most when we coach – the people.

## Structure of this Thesis

This kaupapa rangahau comprises Ko Wai Au and seven Chapters.

### Ko Wai Au?

Ko Wai Au (Who am I?) is an introduction to me as a person: my whakapapa, my identity, where I belong in the world, and what connects me to the whenua of Aotearoa. My thesis is a journey of self-awareness and self-reflection. I must, therefore, make explicit who I am and dive into the subtle parts of life that may be considered normal to me, but something out of the ordinary to others. I am not just the writer of this thesis, I am a brother, a son, and a moko (grandchild). I am the product of my tūpuna and the values I carry with me through life are those instilled in me by my whānau. It is crucial for readers to understand who I am at heart because the essence of this thesis demands that I be deliberate, intentional, and open about myself. Hence, Ko Wai Au is the starting point.

### Chapter 1: Introduction

This introductory Chapter provides insight into the aim of this thesis, which is to develop culturally and contextually grounded coaching to address the disconnection between culture, coaching, and sport in general. There are so many possibilities that culture provides coaches that have not been utilised yet. This kaupapa rangahau intends to be a starting point for future kōrero (conversations) and whakaaro (thoughts) to build upon.

### Chapter 2: Context

This Chapter sets the scene for my kaupapa rangahau especially for readers who may not be familiar with Aotearoa, Māori culture, and/or

basketball and coaching. Therefore, the context Chapter includes sections that provide an overview of my context, which is unique and personal to me but extremely important for understanding of the purpose of this thesis.

### Chapter 3: Methodology

This Chapter goes into detail about what Methodology is, and Kaupapa Māori, the chosen methodology for this kaupapa rangahau. The choice of Kaupapa Māori as my methodology connects with who I am as a person, the values I hold, and the aspirations I have for this thesis. Importantly, I have decided to place the methodology Chapter before my literature review as I believe that methodology - being linked to my epistemology and ontology - helps organise and guide my decisions on what is pertinent and important as I move through the literature. Kaupapa Māori ensures my position and perspective of the world are known to readers, helping me to navigate this kaupapa rangahau with deliberation, intentionality, and cultural appropriateness.

### Chapter 4: Literature Review

In this Chapter I conduct a conceptual review of existing literature relating to Positive Youth Development, Ecological Dynamics, the Constraint-Led approach to coaching, a Form of Life, and Kaupapa Māori concepts driving coaching. Reviewing this literature highlights that if we aim to enhance positive youth development through coaching, we must recognise the important role that culture plays in the lives of our rangatahi. Aligning coaching practice to cultural values and ways of being can enhance the ability of rangatahi to connect with the learnings in their environments. However, currently the concepts explored in the literature sit distinct from one another, as opposed to being connected holistically. This kaupapa rangahau seeks to bridge the gap between culture and coaching by creating a personally grounded Kaupapa Māori coaching framework.

## Chapter 5: Methods

This Chapter explores the way in which Indigenous Autoethnography was used to arrive at my conclusion. It will provide enough detail so others can re-create this study in their own context. In this Chapter, I describe my methods of data collection, analysis, and how I will present my findings. I will also acknowledge the strengths and limitations of my chosen method and highlight what practices I used to work through the limitations as kairangahau (researcher).

## Chapter 6: Aku Pūrākau

Aku Pūrākau is the Chapter where I present my personal narratives; sharing the special and critical moments in my life that have shaped who I am. These stories require me to be vulnerable and expressive to bring you on the journey with me. Remembering and reconnecting with these influential and significant moments in my life has been an extremely emotional but also rewarding experience.

## Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusion

The careful, deliberate, and intentional analyses of my pūrākau is presented in the Discussion and Conclusion Chapter. The analyses will be guided by Kaupapa Māori and examine the themes and meanings from my pūrākau, and how they have shaped my life and my coaching practice. I then present the themes elevated from my pūrākau analysis in a personally grounded, contextually located coaching framework – Driving Coaching with Mana. The framework introduced, elevates the centrality of values and reflective practice in coaching, providing a pathway to bridge the gap between coaching and culture. Finally, I will evaluate the framework through the Kaupapa Māori elements of change brought forward by Graham Hingangaroa Smith (1997).

## Chapter 2: Context

In this Chapter, I provide an overview of the context in which this research is grounded. It is important to recognise the diverse nature of the people, the history, and the colonisation of tāngata whenua (people of the land, indigenous people) and the subsequent impacts on the place of Māori within society in Aotearoa. This Chapter will also investigate the basketball landscape in Aotearoa, including the current coaching practices at the forefront of sport in our country and highlight why there is a need for a fresh approach to coaching in Aotearoa.

### Our People

The geographical and cultural context of this kaupapa rangahau is Aotearoa New Zealand (Aotearoa). Considered home to just over five million people, Aotearoa is a small multicultural nation nestled in the South Pacific Ocean. Māori are the tāngata whenua, or indigenous peoples of the Aotearoa, and account for 17% of the population (Stats NZ, 2022). Māori are followed closely by 15% pan-Asian communities, 8% Pacific peoples and a smaller number of nationalities from the Middle East, Latin America, and Africa (Environmental Health Intelligence New Zealand, n.d.). The largest population group is New Zealand Europeans, at 60%. The unique range of cultures that are part of Aotearoa society each bring their own authentic worldviews, values, and beliefs to our beautiful country – creating the multi-cultural fabric of Aotearoa.

### Responses to European Arrival

The earliest British settlers were described as lawless and uncivilised, and their unchecked ambitions and self-centred ways of thinking led to violence across Aotearoa (Ngata, 2017; Wolfe, 2008). Mutu (2019) shared insight from the Ngāti Kahu Iwi, explaining that the first settlers brought destruction and complete disregard for the lives and environment of others – ransacking and burning down kainga (village/home) and even forcefully kidnapping

their rangatira (chief), Ranginui, after he and his people had provided them with shelter and support. Much of this conflict grew from the different world views and understandings of land ownership (Cram et al., 2003; Moewaka Barnes & McCreanor, 2019; R. Walker, 2004).

A Māori worldview considers land as a taonga (treasure) to be respected, and its ownership was shared collectively amongst the people across iwi (tribes), hapū (subtribes) and whānau (extended families) (Moewaka Barnes & McCreanor, 2019). Land is not just a place to stay, but of critical importance for health and wellbeing and cannot be treated as a separate entity from tāngata whenua - Māori worldviews recognise the interconnection between all things (M. Durie, 2003; Marsden, 1992, 2003). Holistic in nature, Māori hauora (health) is understood, contextualised, and grounded within the whenua, te reo Māori (the Māori language), the environment, and whanaungatanga (relationships within extended families) (Cram et al., 2003; Moewaka Barnes & McCreanor, 2019). These factors contribute to overall Māori health and wellbeing and support a sense of identity and belonging.

In response to colonisation by the British, Aotearoa has two important constitutional documents: He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga, and Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tireni, The Declaration of Independence (The Declaration) was created in 1835 in response to an announcement made by a French national who said he intended to create (and lead) an independent state of a region in the Hokianga (Mutu, 2004; Turton, 1877). The Declaration consists of four articles that ensure that sovereign authority of the land would be held by Te Whakaminenga (a Council of Chiefs) and was sent to King William asking for protection of their Mana (the right to lead given to them by their ancestors) (J. O. Ross, 1980). For Māori, amidst a rapidly changing political, social, and environmental society threatening the survival of our ways of life, this action would safeguard their people, land, and traditions (Mutu, 2004). The Declaration

declared that tāngata whenua would never surrender the power to rule the country to foreigners (Mutu, 2019).

Although the Crown and other nations had accepted the Declaration of Independence signed by Te Whakaminenga, in 1840, Governor Hobson was sent to Aotearoa to gain sovereign power of New Zealand (Orange, 2015). To achieve this goal, a treaty was created for the purpose of convincing Māori to give up their leadership and kaitiakitanga (guardianship) of their lands. An English and Māori version of the Treaty were created and contained vastly different meanings, understandings, and led to serious consequences for Māori (Orange, 2015).

Article One of the Treaty of Waitangi states that Māori will transfer all sovereign control and power of the land to the Crown (Orange, 2015). However, within Te Tiriti o Waitangi (te reo Māori version) the word kawanatanga was used and meant that the Chiefs granted Queen Victoria governorship, not ownership over the land. This was an important kupu (word) to use because the word governor was understood by Māori from the Bible and the role held by Pontius Pilate (S. Jones, 2005). However, the different interpretations of governorship over the land are vastly different with iwi not seeing this as transferring complete power over the country.

Article Two in the Treaty states that Māori have exclusive and undisturbed possession of their land and Pākehā had exclusive right to deal with Māori over land ownership deals (Orange, 2015). However, in Te Tiriti, the chiefs have Tino Rangatiratanga – the right to chieftainship over their lands and taonga katoa (all treasured things).

Article Three assures Māori the rights and protection afforded by the Crown to all its citizens for equal opportunity. This is close to identical in the English version (Orange, 2015).

Article Four was an addition made at the signing to persuade chiefs who had been converted to Christianity by various Missionaries. It ensured that all people, Māori and Taiwi (Pākehā/foreigners) alike had the freedom to

practice their religion, faith, and cultural practices under the protection of the Queen of England (Orange, 2015).

After weighing up the potential benefits and consequences, approximately 40 chiefs signed the Treaty of Waitangi, some more reluctant than others. Lawlessness by British settlers is recognised as a motivating factor for some rangatira (chiefs), who believed it was time that the Crown was made responsible for the actions of their people (Mutu, 2010, 2019). Many chiefs refused to sign or did not get the opportunity to see it. Reasons rangatira refused were mainly due to the value they placed on their independence (Orange, 2015). Over the course of a year, approximately 500 chiefs placed their mark on Te Tiriti o Waitangi: 461 chiefs signed a reo Māori version, and 39 signed an English version. Even though a significant number of high-ranking rangatira did not sign, the Crown deemed this sufficient for the Treaty articles to take effect. Orange (2015) states that the Crown viewed the signed Treaty as an acceptance of 'peaceful colonisation'. However, in the years to come peace was not on the agenda.

Following the signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, colonial rule began in Aotearoa. By the mid 1860s the Māori population was severely diminished by the introduction of European diseases, arms and ammunition (T. K. Kingi, 2007; Wyeth et al., 2010). Imported diseases dramatically impacted Māori population because the isolation Aotearoa has from other countries of the world meant Māori had no immunity and were susceptible to diseases introduced by settlers (T. K. Kingi, 2007). Ever increasing numbers of settlers lead to the New Zealand Land Wars and further Māori population decline (Wyeth et al., 2010). Land loss was astronomical and disconnected iwi from their environment and culture, breaking the long held traditions of care and value towards land, rivers, te reo Māori, and mātauranga (knowledge) (Moewaka Barnes & McCreanor, 2019). Population estimates at the time were 150,000 Māori in 1800, and was reduced to 42,000 by 1896 (M. Durie, 2005; T. K. Kingi, 2007). Land was originally collectively controlled by iwi, however, in the years after the Treaty, parliament passed laws that enabled and required land to be owned by an individual (T. Kingi, 2008; Sheppard, 2005). Today, Māori own 6% of land in Aotearoa (1.5

million hectares) most of which is located in the North Island (Controller and Auditor General: Tumuaki o te Mana Arotake, 2004; Harmsworth & Awatere, 2013).

The impact of colonisation continued with the passing of The Native Schools Act 1858 and The Education Act 1877. Policy was designed to assimilate Māori to the European life and worldview. Tikanga Māori (Māori customs and practices) were seen as savage, uncivilised, and underdeveloped (Ka'ai-Mahuta, 2011). Te reo Māori was phased out of educational institutions, and Māori were abused and beaten for speaking Māori language in schools (Wirihana & Smith, 2019).

In the 1970s, rejecting and fighting the injustices of colonisation, Māori began creating their own education system: kohanga reo (Māori language nests) and later kura kaupapa Māori (total Māori immersion schools) were set up across the motu (L. T. Smith, 1989a; R. Walker, 2016).

The various trauma inflicted upon Māori is intergenerational. Māori overwhelmingly bear the burden of negative health outcomes in Aotearoa (Kopua et al., 2020; Moewaka Barnes & McCreanor, 2019). Māori are more likely to have lower incomes and have a significantly negative experience in the health education systems (Highfield & Webber, 2021), creating a cycle that consistently places our people in vulnerable positions of society (L. T. Smith, 1989a). Ultimately, Te Tiriti o Waitangi– an agreement made to protect the culture, wellbeing, and rights of Māori as tāngata whenua, has not been upheld by the Crown.

In essence, an agreement made between two peoples to live together in peace and fairness, has resulted in inequality and inequity of outcomes for Māori across all domains. The degradation of Māori ways of living through the process of colonisation must be understood because its effects are still felt today. Nevertheless, Māori continue to fight for their culture, independence, and self-determination.

This brief history provides a background for this kaupapa rangahau and is important to understand as it highlights the necessity of the work that must be carried out and continued for the people of Aotearoa.

## Basketball in Aotearoa

Sport is an instrumental part of our identity as a nation and is something we do well considering our small population size (Kidman & Keelty, 2015). The Active New Zealand Update 2021 reported that 91% of Aotearoa's young people are actively participating in physical activity and play settings, and 90% of Māori are participating weekly (Sport New Zealand, 2022b). Basketball in Aotearoa has been growing rapidly over the last five years and is now the second most played sport in the country (Sport New Zealand, 2022a, 2022b) – surpassing rugby, what most would call Aotearoa's national sport. The popularity of basketball has led to an increase in the need for facilities, referees, and coaches. However, limited funding for basketball has made it difficult to provide opportunities to rangatahi wanting to play (Basketball New Zealand, 2019). The previous Basketball New Zealand CEO, Ian Potter said the diverse range of people who are getting involved in basketball highlights that there is great mahi being done in the community to provide opportunities for players, but he also calls for an increase in funding to support the future growth of the sport in Aotearoa (Basketball New Zealand, 2019).

Our national basketball squad, the Tall Blacks, were relatively unknown until they rocked the world stage when they finished fourth in the 2002 World Cup – above the 6<sup>th</sup> placed United States of America (Hinton, 2022) Notably, Māori have been prominent figures in Aotearoa basketball. Pero Cameron our current Tall Blacks head coach and past player and captain, was named in the All-Star five best players in the 2002 World Cup and was enshrined in the Federation of International Basketball (FIBA) Hall of Fame in 2017 (New Zealand Herald, 2017). Another example is Steven Adams, Aotearoa's highest-level basketball player, who plays in the American National Basketball Association (NBA). Since being drafted by the

Oklahoma City Thunder as the 12<sup>th</sup> overall pick in the 2013 NBA Draft, Adams has played a significant role in the explosion of the sport for rangatahi in Aotearoa (Reive, 2022). Adams' rise as an NBA superstar is thought to play a major role in basketball's hopes of financial government backing, however, this has not eventuated (Cheshire, 2013).

Specific statistics on the participation of Māori within the sport are not collected which is unsettling. As a coach who works with many Māori basketball players, I am therefore interested in knowing how many of our people are getting involved and staying involved in basketball. In this kaupapa rangahau I argue that we need more culturally appropriate coaching frameworks for Māori, and ethnic player statistics on participation would support my claim. In other words, being able to show high levels of Māori participation highlights the need for coaching approaches that value Māori thinking. Statistics can also help measure and show reasons for the continued growth of Māori involvement in all sporting contexts.

## Coaching Styles in Aotearoa

Traditional coaching styles in Aotearoa are described as highly authoritarian in nature, negatively focused on achieving perfection, and teaching kids through consequences (Light, 2004b, 2006). Curzon-Hobson et al. (2003) explored the challenges coaches face in Aotearoa regarding the continuous learning of skills, exemplifying that in most cases, the need to teach specific technical skills leads coaches to create a highly authoritarian style of coaching and removes the truly human, reflective side of connecting with and teaching people.

In response to traditional thinking around knowledge and skill transfer within the sporting environment, athlete-centred and game-based approaches such as Game Sense pedagogy have become popular in Aotearoa (Kidman & Keelty, 2015; Light, 2004b; Pimenta & Light, 2021). There has been an overwhelming amount of work that has highlighted coaches' focus on skill acquisition and fundamentals in Aotearoa, hence, authors calling for a more

widespread use of Game Sense in coaching practice (Light, 2004b; Light & Harvey, 2017; Pimenta & Light, 2021). The literature highlights that many coaches' believe that players should be able to sufficiently execute fundamental technical skills (e.g. dribbling) before they can play the 'real' game (Blomqvist et al., 2001). Conversely, Game Sense opposes the idea that skills should be taught in isolation due to the fact that decision-making is an integral part of being able to transfer that skill into a game setting (Pimenta & Light, 2021).

Basketball New Zealand encourages coaches to teach through play and recognises that coaches must be able to respond to players needs' and provide a quality, safe, and fun learning experience if we are to see continued participation rates (Basketball New Zealand, n.d.). Therefore, in partnership with CoachMate, Basketball New Zealand have developed a coach development app for volunteers working with athletes aged 5 to 13, connecting coaches to a range of game-based practice plans, coaching advice, and activities, tailored to basketball (Basketball New Zealand, 2022, n.d.; CoachMate, 2022). Apps like CoachMate are valuable sources of support for coaches who want to develop their coaching practice, extending further than isolated skills and drills.

However, even though there are benefits to the approach for teachers and learners alike, the implementation of Game Sense, athlete-centred pedagogies has not taken off as much as expected Light (2004b).

Potentially, this is a sign that a fresh approach is needed. In this thesis, I argue and will demonstrate that developing young people through sports can be enhanced when coaches embrace Kaupapa principles Māori (explained in Chapter Three) and draw on the concepts underpinning the constraint-led approach to teaching and learning. In Chapter Four (Literature Review), I examine these approaches and concepts of coaching practice in more detail.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

Methodology can be defined as the spirit in which we behave and conduct ourselves as researchers, and therefore how rangahau should be carried out (Clarke, 2020). For instance, Fiona Cram describes methodology as “...the principles that guide our research practices” (Katoa Ltd, 2021). In his exploration of his own research methodology, Wilson (2001) argues that in the pursuit of seeking more knowledge about our reality, a researcher’s worldview informs their methodology. Wilson also highlights the importance of relationality, which recognises the truly interconnected nature of the world, which in turn governs how we approach the pursuit of knowledge.

Thus, methodology is embedded with questions relating to epistemology, ontology, and axiology (Wilson, 2001). Ontology is how we see the world and the nature of reality (Henry & Pene, 2001). Epistemology is how we think about our ontology, inclusive of one’s worldview, history, language, and culture (Wilson, 2008). Axiology relates to the value of your work that make it worthy of doing and the relationship between methodology, paradigm, and methods (Hart, 2010; Moewaka-Barnes, 2000; Pihama, 2010; G. Smith, 2015; L. T. Smith, 2015; Weber-Pillwax, 2001; Wilson, 2001, 2008).

It is therefore important for researchers to identify who they are (as I have done with Ko Wai Au) and describe their methodology to ensure that the reader is aware of the lens through which questions, hypotheses, and issues are being explored and analysed, and the subsequent actions undertaken to develop and attain knowledge. This in turn allows readers to discern (in part) the reliability and validity of the findings. In this sense, research is ceremony – it is about setting the stage and being ready to step beyond ‘everyday norms’, working towards heightened consciousness (G. H. Smith, 2015; Wilson, 2004).

In this Chapter, I introduce Kaupapa Māori Theory as my methodology of choice, including what Kaupapa Māori means to me, and its application

within this kaupapa rangahau. However, before I do this, I wish to acknowledge that some readers may be asking: Why is methodology located here, before the literature review, and separated from the methods? The point is that because one's methodology is informed by one's worldview, and thus shapes and informs the manner in which one conducts research - then one's methodology should also inform one's literature review – which is traditionally and typically located before the combined methodology and methods Chapter (Clarke, 2020). In short, I present my methodology here because it will inform my approach to the literature review.

## Kaupapa Māori

There is more to Kaupapa Māori than our history under colonialism or our desires to restore rangatiratanga. We have different epistemological traditions that frame the way we see the world, the way we organise ourselves in it, the questions we ask, and the solutions we seek (L. T. Smith, 2000, p. 230).

Pihama (2010) articulates Kaupapa Māori theory as a culturally sensitive approach to carrying out contextually located research. Kaupapa Māori research is fundamentally rooted in the long-standing traditions and ways of being of Māori, tāngata whenua of Aotearoa (Pihama, 2010; G. H. Smith, 2015). Māori have always been theorists and researchers who continually strive to learn for the betterment of our people (e.g. building of waka, understanding tidal patterns, reading the sky, use of flax) (Pihama, 2010; L. T. Smith, 2015). Macfarlane and Macfarlane (2019) support this statement, recognising the value Māori place on high-level, clear thinking, identifying the knowledge required of raw materials and their uses.

Kaupapa Māori research recognises the multiple 'sites of struggle' in which our realities are based (G. H. Smith, 2015). However, the purpose of the Kaupapa is to support transformational change within society as Māori continue to fight for their rights of Tino Rangatiratanga and Mana Motuhake

as set out in Te Tiriti o Waitangi (see Chapter Two). Kaupapa Māori research has guiding principles that in essence focus on providing positive outcomes for Māori (L. T. T. R. Mead, 1997; G. H. Smith, 1997) Placing te reo me ōna tikanga Māori (Māori language and cultural practices) as the guidelines for Kaupapa Māori approaches, researchers link epistemology, ontology, and axiology to conducting rangahau for the benefit of whānau, hapū and iwi (Moewaka-Barnes, 2000; G. H. Smith, 1997, 2003; L. T. Smith, 2015, 2021).

## Mihi

I want to acknowledge the mahi (work) of Graham Hingangaroa Smith and Linda Tuhiwai Smith (nee Mead) who have been instrumental pou (pillars) of Kaupapa Māori as we know it today. With their seminal works, *The development of Kaupapa Māori: Theory and Praxis* (G. H. Smith, 1997) ; *Nga aho o te kakahu matauranga: the multiple layers of struggle by Māori in education* (L. T. T. R. Mead, 1997) ; and *Decolonizing Methodologies* (L. T. Smith, 1999), Graham and Linda Smith have brought Kaupapa Māori to the forefront of the extremely Western privileged research field, and inspired Māori academics and other indigenous researchers to develop and adopt Kaupapa Māori approaches to research. Furthermore, it is crucial to mihi to all authors past, present, and future for their mahi, which tends to be driven by the desire for Māori aspirations to be achieved through Kaupapa Māori research and initiatives. I mihi to Graham and Linda but also acknowledge the works of the Kaupapa Māori 'warriors' who have been inspired by these earlier Kaupapa Māori thinkers.

## Graham Hingangaroa Smith

In his doctoral thesis, *The Development of Kaupapa Māori: Theory and Praxis*, Graham Hingangaroa Smith (1997) challenges our education system by exposing the assimilation and marginalisation forced upon Māori within mainstream schooling. To address the constraints colonial institutional policies, directions, and approaches have placed on Māori, G.

H. Smith (1997) advocates for conscientisation, resistance, and transformative action within the education sector. These constraints have led to educational underachievement, identity loss (language and culture), and a disregard for the aspirations and preferred learning methods of Māori. Smith's aspiration for culturally appropriate education was inspired by the needs of his daughter and other tamariki. He examined Te Kōhanga Reo ('language nest'; pre-school settings) and Kura Kaupapa (Māori medium primary and secondary schools) in Auckland from 1982-1989 through formal and informal interviews and observations with the whānau involved. Te Kōhanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa Māori have been at the centre of a Māori educational movement to "revitalise and strengthen te reo Māori me ōna tikanga" (Māori language and customs) (Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust Board, n.d., para. 1) Working with the Māori community, Smith identified six intervention elements that form the founding principles of successful Kaupapa Māori initiatives, with hopes that these critical change factors can be applied in a wider range of contexts. In moving outside of 'state controlled' spaces, Kōhanga Reo and Kaupapa Māori education initiatives have achieved a large degree of autonomy, increasing the opportunities we have as Māori to drive transformational change that focuses on Māori achievement. These initiatives are by Māori, for Māori, with Māori.

G. H. Smith (2015) states that "conscientisation, resistance, and a transformative action response to structural impediments" (p. 18) are the key issues that Kaupapa Māori theory should address. As such, Kaupapa Māori theory is about (1) educating and enhancing peoples' awareness of the systemic, cultural, and political wrongdoings of our history and context and their subsequent impact on the position of Māori in our society, (2) fighting back against the oppression and inequities of our society; and (3) leading to transformative action against these structural impediments (G. H. Smith, 2015). G. H. Smith (2003) states taking a proactive approach to resistance is,

...a shift away from waiting for things to be done to them, to doing things for themselves; a shift away from an emphasis on

reactive politics to an emphasis on being more proactive; a shift from negative motivation to positive motivation (p. 2).

Graham's framework is significant for my kaupapa rangahau because coaching is a form of teaching.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith

In *Decolonizing Methodologies* (L. T. Smith, 1999), Linda Smith articulates the impact of colonialism not only for indigenous people and knowledge but by research and in the way that research is carried out. L. T. Smith (1999) argues that there is value in indigeneity and indigenous knowledge, and she provides examples of how we can decolonise and indigenise the research and writing spaces. In her thesis, *Ngā aho o te kakahu matauranga: The multiple layers of struggle by Māori in education* (L. T. T. R. Mead, 1997), Linda Smith (nee Mead) introduced Kaupapa Māori as methodology, which sets out how Kaupapa Māori research remains rooted in community through actionable principles. L. T. Smith (2015) shares these guiding principles and viewpoints of Kaupapa Māori research and how they help create space for Māori knowledge and aspirations to be seen, acknowledged, and fought for in Westernised society.

## Summary

In the course of their works and their careers, Graham and Linda Smith have identified some common Kaupapa Māori principles and values that are central to my kaupapa rangahau. That is, I intend to privilege culture through Kaupapa Māori to enhance the opportunities our rangatahi experience through sport and life. In doing so, this kaupapa rangahau hopes to make a contribute to the body of knowledge about how Kaupapa Māori principles can positively transform coaching practice, and the design of culturally informed learning environments.

## Change Elements of Successful Kaupapa Māori Initiatives

### Tino Rangatiratanga

Originating from the agreement made in Te Tiriti o Waitangi (see Chapter Two), Tino Rangatiratanga dictates that the aim of Kaupapa Māori research must focus on attaining purposeful control over our lives and well-being as Māori. Increasing Māori involvement and power in decision-making processes has significantly improved autonomy for Māori, uplifting the desire to see things through to the end and do a good job (G. H. Smith, 1997). Graham Smith (1997) calls for researchers to consider the pure definition and application of transformative change, arguing that the change we wish to action through our work needs to consider structural impediments. Change can take many forms, some more transformational than others, but we must remember that the transformational change strived for within Kaupapa Māori theory is:

...flexible enough to accommodate the 'ups' and 'downs' of struggle; in that some gains are made and some are lost, but these wins and losses have to be absorbed without disturbing the overall emancipatory vision (G. H. Smith, 1997, p. 95).

What Graham Smith asks is that as researchers we must be very clear about the type of transformation we wish to make through our rangahau.

A critical distinction which has to be made with respect to transformation, is the notion of simply transforming a 'white' structure into a 'brown' structure and thereby merely creating a brown version of the status quo or building completely new and alternative structures which respond fully to Māori needs and aspirations (G. H. Smith, 1997, p. 467).

Tino Rangatiratanga is about recognising and honouring the needs and wants of Māori to make decisions for themselves and take control over their lives. In education for instance, monocultural Pākehā-driven institutions have failed to provide culturally safe and appropriate learning curriculums

and methods for Māori (G. H. Smith, 1997). Pākehā control and political ruling over Māori in schools have led to disastrous policies and decision-making in our education system which have meant Māori are not in a position to self-determine and drive the positive changes they want to see in education (G. H. Smith, 1997). Exercising our rangatiratanga would mean having greater control over what we teach and how we teach, and therein provide us with the opportunity to impact positive and real change in our schools for our tamariki.

L. T. T. R. Mead (1997) also identified Rangatiratanga as a principle in her conceptualisation of Kaupapa Māori research methodology. She (L. T. T. R. Mead, 1997; L. T. Smith, 2015) advocates that researchers employ Rangatiratanga by working with the Māori community to address the following pātai (questions):

1. What research do we want to carry out?
2. Who is that research for?
3. What difference will it make?
4. Who will carry out this research?
5. How do we want the research to be done?
6. How will we know it is a worthwhile piece of
7. research?
8. Who will own the research?
9. Who will benefit?

Kaupapa Māori as methodology is underpinned by the achievement of Tino Rangatiratanga (sovereignty) for Māori knowledge and ways of being (Pihama et al., 2002). This principle ensures that research is Māori centred and that the aspirations and outcomes of the research align with the needs of Māori (L. T. Smith, 2021). Kaupapa Māori research challenges the imbalanced power structures within society and works towards higher levels of equity and justice for Māori (Kiro, 2000). A. Mead et al. (1994) also argue that this principle ensures measures are in place to ensure Māori knowledge remains in the control of Māori and overseas entities are not given the

opportunity to claim indigenous knowledge as their own – thus new forms of colonialism (L. T. Smith, 2015, p. 52).

## Taonga Tuku Iho

Taonga Tuku Iho means ‘treasure handed down’ and includes our identity, te reo Māori, and mātauranga (knowledge) from our tūpuna (ancestors) (N. Ellis, 2016; Moeke-Maxwell et al., 2019). As a principle, Taonga Tuku Iho highlights the powerful and significant connection that many Māori have (or want to have) with their culture. This emotional and spiritual relationship with te reo, mātauranga, and who we are is important when developing Kaupapa Māori initiatives that benefit the people (G. H. Smith, 1997). Mainstream education has not valued that relationship and has created an inequitable education space that ensures Māori underachievement – therein breaking the agreement set out in Te Tiriti o Waitangi a driving factor for negative health outcomes for Māori (R. Bishop et al., 2009; Cavanagh et al., 2012; Houkamau & Sibley, 2011; Muriwai et al., 2015; Pihama, 2019). Taonga Tuku Iho in educational action would mean harnessing the positive sense of emotion and pride one has with their culture and identity and supporting the transfer of this pride into their learning (G. H. Smith, 1997). *Ngā Haeata o Aotearoa 2020* (Ministry of Education, 2022) highlights that Māori in Māori medium schools are experiencing higher levels of success, compared to Māori students in mainstream education, such as NCEA literacy and numeracy requirements, more likely to achieve University Entrance, and “...participate in and attain standards that reflect Māori culture, language and identity” (p. 30).

Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s Kaupapa Māori principle of Whakapapa is connected to Tāonga Tuku Iho in the sense that it recognises the familial connections Māori have with their people (past, present, and future), the whenua, and cultural values (L. T. T. R. Mead, 1997). As researchers, we must therefore understand that these relationships play a vital role in our worldviews and the lens through which we approach the mahi. Keeping in mind, however, that our people are not all one and the same, as we have differences in outlook and mātauranga-a-iwi (tribal specific knowledge) built up through

the experiences of generations (William Doherty, 2010; Royal, 2012; L. T. Smith, 2015).

A methodological application of the Whakapapa principle is ‘kanohi ki te kanohi’ (face to face), which means researchers openly share their whakapapa and their position in their kaupapa rangahau (L. T. T. R. Mead, 1997, p. 213). In other words, ‘kanohi ki te kanohi’ means being part of the community you are working with, and establishing relationships through your whakapapa and your mahi. Whakapapa is important because knowing your identity means knowing your whakapapa. Wiremu Doherty (2014) states for instance “People, knowledge, and the landscape must be linked, and mauri and whakapapa map this development” (p.41).

### Ako Māori

Ako means reciprocally teach and learn (Morrison & Vaioleti, 2011). This principle recognises that teaching and learning needs to be informed by and grounded in the wider socio-economic factors that Māori consistently engage with (G. H. Smith, 1997). Ako Māori recognises that Māori can lead the decision-making in implementing learning techniques that are related to Māori culture and realities (G. H. Smith, 2017). Importantly, this principle does not endeavour to discredit other teaching methods but rather comment on the need for culturally preferred pedagogy that upholds te reo me ona tikanga (Māori language and customs) (G. H. Smith, 1997).

Much work has been done detailing the need for culturally appropriate learning pedagogies for Māori in the education system and advocates that educators implement learning strategies that has meaning for Māori. (Cavanagh et al., 2012; Hapeta & Palmer, 2009; Harrison, 2005; Highfield & Webber, 2021; Stucki, 2012; Webber & Macfarlane, 2020). In a similar vein, O’Sullivan et al. (2022) highlight the importance educators must place on the identity and cultural makeup of their students. In research, Ako Māori affords the opportunity to privilege mātauranga Māori through Kaupapa Māori methodology and practices. As kairangahau, there are also

opportunities to share and learn skills and knowledge with research participants.

### Kia Piki ake i ngā Raruraru o te Kainga

The socio-economic principle: Kia Piki ake i ngā Raruraru o te Kainga advocates that educators and whānau are collectively responsible for the achievements of all learners, which in turn is an expression of tika (doing what is right) (G. H. Smith, 1997). This in turn, supports greater involvement and commitment to education and learning (G. H. Smith, 1997, 2015). For example, within the Kaupapa Māori Kōhanga Reo initiative, if parents cannot drop their kids at school due to work schedules, for instance, their 'Kohanga Whānau' will support them with transport. Additionally, if a whānau has financial constraints that impact the ability of their tamariki to attend kura, other whānau who can pay, will pay more (G. H. Smith, 1997). Importantly, G. H. Smith (1997) explains that this principle does not disregard the role colonisation has had on Māori attitudes toward education. However, Māori cultural practice can become a vehicle for reconciliation, and doing what is tika (right), supporting Māori to refocus their perceptions of education – classing it as an important part of our lives. Thus, contributing to decreasing the negative pressures economically, and opening the doors to opportunities one might not be afforded without education (G. H. Smith, 1997).

In her conceptualisation of Kaupapa Māori as methodology, Linda Tuhiwai Smith refers to the principle of Kia Piki ake i ngā Raruraru o te Kainga (L. T. T. R. Mead, 1997), which is related to tīkanga Māori. L. T. Smith (2015) cautions that tikanga is not a recipe or formula which you can just learn, but rather a result of continual experience and dedication to applying it in everyday life. Her advice on applying tīkanga (customs) within Kaupapa Māori research lies in how we enter into a community and the ways in which we can ensure that the "...formal, ritual and spiritual dimensions" are looked after and maintained in a way that is felt to be tika (right or correct) (L. T. T. R. Mead, 1997, p. 216). This is usually addressed by kairangahau (researchers) having a mentor or kaumatua (elder) guiding them through

their kaupapa and ensuring their ways of being are culturally sound and adhere to correct process.

Tikanga, open to individual interpretation, informs how people carry themselves, their behaviours, and their thinking, but is often focused on seeking that which is tika (Henry & Pene, 2001; Pere, 1982; L. T. Smith, 2015). The Tikanga principle calls us to be aware of the continuously evolving, active, and interconnected world in which we live (Roberts & Wills, 2019). Recognising the many unique understandings of tikanga for different iwi and hapū is evident in the work of Wiremu Doherty, where he sets out the foundation of Mātauranga-a-Tūhoe (William Doherty, 2010; Wiremu Doherty, 2014; Mahuika, 2011). Mātauranga-a-Tūhoe is an example of how Kaupapa Māori has been applied by kairangahau to ensure tikanga specific to iwi and hapū are recognised through the research process. Kaupapa Māori research, when guided by tikanga is contextually grounded in place and time, fulfilling the aspirations of the people of the rohe.

## Whānau

Whānau is the kupu Māori (Māori word) for family, extended family, and also includes relationships with friends (M. H. Durie, 1985). Whānau as a principle of Kaupapa Māori theory understands the value of families binding together to support each other; sharing experiences, thoughts, and ideas based on experience to nurture positive change in the lives of others (G. H. Smith, 1997). Whānau is connected to the kupu whanaungatanga (relationships), and the strengthening of our connections with each other (Te Whāiti et al., 1997).

The whānau concept is critical to understand as it has synergy with Māori beliefs of interdependence over independence – we rely on each other always, and in collaboration get things done (M. H. Durie, 1985). The conceptualisation of whānau in the education setting connects with the previous principle (Kia Piki ake i ngā Raruraru o te Kainga). These two principles enable collective responsibility and ensures the education of all children is the primary goal (G. H. Smith, 1997). By realising and actioning whānau leadership in kura, the whānau principle has also seen the return

of many parents to the school setting after negative experiences of their own. The opportunities for whānau to contribute within school settings, support the transformation of their mindset and commitment toward education for their tamariki (G. H. Smith, 1997, pp. 471-472).

Recognising the role of kaumātua, and the structure required within Kaupapa Māori research teams, L. T. Smith (2021) Kaupapa Māori methodology principles also includes whānau as an organisational principle. She highlights special skills and knowledge that kaumātua have in opening the doors to knowledge. Furthermore, the whānau principle speaks to how important it is to safeguard the centrality of Māori identity within research, and our daily lives through the renaissance of language, kapa haka, art forms, and cultural practices (Kopua et al., 2020). The whānau principle values the building of relationships – whanaungatanga – which is key to Māori learning. The whānau principle also promotes a collaborative approach to creating knowledge, protected by the collective, and allows for a unified position and response shared by all involved (A. R. Bishop, 1995; G. H. Smith, 2003; Stucki, 2012).

## Kaupapa

G. H. Smith (2015, p. 18) states that Kaupapa Māori has the flexibility to deal with 'wins and losses' as Māori seek to realise emancipation. The aspiration and purpose of Kaupapa Māori research is supported by its commitment to the 'Utopian Vision' – the kaupapa - the dream scenario and best outcomes for Māori envisioned through the rangahau (G. H. Smith, 1997, p. 472). An expression of the kaupapa principle can be seen in the vision of Kōhanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa Māori – the aspiration to provide a high standard of education in te reo Māori (G. H. Smith, 1997).

The revitalisation of te reo Māori is foundational to Kaupapa Māori resistance initiatives, including Kaupapa Māori methodology (L. T. T. R. Mead, 1997; L. T. Smith, 1989b, 2015, 2021; S. Walker et al., 2006). This connection is seen through Linda Tuhiwai Smith's recognition of te reo as a principle of Kaupapa Māori as a research approach. Much like Kohanga

Reo, Kaupapa Māori as methodology views te reo Māori as critical for Māori people, and therefore the research conducted to support the achievement of cultural aspirations for tāngata whenua. The language holds connections to epistemology and worldview and allows for the proper expression of history, experiences, and knowledge (L. T. T. R. Mead, 1997).

Te reo Māori allows us to comprehend Māori cultural concepts and tikanga more fully and acts as a protective factor to Māori identity (L. T. Smith, 1989b). This would mean that Kaupapa Māori research is conducted and written in te reo as much as possible (S. Walker et al., 2006). The importance of te reo can be summed up in the following quote: “Without the key—language—you are only able to peek and peer through the window. The language allows you to shift your position to view from within rather than from a distant or foreign position” (Wiremu Doherty, 2014, p. 44).

Taina Pohatu (2013) supports this position and contends that te reo Māori deepens our understanding and connection with all things through the expression of emotion, “Feelings and sentiments underpin cultural theory and reasoning, with language the vehicle that conveys and at the same time assesses practice” (Pohatu, 2013, p. 14). Viewing te reo in this way reflects the dynamic relational nature of our reality (Pohatu, 2013). However, Māori realities’ of colonisation has led to varying levels of te reo Māori attained by Māori researchers (Pihama, 2017). Therefore, its use as much as possible is advocated. However, Clarke (2012) views the principle as researchers placing a commitment to te reo Māori within their work and I would say importantly, their lives.

Kaupapa Māori theory and research has opened the door for Māori and other indigenous academics to realise their research aspirations as indigenous peoples’. One specific Kaupapa Māori framework that resonates with me is Te Takepū Āta, which was brought forward by Taina Pohatu.

## Te Takepū Āta

Pohatu (2013) introduced Te Tākepu Āta (Āta), a set of principles that can be used as a tool to deliberately bring Māori ways of thinking and being back

to the centre. As a social worker, Taina Pohatu recognised that Takepū (principles) are culturally preferred tools that derive from Māori thinking and being, and which supported him to navigate working with people who have been oppressed and thus disconnected from valued relationships.

Taina Pohatu (2003) explains that social workers are consistently engaging with “...people who have been marginalised and disempowered in their relationships” (p. 1). Therefore, the use of Takepū, Māori cultural tools, support social work practitioners to ethically navigate and build respectful relationships and connect us to our cultural ways of life (Pohatu, 2003, 2013; Pohatu & Tīmata, 2008). Āta is a representation of the beauty of Māori thinking and highlights that we can respectfully grow relationships with care and intentional thought (Pohatu, 2013).

Āta resonates with me because being intentionally reflective and valuing relationships with all things is who I am as a person. My life experiences have shaped who I am today, and the learnings provided by those special moments could only be realised through true reflection. Therefore, I recognised the significance of Āta as a framework. In essence, I believe that the framework is a great tool that reflects my natural way of being as a young Māori man in this kaupapa rangahau.

Āta highlights how respectful purposeful sharing and reflection of knowledge and stories can lead to effective and positive approaches to transformational change (Pohatu, 2013). As narratives and experiences are shared, the Āta principles require the careful, yet purposeful pursuit of locating the critical and meaningful messages within them. Narrative as a method is discussed in Chapter Five. The messages must then be reflected upon with an intentional emphasis on the reapplication and reshaping of the pieces of knowledge and practices shared.

Āta principles encompass many aspects, such as ways to listen, be with people, when, and how to respond. However, they can be understood as the way in which we can intentionally and respectfully interact with knowledge that has been shared. We can then work deliberately to present the ideas and messages that are identified, having an open mind

to find creative solutions, and consistently reflecting on the connections that are significant between all things in Te Āo Māori (The Māori World).

The set of 12 Āta principles are set out below. Each of these elements have a meaning and place individually, however, their significance and purpose is intensified and more fully experienced when connected with each other (Pohatu, 2013). In other words, when multiple principles are applied within what we do, we must go through an intentional process of reflection, to think about how these specific principles are expressed through our mahi. We must act and think intentionally to recognise the ways in which our kaupapa can be intensified with the use of Takepū but also be reflective enough to understand how each principle can have a special meaning in different contexts (Pohatu, 2013; Pohatu & Tīmata, 2008).

*Table 1: Te Takepū Āta Principles<sup>3</sup>*

Takepū   Principles	He Whakamāramatanga   Definitions
Āta-haere	To be intentional and deliberate and to approach reflectively, moving with respect and integrity. It signals the act of moving with an awareness of relationships, their significance, and requirements.
Āta-whakarongo	To listen with reflective deliberation. This requires patience and tolerance, giving space to listen.
Āta-kōrero	To communicate and speak with clarity, requiring quality preparation and a deliberate gathering of what is to be communicated. This is to ensure a quality presentation (kia marama ki te kaupapa), to speak with conviction (kia pūmau ki te kaupapa), and to be focused (kia hāngai ki te kaupapa).
Āta-tuhi	To communicate and write with deliberation, needing to be constantly reflective, and knowing the purpose for writing; in this, consistently monitoring and measuring quality is implicit.

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<sup>3</sup> Pohatu, 2013.

Takepū   Principles	He Whakamāramatanga   Definitions
Āta-mahi	To work diligently, with the conviction that what is being done is correct and appropriate to the tasks undertaken.
Āta-noho	To give quality time to be with people and their issues, with an open and respectful mind, heart, and soul. This signals the level of integrity required in relationships.
Āta-whakaaro	To think with deliberation, allowing space for creativity, openness and reflection, the consequence of which is that action is undertaken to the best of one's ability.
Āta-whakaako	To instil knowledge and understanding deliberately. There are clear reasons why knowledge is shared – to the appropriate participants, in the required manner, time and place.
Āta-tohutohu	To instruct, monitor, and correct deliberately, in which grounded knowledge is a constant and valued companion. Cultural markers such as kaitiakitanga (responsible trusteeship) are then accorded safe space to enlighten how and why relationships should be maintained.
Āta-kīnaki	To be deliberate and clear in the choice of appropriate supports to enhance positions taken.
Āta-hoki mārire	To return with respectful acknowledgement of possible consequences.
Āta-titiro	To study kaupapa with reflective deliberation.
Āta-whakamārama	To inform with reflective deliberation, ensuring that the channels of communication at the spiritual, emotional, and intellectual levels of the receiver are respected, understood, and valued.

As an example of application, Were (2021) sought the support of Āta in her work advocating for the actioning of aroha within evaluative leadership. She recognised Takepū as important tools that express authentically Māori thought and bring our ways of being back to the centre – a subtle reminder of the importance of respectful relationships between tāngata (people), whenua (environment) and kaupapa (ideas) (Were, 2021). For instance, the Āta-whakarongo principle calls us “to listen with reflective deliberation. This requires patience and tolerance, giving space to listen” (Pohatu, 2013, p. 15). This Takepū requires concentrated effort, especially through wānanga (meetings face to face) when we must be respectful of others' time and value in order to feel safe to speak and also to be properly heard (Were, 2021). However, a critical aspect here is that Te Takepū Āta is a framework that challenges us to be deliberate and intentional in our pursuit of bringing Māori ways of thinking and being back to the centre.

Within this kaupapa rangahau, Te Takepū Āta is actioned through deliberate and intentional reflection and relationship to the kaupapa. I want to make explicit the deep connection I have to coaching and working with young people, as well as the respect I have for my rangatira, (mentor) Mel Young. As I move through this mahi and share my pūrākau (stories), I am actioning the principles and meaning of what Āta means to me – being deliberately intentional, reflective, and relating to all that is around me – people, environment and kaupapa (more specific applications in Chapter Five).

## Applying Kaupapa Māori as my Methodology

Kaupapa Māori theory is a fluid and naturally evolving philosophy (Moewaka-Barnes, 2000; Pihama, 2010; G. H. Smith, 1997, 2015; L. T. Smith, 2015).

The synthesis above demonstrates the significance of cultural values and principles for our people, and Āta is one example of the academic and community-based works that have been inspired by Kaupapa Māori theory and Kāupapa Māori as methodology – the Kaupapa Māori movement.

Of particular relevance and interest to me, Te Takepū Āta gives us a gentle reminder of the importance of relationships and encourages us to be deliberately and intentionally reflective (Pohatu, 2013; Were, 2021). In essence, Āta is about reflection, recognising your relationship to kaupapa, to what you write, and how you express the learnings and meanings of the experiences we have. Learning about Āta as a framework, I have learnt that reflection and connection is a way of life and an important tool to use if we wish to make meaning through our relationships with the world around us. I will employ Āta as the lens for my kaupapa rangahau, including the analyses of my pūrakāu. Put simply, we are practising Āta by reflecting on a story or our life experiences to find connection and purpose.

By living Te Takepū Āta, I give effect to Kaupapa Māori, and is seen in my thesis through intentional and deliberate reflection.

As I move reflectively through this kaupapa rangahau, I will action Āta in the way that I write, engage with ideas and knowledge, and how I connect with a kaupapa that is extremely important to me. Reflecting on my life experiences, I articulate a Kaupapa Māori coaching framework. In Chapter 8, I then draw on G. H. Smith (1997) set of intervention elements for successful Kaupapa Māori initiatives to evaluate my framework.

## Conclusion

Guiding principles help us to make sense of what and why we are conducting Kaupapa Māori research, while providing the support we need as we carry out research that aspires to be meaningful for our people. These principles provide the blueprint for what successful Kaupapa Māori initiatives look like (L. T. T. R. Mead, 1997; G. H. Smith, 1997). The wero (challenge) that is laid down for Kaupapa Māori researchers is to ask critical questions about who the research is for, how will we learn through the research, and what difference will our mahi make.

Bringing our own unique perspectives to our mahi enables the field to grow. Just being Māori or Ngāti Manawa or a moko does not necessarily give you 'the keys to the car' in terms of Kaupapa Māori research (L. T. Smith, 2015).

In other words, just because we identify and whakapapa Māori (Māori ancestry), our mahi and what we aspire to achieve through it must connect with Kaupapa Māori principles and aspirations.

However, as Māori we also acknowledge the multitude of relationships we have with the world around us. Our relationship to things animate and inanimate binds us to all things, and harnessing these connections add value to our research (Marsden, 1992, 2003; Peters et al., 2017; L. T. Smith, 2015). Therefore, our mahi as researchers is to bring our experiences and who we are to our works, sharing knowledge, and stimulating thought for how things can be done in more transformational and positive ways. In this sense, my kaupapa rangahau presents my story and the process of reflecting on who I am and the people I have been blessed to spend time within my life while working towards bringing Māori ways of thinking and being back to the centre of coaching practice.

In the next Chapter, I conduct a conceptual literature review and apply the principles of Te Takepū Āta to unpack coaching practice and highlighting the need for culturally specific coaching. My driving motivation is to develop a Kaupapa Māori coaching framework that brings Māori ways of thinking and being back to the centre as a means to enhance the development of rangatahi through sport.

## Chapter 4: Literature Review

In this Chapter, I offer a conceptual literature review that takes you through some of the building blocks of coaching practice. To better develop young people through sport, we need these concepts and actions to work together in harmony and balance, rather than on their own. This journey through the literature speaks to the idea that our Māori culture is the foundation upon which contextually specific practice can be built.

I want to recognise the deliberate use of Te Takepū Āta as the framework I have used to move through reading, writing, reflecting, and relating to the literature. Using Āta as my lens, I will be intentional in critically analysing what mātauranga (knowledge, wisdom) is to be brought together and its connection to the purpose of this kaupapa.



Common perceptions of coaches are that we look after kids for two hours and teach them skills (Camiré et al., 2012; Gould & Carson, 2008). But we are more than that. I know that there is more to coaching than skill acquisition because Mel showed me what coaching with values and coaching for life was. Starting with positive youth development, I will begin unpacking how we can develop rangatahi purposefully rather than coincidentally, seeking to form a relationship with someone who genuinely cares. I believe all our rangatahi deserve to have the ‘Mel like’ experience that I was fortunate enough to have. To this end, I believe we must begin to understand how coaches can deliberately and intentionally bring youth development into their practice in a more explicit and culturally specific way.

As coaches, we need to recognise the different realities and experiences of our players, and through that knowledge and understanding, practice personally grounded contextualised coaching. Understanding the diverse realities of the people we coach affords us the opportunity to design learning environments and cultures (Renshaw et al., 2019) that align and connect to their context and culture. In doing so, we may begin to view coaching and

learning from a more contextually grounded vantage point. The lives of the people we work with as coaches are impacted and influenced by culture and socio-cultural factors.

## Being an Effective Coach

Personally grounded coaching is one of the pillars of this rangahau. In other words, it is important to have coaches whose practice takes into consideration the diverse range of circumstances that people face every day. We will begin this literature journey examining what it means to be an effective coach.

Coaching effectiveness as described by Côté and Gilbert (2009) is:

The consistent application of integrated professional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal knowledge to improve athletes' competence, confidence, connection, and character in specific coaching contexts. (p. 316)

Thus, coaches must engage and draw from multiple and different sources of knowledge to effectively develop learning environments that nurture holistic athlete development. This learning environment has been described as a motivational climate, where a culture is built to inspire athletes to work hard, improve their skills, and contribute to the team environment (Côté & Gilbert, 2009; Potrac et al., 2013; Vella & Gilbert, 2014).

Effective coaches use reflection to transform their coaching/practice experiences into learning opportunities, which they can then apply (Côté & Gilbert, 2009; Knowles et al., 2005; Trudel & Gilbert, 2001). Roy et al. (2021) states for instance, "reflection links experience and knowledge by providing an opportunity to explore areas of concern in a critical way and to make adjustments based on these reflections" (p. 1). Reflection is a challenging and uncomfortable process (Hall & Gray, 2016; Stodter et al., 2021) but is key to personally grounded and effective coaching, and allows us to

understand how to best support learning within the reality of our learners' lives (Piggott, 2012). Coaching exists in many different contexts and with a diverse range of people, therefore, our coaching knowledge and approach should relate to the people, place, and time that we are in (Ciampolini et al., 2019; Dempsey et al., 2021; Mallett & Dickens, 2009).

Reflective conversations in coach development contexts can support coaches in making changes and understanding the connection between knowledge, people, and context (Stodter et al., 2021). Bamberger and Schön (1983) similarly speak about “conversational learning” which is founded on the understanding that knowledge is relational (p. 69). Thus, communicating with and learning from others provides new perspectives that can benefit learners (R. L. Jones & Hemmestad, 2021; Wegerif, 2008). However, there is a lot of confusion about what the reflective process looks like (Downham & Cushion, 2022), and the positive impacts of reflection on athlete learning (Paquette & Trudel, 2018).

The personal assets framework has been examined as a way to improve coaches' understanding of the many components of their practice that must be fulfilled in order to facilitate quality learning experiences and achieve positive athlete outcomes (Côté & Erickson, 2016; Côté et al., 2016). As such, athlete outcomes are dependent upon coaches' ability to understand the many dimensions of the people they work with and create appropriate sporting goals within a contextually grounded growth environment. The personal assets framework highlights the truly multi-level and complex nature of coaching in the sense that we need to look beyond teaching sport-specific skills and move towards an approach that focuses on teaching contextual values that matter in the lives of the people we work with (Côté & Erickson, 2016; Côté et al., 2016). Therefore, this kaupapa rangahau intends to provide a culturally informed solution that supports coaches to elevate cultural values in their coaching practice, and thus, recognising the need to better understand the importance of the context we all live in to enhance youth development in Aotearoa.

## Positive Youth Development

Positive Youth Development (PYD) is an approach focused on developing the strengths and qualities of rangatahi to enhance their potential in life (Lerner, 2017). Holistic in nature, PYD engages with a range of theories and approaches that recognise the ability rangatahi have to grow and aspires to connect them to positive opportunities. However, the key is that practitioners (for example, coaches, researchers, policy-makers) constantly search for the “characteristics of individuals and their social contexts that can be harnessed to build strengths and foster positive developmental change” (Lerner & Castellino, 2002, as cited in Holt et al., 2020, p. 429). PYD programs are designed to facilitate positive relationships between adults and rangatahi, encompass life skill building activities, and provide opportunities to apply those skills in the community (Holt et al., 2020; Lerner, 2004). Lerner et al. (2009) present a PYD model that is focused on the development of the 5C’s of PYD – competence, confidence, connection, character and caring. Rangatahi involved in sport could develop the necessary skills to then be able to contribute (the sixth C) to their communities (Coakley, 2016).

In sport, PYD focuses on facilitating quality environments that allow rangatahi to learn and apply life skills, using sport as the vehicle to do so (Holt et al., 2016). PYD also provides a framework and direction to analyse how coaches can impact positive change for the people we work with (Holt et al., 2013). However, Coakley (2016) questions sport’s ability to impact positive change in the lives of rangatahi. We must think critically about the ability sport has to teach beneficial values because sport programs needs to be designed and practiced effectively to affect positive change (Coakley, 2016).

Weiss (2016) states that PYD as we know it has evolved over the years. In its initial stages, PYD did not recognise work related to youth sport psychology but has since been developed into the framework as we know it today. Following Holt et al. (2016), PYD is underpinned by Bronfenbrenner’s relational model, which provides a lens to ensure that

sport is no longer considered as an isolated environment, but rather interconnected with the diverse range of factors that influence our lives (Agans et al., 2016; Strachan et al., 2016).

Research has been conducted that highlights that rangatahi involved in PYD programs have developed increased initiative, emotional intelligence, teamwork, and other social and emotional attributes (Hansen et al., 2003; Larson et al., 2006; Zarrett et al., 2007). In contrast, when compared to other organised youth activities, examinations of youth sport practice have also highlighted negative relationships with peers and that undesirable adult behaviours occur in sport (Hansen et al., 2003). Thus, we must also recognise that there is nothing magical about sport, while it does provide a unique opportunity to shape the lives of rangatahi (Larson & Seepersad, 2003). PYD is one approach to address the issues of poor behaviour in sport, although it is critical to remember that PYD is not merely about steering rangatahi away from risk-taking behaviours (Scales et al., 2000). Youth are far more capable to learn and grow beyond teachings focused on the avoidance of negative behaviours (Damon, 2004). The key is to realise that the effectiveness of PYD relies on the positive relationships between people and the program, which supports rangatahi to make contributions and a difference in the world (Larson & Seepersad, 2003; Lerner, 2017).

Imparting life skills to rangatahi is a crucial component of PYD (Holt, 2016; Holt et al., 2020). Practitioners must then recognise that life skills can be learnt implicitly or explicitly in practice (Holt et al., 2017; Pierce et al., 2017; Turnbridge et al., 2014). Implicit transfer is the idea that life skills will be picked up by participants in a PYD environment as they make the links between the learning and life application (Holt et al., 2017). In contrast, Camiré et al. (2011) state that the learning of life skills “should not be left to chance” (p. 258) and reflect the idea that these crucial skills are “taught rather than caught” in sports environments (Holt et al., 2017, p. 438). Explicit learning is more widely supported, and the range of intentional practice programs created is evidence of that (Holt et al., 2020). Camiré et al. (2012) worked with 16 student athletes to highlight that coaches can explicitly connect life skills through sports using strategies such as keywords, role

modelling positive behaviour and taking advantage of teachable moments. Intentional and directed effort must be made if the goal is to use sport as a vehicle to impart life skills. Participating in sports does not guarantee anything for our kids and there is a difference between enhancing life skills through directed focus and the causal effects of involvement (Theokas et al., 2007). For example in their study, Bean and Forneris (2017) found that youth involved in explicit practice scored far higher in PYD, than those who were involved in programs that chose to teach life skills implicitly.

People are explicitly linked to their contexts and their development within these spaces relies on their relationship with it (Lerner, 2017). Lerner et al. (2009) take this notion further when they argue that the 5Cs of PYD (confidence, competence, connection, character, caring) are effectively developed when an individual, environment and learning are aligned. So, we need to unpack the meaning of PYD and how involvement in sport can lead to positive youth development (Holt et al., 2013; Larson et al., 2006).

PYD research has been largely focused on interpersonal relationships rather than contextual factors (Holt et al., 2020). More research is needed to understand how PYD can be manifested in practice. I agree with Holt et al. (2020) when they argue that we need to step beyond the theory of PYD and into the trenches of real-world application, becoming part of the achievement of PYD in different contexts.

In Aotearoa, there is a rising awareness of PYD as an impactful approach that supports positive change in youth (Arahanga-Doyle et al., 2019). However, while there are some similarities between the Western-based 5C's PYD model and Māori approaches, an indigenous perspective is likely to view connection as the key to identity, compared to confidence in the Western model (Arahanga-Doyle et al., 2019). Martel et al. (2022) developed a Kaupapa Māori *six-C framework* of connection, collaboration, champion, cultivate, consider, create, that reframes PYD in a culturally specific way. The *six-C framework* is an example of a fresh, contextually, and culturally aligned framework that reflects who we are as tāngata whenua in Aotearoa.

Hapeta et al. (2022) analysed the Hidden Face of Sport (HFS) intervention in an Aotearoa Youth Justice Residence and explored how PYD can be reframed through Kaupapa Māori principles and the *six-C framework*. The HFS initiative highlights the need to explicitly connect the values within sporting contexts to the people, and seeing the whole person who already have inherent values, potential for growth, and the ability to contribute to society (Hapeta et al., 2022). The HFS intervention developed over time to be inspired by the principle of Whakamana Tangata and focused on respectful relationships, character building, understanding your responsibilities, connectedness and decision-making (Hapeta et al., 2022). The HFS intervention is an example of how Māori cultural values can extend current Western theories and provide a platform for personal development that is inclusive and reflective of culture. The HFS thus, affirms the ability of Kaupapa Māori and the potential within Te Ao Māori to support youth development in a contextually specific way.

Coaching is more than skill development, and as a concept, PYD highlights the importance of teaching and instilling life lessons in rangatahi through sport, however, there is a need to explicitly connect these values to rangatahi (Hapeta et al., 2022). Additionally, there is potential in weaving Māori cultural values into our practice, extending previous approaches, and enhancing their relevance and connection to our people and context.

Enhancing youth development through sport is a driving factor of this kaupapa rangahau. Engaging with PYD literature has affirmed the important role that culture plays in our development. This kaupapa rangahau aims to elevate cultural ways of thinking and being in a Kaupapa Māori framework that bridges the gap between coaching and culture, enhancing youth development. Moreover, addressing the need to understand how coaches can effectively design contextual learning environments that rangatahi connect with (Coakley, 2016; Holt et al., 2020). Coaching for life and preparing rangatahi to become positive contributors in society is part of the duty of a coach. Therefore, we need to challenge traditional coaching models that have been focused on skill development.

## Challenging Traditional Coaching Approaches

In response to traditional coaching approaches that have failed to develop the *whole* person, scholars advocate the uptake of evidence-based pedagogy that teaches through active play (Bunker & Thorpe, 1982; Butler, 2006; Butler & McCahan, 2005; Griffin & Butler, 2005; Moy et al., 2020; Newell, 1986; Pinder & Renshaw, 2019; Renshaw et al., 2016; Renshaw et al., 2010a; Renshaw & Chow, 2019; Renshaw et al., 2019; Renshaw & Moy, 2018). Evidence-based pedagogies and teaching methods challenge the traditional view of coaching where fundamental skills are more important than decision-making, and have been taught in environments that are not reflective of the game they are applied in. In response, games-based approaches to coaching and the use of teaching games for understanding (TGFU) were developed to improve the learning experiences of students within physical education classes (Bunker & Thorpe, 1982; Butler, 2006; Griffin & Butler, 2005; Renshaw et al., 2016). TGFU teaches athletes skills within the context of their sport through carefully designed games to enhance the learner's appreciation of their code, and to develop their tactical awareness, supporting athletes and their ability to make the right decisions (Werner et al., 1996).

A games-based basketball practice would involve playing a game that places learners in an environment where technical and tactical skills are applied in a game setting. Throughout the game, coaches provide opportunities for reflection and adaptation of play – allowing the players and coaches to engage in the process of communication and development before returning to live play. If passing was seen as an area of deficiency, coaches might use another activity to focus on passing, such as 3v3 in a tight space, and introduce a points system based on the passes made to work on the skill but also the tactics behind getting open to successfully make and receive passes, then return to gameplay.

Light (2004a) explored the experiences of coaches implementing game sense. In this study, coaches felt that there was an increase in learning opportunities for players in contrast to traditional drills that focus on perfect

skill execution in decontextualised environments before active play. In their study, Kinnerk et al. (2018) found that learning through games improves athlete motivation and facilitates positive affective outcomes. Importantly, coaches also need to recognise that the feelings and emotions of players impact their learning and development of decision making and critical thinking (Pope, 2005). Pope (2005) provides insight on the affective ability of TGFU, stating:

TGfU cannot, and should not, be reduced to tactical or cognitive competence. TGfU has the potential to confirm the humanness of physical education and sport through the ways in which it highlights human interaction and the affective dimensions of games (p. 271).

Despite the research that has been conducted on the topics, however, TGFU has not made a significant impact on the teaching of physical education due to a range of factors including teacher confidence and the knowledge required to create modified games (Brooker et al., 2000; Light, 2004a, 2004b). Gabbett et al. (2009) identified that the challenge for coaches is to have a range of games that focus on skill development and decision making within a game environment that is representative of game-like pressure. Potentially, the challenges discussed above outweigh the positives of TGFU as a method. Therefore, the use of games-based approaches has not been widely implemented, and support for the development of skill acquisition through games-based approaches is not large (Kinnerk et al., 2018).

Questions and concerns have also been raised regarding the validity of TGFU in a more performance or sport focused coaching context. Renshaw et al. (2016) argue that standing alone, the TGFU model is not rooted in specific pedagogy, nor does it have scientific, evidence-based support, but call coaches to explore the constraint-led approach to coaching and learning (CLA). CLA is a relatively new teaching style brought forward by Newell (1986), and is founded on the ideas of non-linear pedagogy and ecological dynamics, but has had a slow uptake since its inception (Stone et al., 2021).

The literature above showcases the development of coaching approaches to enhance skill acquisition and game transfer. However, there is still a cultural disconnect in the development of games-based coaching approaches. We have not been informed how these models support coaches to teach contextually relevant values and develop the whole person. Therefore, we need to understand more about the significant role that the environment plays in developing people.

## An Underpinning Theory: Ecological Dynamics

Ecological Dynamics seeks to understand how learners build their understanding of their performance environment in relation to their actionable abilities (Araujo et al., 2006; Gibson & Carmichael, 1966; Turvey & Shaw, 1995). Ecological Dynamics works together with Non-Linear Pedagogy to explain how movement is established by individuals due to their relationship with task and environment. Viewing decision making through an ecological approach highlights how information is understood and acted upon. Achieving the desired outcome in an activity or sporting event requires an individual to adapt to their environment (Araujo et al., 2006). Additionally, all individuals must learn how to take advantage of the information surrounding them and continuously seek to find the most functional movement solution (Araujo et al., 2006; Kelso et al., 2006; Kelso & Schöner, 1988).

Learning must also provide an element of freedom for participants as they begin to understand their own abilities (Araujo et al., 2009; Woods et al., 2020). In other words, caution must be taken not to over constrain activities, leading to athletes conforming to a specific movement or skill (Bernstein, 1967; Warren, 2006). Therefore, a coach's role is to ensure a functional organisation of appropriate activities that support an athlete to understand the information around them and to use that to reach the desired goal. Exploring with freedom, an individual will exploit what is necessary for more successful performance (Araujo et al., 2006; Davids et al., 2012).

## Person-Environment Fit

Using ecological dynamics as a lens to conceptualise physical literacy, Rudd (2021) highlights that natural spontaneous engagement with the environment is key to a child's development as they learn to read and adjust to the information around them, and using that to inform their action as they journey through their lifespan. Whilst Rudd (2021) critiques physical literacy as a concept, the same applies to understanding player development and skilful movement being the "...emerging functionality of the fit between an individual and the environment" (p. 34).

While physical literacy was used to come to an understanding of the person-environment fit (Rudd, 2021), there is still a need to understand the complexities of the coaching environment. In particular, the way socio-cultural factors play a significant role in the lives of our athletes in context (O'Sullivan et al., 2022). O'Sullivan et al. (2022) state that there is a need to "comprehend the distinct contextual complexities of cultures, communities and situations as they encounter them, co-creating practices that, respectively amplify and dampen helpful and unhelpful aspects of sport forms of life" (p. 1100). As such, the Learning and Development Research Framework (LDRF) provides coaches with guidance on how their practice should consistently evolve and grow in relation to the culture and context in which individuals are situated (O'Sullivan et al., 2022). Importantly, the LDRF promotes mobilisation, which means that research should be conducted by coaches who can develop player development frameworks and apply them in real life settings, and therefore impact positive change (Gainforth et al., 2014). Moreover, coaching is not a one size fits all model and therefore, we cannot expect to coach effectively if we use the same models and approaches that do not value the multi-layered complexity of person-environment interaction, "...context means everything" (North et al., 2014; O'Sullivan et al., 2022, p. 1100).

Ecological Dynamics helps us explore PYD in a culturally specific way as it asks us to comprehend the importance of culture and context in the lives of the people we work with. If we start from a place of culturally capacity, there

is an opportunity to amplify the helpful aspects of sport forms of life - bringing contextually relevant values to the forefront of our coaching practice and providing rangatahi opportunities to engage with them. Ecological Dynamics accentuates how important it is to be culturally specific and account for the vital role culture plays in the development of young peoples' lives.

In its simplest form, Ecological Dynamics does not prescribe to one culture; its nature is to constantly evolve in context. However, due to only reflecting the views of Western authors (based in America and the United Kingdom), we do not have a clear understanding nor have links been explicitly made to demonstrate what ecological dynamics looks like in a Māori cultural context in Aotearoa and how it can benefit our people. Therefore, investigating how Ecological Dynamics can be utilised within coaching practice will provide an opportunity for practical and contextually specific solutions to be brought forward.

## A Move to Non-Linear Pedagogy

Non-Linear Pedagogy (NLP) recognises that people are complex beings whose movement and action patterns are individually constructed through their engagement with their environment and the constraints placed upon them (Chow, 2013; Davids et al., 2005a). These constraints are the focal point of the Constraint-Led Approach and is discussed below. NLP recognises that individuals formulate their own pathways through their environment that are effective for them, shaped by their understanding of what is happening around them (Chow, 2013; Chow et al., 2009; Davids et al., 2005a). Therefore, the focus is placed on providing participants with opportunities to develop their own movement patterns through realistic activities rather than zoning in on a specific skill or technique that assumes one size fits all (Newell, 1986; Renshaw & Chow, 2019). Within NLP, movement patterns evolve through the constant interaction between student and their environment, and therefore it is essential that activities are founded upon a problem that the learner must solve – supporting their development of movement within an environment (Chow, 2013; Chow et al.,

2009; Chow et al., 2011; Correia et al., 2019; Davids et al., 2005a; M. C. Y. Lee et al., 2014).

## The Constraint-Led Approach

The Constraint-Led Approach (CLA) advocates for exploring movement solutions by placing athletes in environments with perception-action couplings and can provide repetition without repetition (Renshaw et al., 2016). Thus, games are used to put learners in situations where there is task and environmental information that they must perceive in order to then distinguish what is the best course forward.

Chris Oliver (Oliver, n.d.), a world-renowned basketball coach and leader in coach development defines skill as:

Technique + Decision Making = Skill (Oliver, n.d.; Oliver & Sarama, 2022).

Based on this definition, one could argue that coaches with a traditional view on coaching have neglected a critical part of the equation, which is decision-making. Decision-making is an important component because the development of perception-action couplings is what facilitates the game transfer of techniques (Araujo et al., 2006; Chow et al., 2009; Oliver & Sarama, 2022). Perception-action couplings is can be simply described as how our actions are informed and created through our perception of the information in our environments, perception and action form a cycle that are constantly interacting (de Rugy et al., 2002; Fontan et al., 2022; Stone et al., 2015)

Coaches need to understand the process by which people acquire skills in the constraints model in order to find success through it (Renshaw et al., 2010b). CLA sessions should connect learners' to their environment and support them to engage with the information within it (Renshaw et al., 2019). Hence, a coaches understanding of an athletes learning process is critical for the success of CLA as it aids them in their design of effective learning environments and activities (Chow et al., 2023; Renshaw et al., 2019)

Renshaw et al. (2019) identifies “constrain to afford” (p. 76) as a key step when designing a session based around the CLA. Affordances are opportunities created in the environment that inspire action (Brymer & Renshaw, 2010; Gibson, 1977). Constraints within the CLA are task, environmental, and performer constraints, which provide affordances for the exploration of movement (Chow, 2013). Task constraints have been widely researched as the most readily used constraint, and can involve the manipulation of game rules, court space, and the equipment used to enable and encourage specific learning to occur (Chow et al., 2009; Davids et al., 2005a). Environmental constraints include temperature, terrain, light, and even cultural norms (Renshaw et al., 2010b). Finally, performer constraints take into consideration height, weight, strength, speed, and the ability of an athlete to make sound decisions, concentrate, and their individual personality (Brymer & Renshaw, 2010). Constraining the environment presents affordances for athletes as they interact with the various information available to them (Davids et al., 2013). In other words, as an individual’s environment changes through the manipulation of constraints, new affordances become available to them. Importantly, Ramos et al. (2020) explored how the use of CLA could enhance the synergy between team members, explaining that quality learning design means that appropriate constraints are consistently brought into the learning environment that reflect the level and experience of the athletes. As learners interact with their environment and the constraints present, they will self-organise to produce a goal-oriented movement pattern that suits their abilities (Bernstein, 1967; Kelso, 1995; Renshaw et al., 2010b).

Representative learning design explains the need for realistic learning environments that look and feel like the real game (Chow, 2013; Chow et al., 2009; Warren, 2006). Within the CLA, athletes learn through their experience within their environment and seek to understand, self-organise, and adapt to the environment they are in - along with solving the problem is presented by coaches (Chow et al., 2009; Renshaw et al., 2010a).

Additionally, the idea of *repetition without repetition* (Bernstein, 1967) is crucial for the development of skill acquisition within CLA, NLP and ecological dynamics. While Bernstein (1967) argues that it is extremely difficult for an individual to perform the exact same movement pattern identically to the last, *repetition without repetition* allows for individuals to keep engaging with perception-action couplings in their environment and find the best possible movement solution (Bernstein, 1967; Davids et al., 2008). The idea of *repetition without repetition* requires coaches to create information-rich environments and manipulate constraints to get as many repetitions as possible in situations that require movement solutions – without being prescriptive and allowing individual freedom.

Using constraints in a basketball coaching setting would involve the specific design of learning environments and the manipulation of task constraints; constraining to afford in a representative learning environment. For example, if passing needs improvement, a coach could utilise small-sided games (2v2,3v3) or advantage-disadvantage scenarios (3v2, 4v2, 4v3) to simplify the activity - but not decontextualising the environment - and focus on both passing technique and decision making. Coaches could then start to manipulate constraints by increasing the space used, stipulating rules like after you pass you must find space and incentivising exploration and creativity. Incentivising creativity might be a rule that means players must attempt to use behind-the-back passes or flash passes, allowing them the freedom to explore movement solutions and exploit the affordances in their environment. Ommetto et al. (2018) point out that coaches beginning to adopt CLA into their usual coaching practice most commonly constrain player numbers within their practice tasks, creating advantage/disadvantage situations and generally failing to create representative learning environments. Renshaw et al. (2010a) provide an example of effective use of constraints from Australian cricket where a low net was introduced to decrease the playing field, increasing fielders' involvement in practice while striving to recreate match intensity. The benefit of manipulating the environment allowed for repetition without repetition (Bernstein, 1967; Newell, 1986) and afforded players more autonomy over

their learning, and leading to increased confidence due to quality learning design.

The constraint-led approach as a formula for coaching through games is supported by science and strong pedagogical foundations (Araujo et al., 2006; Chow et al., 2009; Davids et al., 2012; Davids et al., 2003; Davids et al., 2013; Davids et al., 2008; Davids et al., 2005a; Davids et al., 2005b; Newell, 1986). However, more recent studies have seen the opportunities CLA affords coaches to be creative, dynamic, and flexible with their practice.

Pinder and Renshaw (2019) recognised CLA as a flexible coaching model that encourages and requires coaches to seek to understand the complexities of their players' realities and carefully design personal and contextualised practice. Similarly, Dehghansai et al. (2020) recognise that the three core constraints (task, environment, person) do not just occur in the micro-practice of sports coaching (e.g., the gym), but in all parts of our lives. Therefore, coaches must navigate the socio-cultural constraints in the design of practice environments.

The constraint-led approach to coaching is an example of athlete-environment centred coaching practice in which coaches design and manipulate the three interconnected constraints within their learning environment to support the development of skill (Renshaw et al., 2016). As such, Orth et al. (2019) argue that the athlete-coach relationship needs to be deliberately valued and developed as coaches are responsible for designing quality learning environments and are the *master of constraints*. The argument here is that coaches cannot adequately respond to their players' needs if they do not have a genuine connection and understanding of who that player is and what they need. In other words, there is more to CLA than just the method of teaching, it is inclusive of the coach, player, and the learning environment.

Examining how to navigate shot selection in Aotearoa high school basketball, Minjares (2020) exemplifies that coaches must not be constrained by the method they choose to adopt and teach by, instead

arguing that coaching approaches provide a framework to build from. In other words, a coach's focus should be creating an environment that best caters for athletes' needs, and that we should be deliberately reflecting on how the values we hold as people support our chosen method to be successful. The argument made here reinforces the idea that coaching is more than skill acquisition, and comments on the requirement for values to drive our coaching as we are cognisant of the importance of our role as coaches to design learning environments that recognise the person-environment fit.

Literature has supported my argument that effective coaching needs more reflection and refining which will allow us to more fully understand how we might purposefully impart life skills through coaching. Ecological dynamics is a theory that highlights the need to appreciate the importance of person-environment fit. CLA brings ecological dynamics and non-linear pedagogy together to show how these two ideas can be utilised in coaching practice - but they are still very Westernised. Thus, the concept of CLA rooted in the theory of ecological dynamics, remains valuable in the pursuit of Kaupapa Māori informed coaching that aspires to enhance positive youth development through sport.

However, if there is more to sport than skill development, and the purpose of coaching is to develop values within rangatahi, it is crucial to understand the specific context that our practice is situated in, which is important to our development as people.

### Coaching is more than skill practice: A Form of Life

A Form of Life refers to the fact that our realities and the values and beliefs of our community inform our actions and the ways we approach our interactions with the affordances (opportunities to act) in our environment (Wittgenstein, 1953), not just as coaches or athletes, but as people too (Rothwell et al., 2018; Rothwell et al., 2019). The argument a Form of Life perspective makes is that coaching, being, and learning are contextually

developed (Rothwell et al., 2019). Therefore, the approach of one country, city, and sport will dramatically change according to the context it is situated in. However, more research and investment is needed to investigate and articulate how we can harness the socio-cultural constraints in our communities (Rothwell et al., 2018).

Within the Constraints-Led Approach, affordances are provided to learners through the effective design of learning environments in which athletes can interact and engage to grow (Davids et al., 2008; Davids et al., 2005a; Renshaw et al., 2016; Renshaw et al., 2010b; Renshaw et al., 2019). However, an important connection to make is the relational nature between affordances and the ecological niche of a person (Gibson, 1977; Rothwell et al., 2018). In other words, people who know how to approach and interact with their environments are more able to connect with the affordances available. A Form of Life provides the framework that helps coaches understand how we can better design learning environments that account for the socio-cultural constraint's athletes face in their lives. Understanding more about how a Form of Life can support coaches to enhance athletes' ability to utilise the affordances within a range of diverse cultural contexts across the globe (Uehara et al., 2016).

The British industrial era provides an example of how Form of Life influences behaviour (Rothwell et al., 2019). During industrialisation, workers were exposed to management techniques designed to remove confusion and create rigid roles (Rothwell et al., 2019). This meant that the normal learning approaches people became accustomed to were based on being told what to do and how to do it. The socio-cultural working conditions have in turn influenced traditional coaching approaches we use to this day (Day et al., 2013; Rothwell et al., 2019; Stone et al., 2021). Stone et al. (2021) investigated the socio-cultural factors that impacted 15 experienced international coaches, and their ability to explore contemporary coaching approaches even though they were aware of the positive impacts non-linear coaching approaches have; importantly connecting the impact a Form of Life has on coaching practice today. The findings of the study found that traditional coaching is often replicated - meaning we coach how we were

coached, or we try to fit in with the practices of experienced coaches around us (Denison & Avner, 2011; E. Ross et al., 2018; Stephenson & Jowett, 2009; Stone et al., 2021). This finding highlights that coaches also feel pressure to conform to the norms of their context.

In another example, the All Blacks (Aotearoa's national rugby team) harnessed our country's history and heritage in a Form of Life, by creating a team culture where athletes are encouraged to think for themselves and adjust to the environment (Rothwell et al., 2020). Utilising a Form of Life in this context demonstrates how coaches can look beyond their immediate coaching practice and navigate the multiple interacting constraints to transform their coaching approach (Phillips et al., 2010).

A Form of Life as a concept proposes that coaching is contextually located and specific; the values we hold are derived from our community and as the examples above highlight, can be successfully harnessed in coaching practice, fusing together people and environment. Māori have a unique knowledge base and way of life guided by tikanga and cultural values. A Form of Life further affirms the importance of culture in our development as people. This kaupapa rangahau will present a possible solution to help coaches navigate their pursuit to fuse coaching and culture together. However, we do not know how coaches can harness Māori values in a Form of Life within the context of coaching in Aotearoa, and what they look like for our people.

## Kaupapa Māori Concepts Driving Coaching

Research that relates to Kaupapa Māori (Chapter Three) sport coaching approaches is limited. However, Hapeta et al. (2021) explores how Game Sense pedagogy aligns with Kaupapa Māori principles and can be adapted into a more culturally responsive pedagogy that coaches can employ when working with indigenous athletes. Additionally, Hapeta et al. (2021) call on practitioners to critique their coaching approaches as they often disregard

how cultural factors can support coaches to develop kotahitanga (togetherness, unity) in their work with Māori (and indigenous) athletes.

Dissatisfied with education and its ability to support rangatahi Māori (Māori youth) is the reason why TŪ TOA was established (M. K. Durie, 2011). TŪ TOA is a Kaupapa education initiative that was set up to inspire rangatahi to achieve excellence in school and sport (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2007). M. K. Durie (2011) highlights that TŪ TOA was born when Māori performance in school improved as teaching methods aligned with Māori values. The TŪ TOA vision is to support rangatahi Māori to realise their potential and achieve excellence as student-athletes (Hapeta & Palmer, 2009). Their kaupapa involves a daily focus on physical activity and sport-specific coaching as well as receiving their education in a supportive correspondence environment that teaches rangatahi life skills (Tai Wānanga TŪ TOA, 2021) (Hapeta & Palmer, 2009). The positive impact of TŪ TOA showed through the findings, related to educational motivation, accountability and an improved sense of representing themselves with pride (Hapeta & Palmer, 2009).

Driving TŪ TOA are three pou: Kia Tū - confidence and competence to be part of life in the community; Kia Ora - holistic wellbeing development; and Kia Māori - having a strong cultural connection and identity (Tai Wānanga TŪ TOA, 2021). Evidence of the success TŪ TOA has achieved through their kaupapa are: 100% NCEA Level 1, 2 and 3 pass rate (2018); 1:7 student-teacher ratio; individualised learning plans that connect taiohi (student), whānau and kaitiaki (teachers); and holistic development (Tai Wānanga TŪ TOA, 2021).

In another example of Kaupapa Māori in coaching, Hapeta and Palmer (2014) research the benefits associated with both performance, transformational leadership, and social interactions when mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge bases) are used within a professional sporting environment (Hapeta & Palmer, 2014). The Waikato Chiefs (Regional Super Rugby team), the subject of this case study, found that a winning culture and effective leading relationships were developed when they implemented

a mātauranga-a-iwi and mātauranga Māori philosophy (Hapeta et al., 2019; Jackson & Parry, 2011). The Chiefs became a more visible part of the community when they rode their bikes around Kirikiriroa and to training (Hapeta & Palmer, 2014). As a team, the Chiefs continued to strengthen their team identity by naming their set plays and *teams within the team* after important marae and waka, along with developing a team haka and presenting a toki (Māori axe) to the player of the game (Hapeta & Palmer, 2014). The Chiefs created a strong tūrangawaewae (place of belonging linked to whakapapa) for their team because they linked themselves to their context, community, and indigenous knowledge (William Doherty, 2010; Wiremu Doherty, 2014). The use of the Tainui whakataukī *He piko, he taniwha*<sup>4</sup> further connected the team to their community and also motivated the players to realise their potential and responsibility to give their all to the team and make a difference (Hapeta & Palmer, 2014). Leadership is a cultural endeavour and infused with values, beliefs, traditions, and language (Jackson & Parry, 2011, as cited in Hapeta & Palmer, 2014); the Waikato Chiefs provide an example of how a team can lead through connection to their culture. Bringing Māori ways of being back to the centre of their practice, the Waikato Chiefs have showcased that mātauranga Māori is positive for professional performance (Hapeta & Palmer, 2014).

The Bay of Plenty Steamers provide another example of mātauranga Māori driving coaching; pūrakāu (stories, storytelling) were used to develop a “Maunga of Success” (mountain of success) framework and resulted in improved well-being and a positive sporting environment (Hapeta et al., 2019). The Maunga of Success is based on John Wooden’s pyramid of success (Wooden & Carty, 2010) and encompasses four levels: physical, technical and tactical, brotherhood, and performance (Hapeta et al., 2019). Pūrakāu (See Chapter Six) were used to highlight the significance of maunga to identity. This kaupapa Māori conceptualisation changed athletes’ desire to conform to the stereotype of rugby in Aotearoa of being complacent, and towards becoming more intentional (Hapeta et al., 2019). The Bay of Plenty Steamers show how sense of belonging, identity and

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<sup>4</sup> Translation: At every bend a Chief.

leadership can be enhanced through the incorporation of Māori culture in coaching practice.

The works, findings, and examples shared above demonstrate that the fusion of Māori concepts within coaching practice can enhance player learning, athlete outcomes, well-being, social interactions, and leadership. Having a greater understanding of indigenous culture and its implementation in coaching practice will support practitioners to challenge the status quo in Aotearoa society that privileges non-indigenous ontology and epistemology, which has become hurtful in our communities (Hippolite & Bruce, 2014).

Existing research has largely focused on Western pedagogy and coaching approaches. The mahi presented here highlights the benefits coaching can have when culture is accounted for and utilised to inform practice. However, research regarding Kaupapa Māori coaching practice is limited. Therefore, there is still much to be learnt and investigated in this space - possibilities and benefits yet to be discovered. Indigenising coaching practice and challenging cultureless pedagogies can provide a pathway towards a greater understanding of what coaching could look like if driven by cultural values and ways of life.

## Conclusion

Coaching needs to account for culture. There is potential in incorporating kaupapa Māori in coaching practice however, there is not enough work completed that shows how coaches can account for culture and the socio-cultural constraints that we are constantly interacting with.

In this thesis, I will develop a Kaupapa Māori coaching framework based on my athlete and coaching experiences to provide a possible approach to create learning environments with cultural values embedded in them for athletes to connect with and self-organise against. Importantly, the goal of this kaupapa rangahau is not to just provide another conceptualisation of

how coaching can be practised within the cultural context of Aotearoa but rather to follow the words of Holt et al. (2020) and step beyond the theory and into the trenches of real life application of coaching and how it can be continuously developed through our work with young people. I cannot wait to live the kaupapa I am presenting in this thesis!

The following Chapter will analyse and present the autoethnographic method of the kaupapa rangahau, setting out my personally grounded approach to the development of a Kaupapa Māori coaching framework that reflects my upbringing, cultural identity, life experiences, and who I am.

## Chapter 5: Methods

The purpose of this kaupapa rangahau, *Coaching for the Game of Life: Driving Coaching with Mana* is to improve the quality of the experience that young people have in the sporting context by developing a Kaupapa Māori conceptual coaching framework that is personally and culturally grounded. Driving Coaching with Mana, incorporates effective coaching practice bound by Māori cultural values. The goal is to provide young athletes with a safe and supportive environment in which to develop their skills whilst also embracing their cultural identity.

This Chapter introduces and examines the indigenous autoethnographic and applied research methods employed for the purposes of this kaupapa rangahau. In this Chapter, I provide a snapshot of the inspiration for this mahi and why autoethnography is a method that connected and resonated with me personally and in the context of this kaupapa.

### Qualitative Applied Research

My basic research design is qualitative applied research. Fossey et al. (2002) states, “Qualitative research aims to address questions concerned with developing an understanding of the meaning and experience dimensions of humans’ lives and social worlds” (p. 717). To be more specific, a core objective of qualitative research is to investigate “how people feel, how people make meaning or interpret their lives” (Kainamu, 2012, p. 3). Qualitative research approaches recognise the truly relational, interpretive, and subjective nature of research (Jaye, 2002). Strauss and Corbin (1990) highlight that qualitative research provides an opportunity to illustrate intimate details from personal experience that are difficult to share through research methods that focus on quantifiable data sets.

The strength of qualitative research lies in its flexibility and its ability to unpack and examine rich, in-depth information (Mwita, 2022). The methods employed by qualitative researchers can include interviews, focus groups,

case studies, observation, and ethnography (Queirós et al., 2017). The limitations and critiques of qualitative methods are concerned with the analysis of the information as researcher bias and subjectivity influence the quality of the work (C. Anderson, 2010). Similarly, B. Smith and Sparkes (2020) critique the lack of quality thematic analysis within qualitative research in their field of sport and exercise psychology, saying readers are "...left without an essential part of thematic analysis, that is, a rich interpretation of the data which involves working back and forth between data and theory to produce a complex and richly layered analysis" (p. 1007). Addressing the lack of quality thematic analysis is when Āta can be deliberately and intentionally called upon.

The principles of Āta-tuhi and Āta-whakaako will support quality reflection and rich analysis of the themes present in the personal narratives I will share (Chapter Six). In the case of this kaupapa rangahau, analysing my experiences must dive deeper into the meanings of the experience rather than describing them at a superficial level. Deep reflection is required to locate and articulate the significant messages.



Applied research is a type of qualitative inquiry that is solution-focused and aspires to provide a pathway to address a problem (Kothari, 2004). In contrast to basic research, which focuses solely on generating knowledge, one of the central aims of applied research is to inform decision-making and create change in a specific field (Hedrick et al., 1993). However, Tolley et al. (2016) raises the point that the effectiveness of applied research depends on its application within the field. Applied research and basic research should be one and the same because meaningful research should in some way be conducted to help others or respond to an issue (Ebel, 1967; Hedrick et al., 1993; L. T. Smith, 1999). However, the actual application of applied studies can be the method's major weakness (Camara & Toure, 2010). If deliberate consideration is not given to how findings will be shared and utilised, this could weaken the successful implementation of applied research. Again, Kaupapa Māori research emphasises the need and

responsibility for findings to come back to community (Baker et al., 2015; Cram et al., 2015; Paipa et al., 2015). Kerr (2020) also identifies that the unsuccessful application of qualitative research findings occurs when researchers use conceptual frameworks to analyse and interpret their data without fully engaging with them, or recognising how conceptual frameworks makes their research findings unique. In this sense, applied researchers need to describe the real-life application of their findings in detail.

The application of Āta-whakaaro and Āta-whakaako ensures intentionality of thought. In my analysis, they will also guide how I instil knowledge through this mahi, supporting me to develop a Kaupapa Māori coaching framework that addresses the need for contextually located practice.

## Autoethnography

For the purposes of this kaupapa rangahau, I have employed autoethnography with a view to using my lived experiences to explicitly shape my version of Kaupapa Māori coaching practice.

The term autoethnography is a combination of two distinct research methods: autobiography and ethnography.

**Autobiography** is concerned with describing personally lived experiences, recalling memories, and reflecting on one's life (L. Anderson, 2010). Structured to provoke thought while analysing self (Belli, 1998; Neisser, 1986), autobiography is "...a dialogue of the self with itself in the present about the past for the sake of self-understanding" (Staude, 2005, p. 249).

Researchers use autobiography as a way to express themselves through their experiences in order to understand more about their identity (DeGloma, 2010). Due to the personally grounded stance in which narratives are told, autobiography is a risky method and relies on whether readers believe and agree that the facts being shared are truthful. However, Fivush (2010) stresses that narratives can create change by reclaiming the

truths as we see them in our lives. It is through this process that the strengths of autobiography lie, for “If truth were not contested, resistance narratives would have no power” (Fivush, 2010, p. 95).

In contrast, **ethnography** focuses on participation and observation of culture and the practices within it; investigating experiences and values that contribute to the development of our ways of being (Hammersley, 1994; Willis & Trondman, 2000). Ethnography seeks to represent cultural practices in such a way that *outsiders* can connect with them (Adams et al., 2017). In other words, researchers use ethnography to learn about people within their context rather than studying people from a distance (J. Jones & Smith, 2017). Common ethnographic methods include narrative accounts, participant observation, interviews, and focus groups as a means to identify and present contextually located understandings of people’s lives and how they shape the way they live (Atkinson, 2007; Hammersley, 1994; Mariampolski, 1999; Nurani, 2008).

Critics of ethnography have expressed concerns about the reliability of findings, arguing that data analysis is driven by the researchers' values and beliefs (Nurani, 2008). However, Mariampolski (1999) suggests that the benefits of ethnography are that the studies exist in the real world and provide a glimpse into the subtleties of everyday life that cannot be found in a research lab.

However, it is important to note that all researchers are influenced and informed by their values and beliefs (Wilson, 2008). Our lived experiences and worldviews influence who we are, how we think, and the choices we make (Goodwin et al., 2015). Kaupapa Māori and indigenous methodologies acknowledge and embraces this (L. T. T. R. Mead, 1997; Pihama, 2010; G. H. Smith, 1997, 2015).

In braiding together these two approaches, autoethnographers

...retrospectively and selectively write about epiphanies that stem from, or are made possible by, being part of a culture and/or

by possessing a particular cultural identity. However, in addition to telling about experiences, autoethnographers often are required by social science publishing conventions, to analyse these experiences (C. Ellis et al., 2011, p. 276).

Thus, autoethnography aspires to display the processes people go through as they evolve their ways of life, as a result of lived struggles and experiences (Bochner & Ellis, 2006; Denzin, 2013). Put simply, autoethnography is a way to show how people change their ways of life based on their experiences and struggles. It is about sharing the process of personal growth.

When individuals share and reflect on their personal experiences, it allows and encourages them to recount their individual moments, but also provides an opportunity for self-reflection and further understanding of cultural experiences (C. Ellis, 2004; C. Ellis et al., 2011; S. H. Jones, 2005). Reflexivity enables us to value and validate our own experiences and beliefs, bringing unique insight and adding depth to our work (Goldschmidt, 1977; Martin & Mirraoopa, 2003). S. H. Jones et al. (2016) explain that autoethnographies are "...artistic and analytical demonstrations of how we come to know, name, and interpret personal and cultural experiences" (p. 1). Autoethnographers share significant moments from their lives, going beyond traditional research methods to expand what can be learned and shared, allowing "...what we see, hear, think, and feel to become part of the 'field' " (Adams et al., 2017, p. 4).

### *Narrative Autoethnography*

In the case of narrative autoethnography, Sikes (2012) explains that writers must be honest about the position of power they hold as they present their version of the story. In other words, we must be reflective and respectful about the way in which we write narratives by understanding the multiple realities they exist in for different people (Poerwandari, 2021).

When writing narrative autoethnography, Sikes (2012) emphasises the importance of being truthful about the power dynamics at play whilst presenting one's perspective. Autoethnographers need to be mindful and considerate of the various ways in which different individuals experience and interpret the same story (Poerwandari, 2021; Sikes, 2012). Dauphinee (2010) highlights the fact that we may unintentionally silence the voices of others while analysing our experiences academically through autoethnography.

### Goals and Principles of Autoethnography

Autoethnography, as outlined by Adams et al. (2017), has three main goals that help to make it a valuable source of knowledge. The first goal is recognising the significance of personal experience as a rich source of insight and understanding. Autoethnography allows for data to be personal, intimate, and specific - something that can often be beyond the scope of generalised data sets. The second goal of autoethnography is to provide "insider" knowledge and experiences. Autoethnographers can offer unique perspectives, reflections, and emotional responses that others may not be able to provide. Finally, accessibility is an essential aspect of autoethnography. Autoethnographers strive to write in a way that people can understand and engage with, including those who are not part of the academic writing community. This type of writing values personal experience and reflection, with the goal of helping others understand and potentially live a better life (Adams et al., 2017). Having these types of personally grounded works available to connect with is of extreme importance. People can engage in the diverse range of experiences shared through autoethnography, increasing their capacity for empathy, but also connecting to people who have realities similar or different to them (Adams et al., 2017; Butz & Besio, 2009; C. Ellis & Berger, 2003).

Similarly, C. Ellis and Berger (2003) have identified four goals of autoethnographic research, both as a method and as a means of sharing lived realities. These goals include the denial of objectivity, embracing the importance and value of subjectivity, ensuring that autoethnographic works

reflect personal experience and are accessible, and presenting the researchers experiences to the research participants – we are all part of the same world (C. Ellis & Berger, 2003). By embracing these goals, autoethnographic research can help to create a more nuanced and compassionate understanding of the human experience.

### Examples of Autoethnography

Autoethnographic writing can be a transformative experience that leads to emotional clarity and healing (Hanauer, 2010, 2021; Lengelle & Meijers, 2009; Peskin & Ellenbogen, 2019). As such, autoethnography takes many forms and explores a range of different topics and issues.

Zavattaro (2014) explores the grief of injury and its impact on athlete self-worth and identity, trying to come to terms with the feeling of not being *normal* anymore. In a similar vein, in his master's thesis Whitinui (2001) reflects on his personal experiences of how sport shaped and contributed to the development of his identity as a young Māori male. Whitinui recognises that the values important to him were around him during his involvement in sport but were not part of who he was because the focus was on playing sport, not being who he was. Therefore, even though his experiences were positive, the question remained: 'who am I'? leading to the conclusion that sport - said to be a safe space for participation - masked his identity and reality as a young Māori male.

Irish et al. (2018) use autoethnography to reflect on the experiences of deaf athletes. They found that the deaf athletes wanted to participate and have more social relationships but were sick and tired of feeling alienated from others. Hence, coaches need to know how to effectively support a range of athlete needs and create an inclusive athlete environment (Irish et al., 2018). With a view to increasing participation, Lumsdaine and Lord (2021) share the experiences of a disabled athlete in sport and highlight the positive impacts of their involvement in sport. Using autoethnography Purdy et al. (2008) identified how power was manifested in the coaching

environment and commented on how an athlete's perception of good coaching does not always match reality.

Autoethnography has also been employed by coaches to explore their coaching practice. Ang (2015) reflected on his coaching practice with his basketball team in Singapore as a means to improve his coaching decisions and athlete outcomes, and discovered that coaching with heart and care is far more powerful than being authoritarian. Peel et al. (2013) takes readers through the process of learning by reflecting on coaching and found that one's personal values are of central importance to our coaching practice. In his autoethnography, Mills (2015) reflects on his development as a coach and the struggles, doubts, and fears he faced as he strived to form his coaching identity.

It is important for writers to be able to bring painful memories and experiences to life through their writing. This process can help one gain a better understanding of how these memories have shaped their life and can also provide support to others in the community (Hanauer, 2021).

### Limitations and Criticisms' of Autoethnography

C. Ellis et al. (2011) argue that autoethnography as a method challenges the notion that research based on personal experience is narcissistic and cannot possibly provide objective data and results. Scholars have criticised autoethnography, suggesting that it is not a scientifically reliable research technique as it is centred around subjective thoughts and emotions rather than objective data (Emerald & Carpenter, 2017; Poerwandari, 2021). Being so close to the stories shared can also pose risks for the collection, recording, and analysis of data (Hayano, 1979). It is a personal choice of the type of data a researcher collects and how they analyse. Autoethnography is a deeply personal method and therefore the data and findings can be biased toward your own personal comfort zone and choice, rather than what is necessary.

The mahi of Kaupapa Māori champions demonstrates that bringing forward experiences that are evocative, emotional, and challenge societal structures can be dangerous and risky (L. T. Smith, 2005; L. T. Smith et al., 2016). Autoethnographic writers acknowledge that understandings of autoethnography can differ between each writer, which makes sense due to the highly intimate and risky nature of sharing lived, potential sources of *mamae* (hurt) with and within people and communities (Denzin, 2013; Denzin et al., 2008). This vulnerability is particularly potent when autoethnographers disclose moments of hurt or intimacy that awakens emotion (Méndez, 2013). Autoethnography exposes the author's personal perspective in their writing, which can make them more vulnerable to criticism from others (Alsup, 2004). Likewise, the emphasis on personal emotions can be problematic for readers, potentially evoking unpleasant feelings (Bochner & Ellis 2016a). Lastly, it is important to remember that our own view is still able to be challenged, which can pose risks too, as we are so close to our personal experience and kaupapa.

Poerwandari (2021) offers solutions for autoethnographic authors and explains that a primary step is for authors to clearly define their position within the kaupapa, which is rooted in beliefs, values, and understandings. This includes specifying the context of their research and their worldview, which in this case have been presented in the Ko Wai Au, and the Context and Methodology Chapters.

### Strengths of Autoethnography

C. Ellis et al. (2011) explain that autoethnographic works "...can be rigorous, theoretical, and analytical and emotional, therapeutic, and inclusive of personal and social phenomena" (p. 283). Autoethnography as a research method allows us as *kairangahau* (researcher) to produce pieces of work that give voice to experiences that traditional research methods limit, and recognise the importance of building our capacity and empathising with the realities that people face in their daily lives that differ from our own (C. Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Thus, creating opportunities to critically reflect on experience in order to evolve and enhance our relationships (Adams, 2006;

Gagnon, 2021; Wyatt, 2008). Wall (2006) speaks about the freedom people have through autoethnography to speak their own language and argues that the best person to express our lives are ourselves. Autoethnography involves reflecting on, revisiting, and exploring our experiences to uncover their deeper meanings. Through this process, readers are invited to become part of the kōrero and discover the hidden gems that have shaped the writer's lives (Bochner & Ellis 2016a; Bochner & Ellis 2016b).

Autoethnography also showcases tacit knowledge, which acknowledges that "we can know more than we can tell" (Polanyi, 1966, p. 4). Moustakas (1990) argues that the embedded worldview, beliefs, and perspectives established within us through our culture and experiences means that people have difficulty expressing tacit knowledge. In other words, it is challenging for us to express in words the knowledge that forms who we are and why we do what we do daily. Tsoukas (2005) provides an example when he explains "as common experience can verify, the knowledge people use in organizations is so practical and deeply familiar to them that when people are asked to describe how they do what they do, they often find it hard to express it in words" (p. 3).

Thus, autoethnography uses "...inference and intuition, guiding the person to untapped aspects of awareness in nonlinear ways that elude analysis and explanation. In this sense, the tacit is visionary" (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985, p. 49). Therefore, autoethnographies require a specified focus on reaching unexplored research territory through personal dedication and the use of both cultural and personal lens (Denzin, 2003; C. Ellis, 1998; Neumann, 1996). In other words, autoethnography helps people to discover things they may not have realized before, in a way that cannot be easily explained, because it involves using your instincts and considering unconventional ideas that can lead to new insights and understanding.

## Indigenous Autoethnography

Still in its infancy, Autoethnography speaks up against dominant Western ideals that dominate research process and practice (Lincoln & Denzin,

2003). Autoethnography connects self and culture, and recognises the duality between the two (Bainbridge, 2007; C. Ellis, 1998). Therefore, allowing autoethnographers to investigate cultural knowing and knowledge by reflecting on experience to understand why we have come to know what we do (Kainamu, 2012). Denzin et al. (2008) assert that autoethnography enables indigenous stories to be told in their own voices and thus allows emancipation and escape from the constraints Western research places on Māori and indigenous peoples. Indigenous autoethnography is a culturally founded research approach that emphasises our connection to our cultural heritage and our position within the community to understand *self* within the *collective* (Eketone, 2008; Kainamu, 2012; Stewart, 2022; Whitinui, 2014). This approach values indigenous and cultural perspectives and promotes a welcoming and inclusive research environment. Essentially, indigenous autoethnography allows for self-expression and facilitates a deeper understanding of ourselves and our community.

As indigenous autoethnographers, indigenous narratives allow for the sharing of diverse ranges of knowledge and realities (A. R. Bishop, 1995; L. T. Smith, 2021). Autoethnographic research reflects the identity of the researcher, and writing narratives exemplifies the relationships you have with the research topic.

To offer an example, Whitinui (2014) created an indigenous autoethnography framework and identified four key abilities that impactful narrative inquiry should provide:

**Ability to “protect”** one’s own uniqueness is about moving beyond validation toward honouring who we are as indigenous peoples. This includes sharing our stories in order to protect our identities and keep true to who we are. King (2003) states “The truth about stories is that that’s all we are” (p. 1).

**Ability to “problem-solve”** relies on creating a narrative that is both authentic and relatable to the daily struggles and events experienced by indigenous communities. This practice offers an opportunity for reflection,

reconnection, and realignment with our cultural roots within the ever-changing communities we occupy (L. T. Smith, 2021). Durie (2005b) stresses the importance of collaborative efforts in achieving the community and cultural goals of both Te Aō Māori and Te Aō Whānui (the world, global community).

**Ability to “heal”** recognises the significance relearning and reflecting on *self* has for all. Whitinui (2014) highlights the powerful point of difference that writing personal experiences has to educate people about indigenous knowledge bases and maintain their relevance in contemporary society. Chawla and Rodriguez (2008) highlight the process of enhancing self-consciousness through autoethnography, and exposes vulnerability and awareness (Kainamu, 2012). Furthermore, Kainamu (2012) makes the connection between autoethnography and mauri – the connection between all things seen and unseen, related to self-esteem and cultural identity (Houkamau & Sibley, 2011; Pere & Nicholson, 1997).

**Ability to “provide”** comments on the need for wide-ranging and diverse approaches to reflect indigenous experience as well as enhancing the self-determination efforts of indigenous potential. Chawla and Atay (2018) advocate that indigenous autoethnography be a self-reflexive practice that enables marginalised voices to shift into the centre, supporting indigenous peoples to own their truths.

Stewart (2022) argues that autoethnography as a research method fits well with Kaupapa Māori research, and links it to decolonising methodologies – and introduces the phrase ‘Kaupapa Māori autoethnography’.

Following Stewart (2022), Kaupapa Māori autoethnography comprises:

1. **The ability to authentically express who we are as Māori:** Kaupapa Māori autoethnography recognises that we are immersed within our context but share our unique experiences and our values through our work. Further, this principle provides a platform from which to challenge and disrupt the status quo especially in regard to

unequal systems of power within our society (Stewart, 2022; Williams, 2021).

2. **Indigenous experience is valued and important:** our life experiences and what is termed “insider” knowledge is an important component of Kaupapa Māori autoethnography. Life experiences are not just stories but provide the opportunity to explore ourselves within the context of our culture and environment. Kaupapa Māori autoethnography appreciates that life is a positive and beneficial starting point for expressive and meaningful writing.
3. **Freedom to be creative:** Kaupapa Māori autoethnography is not prescriptive and encourages kairangahau to “...find their own writing voice; their own way to document and examine their experiences” (Stewart, 2022, p. 329). Importantly, this room for creativity and uniqueness creates a space for the use of Te Reo Māori, which is an important concept within the broad scope of Indigenous Autoethnography (Whitinui, 2014).

## Pūrākau

Sharing, reflecting, and connecting to pūrākau is a legitimate research approach rooted in Kaupapa Māori theory (Cliffe-Tautari, 2020; J. B. J. Lee, 2008; Pouwhare, 2016). Pūrākau are Māori narratives that recenter Māori ways of thinking and being, which is central to our identity (J. B. J. Lee, 2015). Pūrākau are a valuable source of sacred knowledge and allow us to tell stories in a culturally consistent manner, extending beyond mere myths and legends (J. B. J. Lee, 2015; Pouwhare, 2016). By reconnecting with pūrākau, we revisit the stories that remind us of who we are (Kuokkanen, 2000). Cliffe-Tautari (2020) recognises the significant role pūrākau have played in shaping our way of life by sharing knowledge from the past. Similarly, Mita (2000) acknowledges that we all have a story to tell and have a responsibility to share our experiences with others so that we can “...re-enforce their identity, build their self-worth and self-esteem, and empower them with knowledge” (p. 8).

There are various ways to express and articulate pūrākau, but the crucial aspect is the successful transfer of knowledge (Dewes, 1975; J. B. J. Lee, 2005). According to Jenny Lee (2015), employing pūrākau as a research method does not mean excluding autobiographies or other narrative forms. In her doctoral thesis, *Ako: Pūrākau of Māori teachers' work in secondary schools*, J. B. J. Lee (2008) collected stories that explored the experiences of Māori Kaiako (teachers) in secondary schools. Through this work, Lee recognised that pūrākau was an effective way to bring together the stories of *ako* (reciprocal learning and student-teacher relationships) in a culturally responsive manner. Archibald (1998) highlights the importance of cultural tools to share pūrākau in culturally consistent ways. She warns that without using cultural theories to understand our experiences, we risk becoming part of "new acts of colonization" (Archibald, 1998, p. 21).

### Application of Indigenous Autoethnography

Using indigenous autoethnography as a method, I will take you on a personally grounded journey through my experiences as a basketball player at my kura tuarua (secondary school), Saint John's College (SJC), and in particular my interactions with my basketball coach, Mr. Mel Young. Mel's impact on my life cannot be understated. From his devotion to the service of others, teaching life through sport, and showing me the power of genuine care, Coach's teachings have stuck with me long after he has moved on from the living realm. His legacy lives on in the many lives that he had the opportunity to impact. Moreover, I also feel that it is important - and fulfils the aspirations of indigenous autoethnography as a method - to share some of my own stories as a coach.

Placing myself in the centre of this kaupapa rangahau allows me to dive deeper into how my life journey, the culture I am emersed in, and the special people in my life have developed my sense of purpose. My life experiences motivate me to wake up each morning with an enthusiasm to develop young people, using basketball as the vehicle for growth and change.

The applied component of this kaupapa rangahau is the Kaupapa Māori coaching framework for coaching practice that I will create. In doing so I aspire to explicitly fuse culture, sport, life experiences and coaching together, and encourage coaches to spend more time exploring their coaching practice. My Kaupapa Māori coaching framework recognises that we have unique upbringings, cultural backgrounds, experiences. In this kaupapa rangahau I argue that reflecting on who we are and explicitly bringing that into the coaching world will improve our standard of coaching – supporting both the sport-specific and cultural identity development of our rangatahi. Additionally, I aspire to weave together both indigenous and Western forms of knowledge so coaches who use the framework can develop a personally grounded approach to coaching through values important to them.

Academic literature, personal narrative, and Mel's notes and resources make up the data sets for the purpose of this kaupapa rangahau. Referred to as a kete (basket) of knowledge, these data sets aid my pursuit to uncover the significant concepts that constitute coaching through an indigenous lens.

Kete of Knowledge: Data sets

#### *Literature Review*

A conceptual literature review (Chapter Four) has been conducted and unpacked positive youth development, effective coaching, ecological dynamics, person-environment fit, non-linear pedagogy the constraint-led approach, forms of life, and how coaching is conducted using Kaupapa Māori values.

The findings of this literature review have highlighted that even though there is a need for culturally and contextually located coaching, we do not know what that looks like in Aotearoa.

## *Personal Narrative – Aku Pūrākau*

Indigenous Autoethnography as the method of choice supports the use of personal narrative in this thesis. Recalling memories of lived experience as a basketball player and coach to delve into the interactions I had with others, will be invaluable to show the process I went through in developing a personally grounded, contextually located coaching framework. These narrative experiences are presented in Chapter Six and ordered in a way that invites the reader to become part of the journey that Mel and I share.

### *Mel's Notes and Documents*

To enhance the stories and memories themselves, in my pūrākau I have incorporated some of the materials that Mel utilised and, in some cases, developed himself. These will complement the existing sources or kete of knowledge. Additionally, these documents help us to clearly see what Mel's vision was for those he worked for - personal growth and development as both a person and as a player. One document is shared in its entirety in "Igniting the Flame" (in Āku Pūrākau). In my narratives, I have also integrated Mel's notes to demonstrate how he effectively communicated his message and objectives for us as individuals through his work. Engaging with these sources will reveal the development process Mel underwent and how it shaped his life's work.

### *Analysis*

Te Takepū Āta (as explained in Chapter Three) comprises 12 guiding principles (see table 1). In the analysis of my narratives, I have selected five of these principles: Āta-whakamārama, Āta-hoki mārire, Āta-whaakako, Āta-mahi, and Āta-haere (see table 1). These principles encourage purposeful and intentional reflection but also considers the spiritual, emotional, and mental dimensions of the reader (Pohatu, 2013).

The analysis of my personal narratives is guided by Taina Pohatu's (2013) Te Takepū Āta framework as described in Chapter Three (Methodology).

Āta requires careful, intentional, and deliberate reflection, which then requires that I am relational to the narratives, but also to the meanings embedded in them. The purpose of sharing my personal experience is about illustrating the impact that they had on my life and my coaching practice.

The key ideas and meanings of my stories also included whānau analyses. Whānau analysis in the context of this kaupapa rangahau involving reading my pūrākau (stories) to supervisors, whānau and friends and then answering and reflecting upon their responses and their pātai (questions) as I begin my own analysis.

Through *whānau analysis*, I give quality time to the people I want to share my pūrākau with (Āta-noho) and respect their whakaaro (ideas) and my relationship with them. I listen with deliberation and reflection (Āta-whakarongo), write, and communicate deliberately and being consistent in my reflection of the purpose of the kaupapa (Āta-tuhi) and being intentional and reflective in the way in which knowledge is shared (Āta-whakaako). The findings from the whānau analyses guide me as I analyse my experiences and learnings, how culture informed my actions, and how my whānau upbringing has shaped who I am today. Applying intentional, deliberate, and relational reflection, I introduce a personally grounded and contextually located coaching framework.

### *Ethical considerations*

This kaupapa rangahau recognises the ethics and ethical practices embedded within tikanga Māori, as well as the guidance for ethical conduct in research set by the University of Waikato. As this kaupapa rangahau is an autoethnographic project, I must acknowledge that as the kairangahau (researcher), I am in a position of power. Therefore, I must be reflective and respectful in the way that I share my experiences as they are my recollection and interpretation of the events, which may be remembered differently by others (Poerwandari, 2021; Sikes, 2012).

Acknowledging that Mel has been welcomed into the loving hands of the Lord above and cannot therefore give his consent and review my recollections, I sought the blessing and guidance from Mel's whānau. I asked them to review my pūrākau to ensure that they were appropriate, respectful, accurate, and reflective of Mel's life. Gaining the support of his whānau was important because as I reflection upon my own life, I divulge personal aspects of Mel's.

Additionally, Saint John's College has given me permission to refer to the school by name.

## Conclusion

This Chapter has outlined the applied indigenous autoethnographic nature of my thesis. Highlighting the value of insider experience and sharing personal experiences, Indigenous autoethnography as a method resonated and connected with me as it provides the space to give Mel the respect he deserves and share some critical and meaningful moments that we shared together that have shaped me as a coach, but more importantly the person I am today. Through indigenous autoethnography, I can ensure that the analysis is relational, and take the reader with me a personally grounded, cultural journey that leads to the introduction of a Kaupapa Māori coaching framework that calls us to coach for the game of life and Drive Coaching with Mana.

## Chapter 6: Aku Pūrākau

This kaupapa rangahau is a deeply personal and deeply reflective piece of work. Inspired by Mel Young – the coach who changed my life - I began coaching and decided to continue my development so I can provide quality learning and life experiences for the people I have the privilege to work for. Mel has continued to guide me along the way after his time on earth was complete. The experiences I was blessed to have with Mel has shaped who I am today, he instilled values and taught life through basketball. Coaching values and life lessons is a challenge that I strive to achieve each day.

In this section, I share four pūrākau that will walk you through the journey Mel and I are on and highlight some of the key components of his teaching that stuck with me as I transitioned to coaching and life after high school. I have chosen to dedicate this Chapter solely to my pūrākau, dedicating them their own space to bring you on the journey that Mel and I are on.

I want to make specific mention that each of my pūrākau end with a personal statement from me to Mel. The purpose of this is to show my relationship with Mel and this kaupapa, as well as to highlight my living relationship with this research which, Tynan (2020) calls *Thesis as Kin* and recognises the centrality of relationality within indigenous paradigms and therefore argues that it is central to our work as researchers. In a similar vein, Wilson (2008) applies relationality where he speaks to his sons about the purpose and journey of his kaupapa.

Remembering, reconnecting, reflecting, and sharing these stories was an emotional process of coming to know who I am. With the greatest of respect, I share these pūrākau with you.

## Tōku Rangatira: Ko Mel Young

Reflecting on my life experiences (to date), I have been blessed to share truly authentic and special moments with whānau, teachers and coaches, friends, and teammates. In the case of my adventures in basketball, there is one man who I must acknowledge – Mr. Mel Young - the coach who changed my life.

Mr. Young inspired my desire to serve others and to use basketball as a vehicle to develop young people for not only the game of basketball, but for the game of life. Even though I had the honour of being coached by Mel for two years – attending perhaps 200+ trainings – what I remember most are his implicit and explicit lessons about respect, care, dedication, commitment, and independence. For example, our responsibilities as players included: rolling up the carpet that protected the varnished wood during assemblies, vacuuming and dry mopping the floor before each training, and basically keeping our place of work clean. He also expected us to introduce ourselves to new people, and to be independent workers. These are some of his core teachings, which he also role modelled for us.

In this Section, I share four vignettes that capture and communicate some of Mel's core characteristics and values, which matter to me. I then analyse this series of pūrākau.



### I Just Couldn't Get Anything Right

Given how positively I speak of Mr. Young, you may be surprised to hear that my first training with him was a traumatic experience.

The focus of that first session was defensive positioning, and I was never in the right position. And so, Mel stopped the team in order to correct me - over and over and over again.

Consequently, arriving home from training that night I could not help but cry.

"I just couldn't get *anything* right," I complained to my parents, tearful.

I was sad and upset all night and sat up thinking that basketball just was not the sport for me. If I couldn't even stand in the right place – even when I got told where to go – how could I become a basketball player. I just was not good enough.

The next morning, when I told my father that I should quit the team, he gave me a piece of advice that changed my mind set and the direction of my life. A man of few words, he said:

“You can choose to quit, that’s your choice to make, but do you really want to make a habit of leaving the fight because it gets too hard?”

This short conversation changed my mind and made me realise that I needed to speak with Mel. So, I went to Coach’s office and shared with him my feelings of frustration and lack of confidence, and that I should leave the team.

“I couldn’t do anything right yesterday. I can’t dribble. I can’t keep up. And I don’t know basketball that well.”

Mel’s response was simple and powerful.

“Yet. You can’t do something *yet*; doesn’t mean you will never be able to do it - nothing is worth achieving in this life if you don’t have to work hard for it. So, work hard and be independent.”

In that moment, I felt his genuine care and belief in me – and I stayed in the team.



### I Care That You Are Here

I arrived for training one morning and Mel was doing his usual routine: sweeping the floor and vacuuming the carpets in the gym. When he had finished, he then told me that a good friend who coaches in America would be visiting soon and would be coming in to do some sessions with us. He did not have a date yet.

So, for the next two weeks I put the pressure on the whānau taxi service to get me to school at 6:30 so I would not be late on the day that our visitor arrived. We lived about 30 minutes away, so it put everyone in our house under some stress for a while. As the days passed, I began to wonder how long our wait would be – but my early morning schedule remained solid.

Then one morning all hell broke loose.

I slept through my alarm, and I was 15 minutes late for training – and of course that just happened to be the day that Mel's mate arrived!

I was too anxious about it to be pissed off. I tried to sneak into the gym and put my shoes on in the little cove just off court, so I would not be seen.

But Mel saw me and stopped me dead in my tracks,

“Brandyn, don't run away, come and introduce yourself.”

Reluctantly, I dropped my bags and slowly walked over to Sir and his friend.

“Hello Sir, my name is Brandyn, it is very nice to meet you. Sorry for being late.”

I shook his hand, and he greeted me.

“It's very nice to meet you too, get your shoes on and jump into training.”

As I walked away Mel stopped me again.

“I don't care that your 20 minutes late, I care that you are here.”



## Brotherhood

Looking back on the *Mr. Young era*, brotherhood is the word that comes to mind. Our program was a family. Juniors (13–15-year-olds) and seniors (16–18-year-olds) came together to train and to learn from one another. It was a tuakana-teina approach where the seniors looked after the juniors and the juniors benefitted from the experience but also gave the seniors the opportunity to practice leadership. This approach helped us be a tight-knit

family and work for each other on and off court. We were learning how to apply the same care that Mel was giving to us.

As a Year 9 student, Mel gave me my first opportunity to be a tuakana. He would open the gym on Fridays after school so I could practice. Then one day he brought in a pre-high school student who was just starting to play.

Mel said to him, “go dribble.”

This young guy went up and down the court a couple of times and then Mel asked me, “what do you see?”

As I started to respond, Mel cut me off and said, “don’t tell me, teach him. Show him what you know.”

So, I nervously began to him give some pointers. From then on, we practiced together on Fridays after school. Each week Mel would have some new dribbling moves for me to try; one ball high one ball low, two basketball figure 8 - or something else I thought was crazy. Dribbling was not my thing. This often meant failing miserably in front of my teina, but I was determined to show him that I could put the effort in and figure it out.

In those moments where I failed miserably, Mel would say “good job, making mistakes means you are pushing yourself out of your comfort zone”.



### Steve Nash’s 20 Minute Workout and Mel’s Speedy Mazda

During my first school holidays as a high school student, I text Sir,

“Can you open the gym so we can do some training”.

“Yeah, I’ll be there at 9 tomorrow”.

The next morning, I woke up super early, caught the bus, and arrived close to 9. But Mel was not there. Then, all of a sudden, his speedy Mazda drifted in around the corner and sped into the school carpark. His window wipers on full speed even though it was a beautiful sunny day. When he opened the gym, I got to work mopping the floor. This was our routine.

“If we look after our gym, the gym will look after us,” he would always say.

Some new players did not realise how serious Mel was about this until they wore their Roman sandals on the court, or arrived for practice and started shooting while someone else was cleaning the floor. Mel would raise his voice and throw it across the gym:

“Get off, you’ll wreck the court” or “What are you doing shooting while we’re cleaning? Your turn to mop.”

OK. Gym floor clean. Shoes on. I’m ready.

But Mel waves me over to the school office, “Come on then let’s go.”

Confused, I follow him. We went inside the office, and I followed him as Sir got his work ready for the day. We were both waiting at the photocopier when a teacher came in.

“Brandyn, did you go to church yesterday? Did you feed your spiritual body?”

I froze. No, I did not go to church yesterday. What was I supposed to say?

“Ahhhh” I hesitated. Hoping maybe that I could just weird him out and he would move on. But he just stood there. A nice man but very spiritual.

“Of course he was there. He’s a good boy” Mel stepped in, saving my ass once again.

“Let’s go, we have work to do.”

We walk to Student Services, and he sits me down at the computer.

“What are we doing Sir?” I finally ask.

“Search up Steve Nash’s 20-minute workout.”

I found the video and opened it. Mel gives me a stack of paper, which has the basic workout on it.

“Watch the video, make notes on the shots he takes and how long he shoots them for. Come find me when you’re done.”

I went through the film. Nash would start close and make 50 shots, then move out and around the court: Jump shots, floaters, fadeaways, three

pointers and pick and roll moves. All in 20 minutes. I made my notes, stapled the papers together and went to Mel's office.

"All done Sir."

"Did you get everything?"

"Yup, I'm ready to go."

He then walks me back to the gym and takes out the score clock from the equipment room.

"How long you want? 40 minutes?"

"Ahh yep that should be good."

"Work hard" he says as he turns and walks back to his office.

'What the hell?' I think to myself. I wanted and had expected a 1-on-1 session.

But I did not ponder for too long. I had work to do.

I had my paper with me and began the workout. It took me forever. The workout included shooting, footwork, dribbling, and fitness. It was a challenge and pushed me outside of my comfort zone. All my *bricks* meant a lot of rebounds and with my poor fitness level I was exhausted in the first five minutes.

But I kept on going. I did what Mel asked me to do and worked hard. It took me about an hour and a half, but I got there.

I rested for a bit and then went to Sir's office.

"Thank you for opening the gym, Sir." I'm done for the day and I'm going home.

"Did you work hard?"

"I tried to."

"Remember, I can give you all the tools, but if you don't use them in your own time or you don't work hard when I'm not around, they won't be of any use."

I left Mel's office that day thinking hard about what he had just said. Maybe I could have worked a bit harder? I returned the next day and tried again.

"Thank you for being you Sir, all the challenges we went through were worth it in the end."



Dear Mr. Young

I've been texting with Mel all day. Asking questions about basketball, when we will be training next, and if he is going to the tournament tonight. My best mate is playing, and I want to go tautoko him and the team. But really, I just want to chat with Mel.

Mel replies, **I'm going out tonight to the game and you can come with me.**

I'm elated! **Thank you so much Sir, I will see you tonight.**

All day, I'm excited. Who knew that just going to a game could be so cool!? But if I'm honest, I'm more excited to be spending time with Mr. Young.

As the day turns to night and tip-off is drawing nearer, I haven't heard from Mel, and he hasn't arrived yet. Where is Sir? I message him a couple more times – but there's no reply... until...

**Sorry Brandyn, I had an appointment that ran over time, and I left my phone in the car. I can't make it out tonight.**

**No worries Sir.** I text back.

I'm disappointed, but don't think to ask what the appointment might have been.

Thanks to my free 'whānau taxi service' I make it to the game, and after a great performance, spend the night at my mate's place.  
But in looking back, I don't remember the game – only Mel.

I often get teased by my players,

*"What was school like back in 1847 Coach?"*

*"Was that your friend that you met in 1942 at school?"*

And I'll admit that I do have an old-school soul. I love 80s and 90s music, I'm a home body, and a deeply reflective and thoughtful person.

But I'm going off track now. Going off on tangents mid-conversation is something that Mel did regularly and must have stuck with me.

When the school announced: Mr Young will be taking time off for the next few months to lessen his workload, I wondered why? Is he leaving SJC? Is he leaving us? Is he leaving me? But the following week all is revealed – Mel is battling Cancer.

The news breaks my heart.

A week later, a mate and I go visit Mel in the hospital. His dad knows which ward Mel is in. We catch the bus from school, and walking with purpose but no idea where we were going, we finally arrive at the right place.

"We are here to see Mr. Mel Young" we inform the receptionist.

She pauses, "Mel Young?"

Her voice is nervous. Shaky.

And her face suggests that we're not going to like her answer.

My heart stops.

"He, he, he..."

I'm nervous and getting angry now.

'Come on let this be good news,' I'm pleading in my head.

“...he’s been released.”

We breathe an audible sigh of relief and leave.

“Damn, I thought she was gonna say he had passed on” I say with relief to my mate.

We cope with the shock, this close call, with awkward laughter. A coping mechanism to deal with the fact that we had just crapped our pants – metaphorically of course.

On the bus-ride home, we call Sir to ask how he’s doing – and we want to tell him and laugh with him about our experience at the hospital. But each time we call his home, it goes to the answer phone. But we don’t think to leave a message.

On our fifth try, Mel answers and tells us, “I have visitors.”

He’s clearly frustrated that we have called so many times and not got the hint – but we play it cool.

“We came to see you at the hospital today Sir, but you had been released. There is a story, but we can tell you about it another time. Sorry to bother you.”

His voice is softer now, “I’ll call school tomorrow and you can come over home during period two before first break, does that sound good?”

“Yes, yes, that’s perfect Sir. We will see you tomorrow. Have a good night!”

The weeks - or perhaps it was months – that followed are a blur. They passed so quickly. I visited Mr Young regularly: sometimes with friends, sometimes with teachers, sometimes alone. And I appreciated and treasured my time with Mel.

As things got harder for Sir, in my 13-year-old heart, I felt like I had so much more to say to him – but I didn't know *how* to say them to him, so I put it all into a letter:

*Dear Mr. Young*

*You have had a huge influence on who I am today. You are not just the 'St Johns College Basketball Coach,' you are a man of great knowledge, wisdom, and courage. Sir, you are an exceptional man to me, and I am sure to many others as well.*

*I would like to say thank you for all the many things you have helped me with, not only through basketball, but in life. I remember the time you first told me: "If you don't work hard, no matter how good you are, you won't make it." That quote helped me understand the importance of hard work and perseverance, leading me to go to the Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday morning trainings which I love. (These trainings have made me a better player and developed good work ethic and early morning training habits). I need to mention the National Talent Development Camp 2014 when you nominated me to participate in, it was hugely beneficial for me to identify the strengths and weaknesses of my game to further work on. The Port Macquarie Tour 2015 which was a great experience for me, to put in work against high quality opponents, and then figure out I have to work more. These things are just the beginning of the list of events you have encouraged me to pursue. That have helped my personal development.*

*Thank you for the guidance and leadership you have given to me Sir, it has helped me see the world and basketball so differently. One of the conversations that has changed my view the most is the one when you were talking about the United States education system being held to a high standard and that it means that you have to be working very hard and striving to achieve Merits and Excellences in school to get there. Also about the actual reality of getting noticed by a scout in the States, that they are not just going to come watch you play out of the*

*blue, you have to prove yourself first and earn your respect. You taught me there is more to success in sport than being good on court.*

*Sir, you are a person so dear to my heart. You have entrusted me so much confidence in me and for that I am eternally grateful. All the memories we have shared over the past two years Sir has been amazing. It was so awesome that you coached us for the Tauranga game, it was fun and great to see you out there enjoying yourself as well.*

*Finally, over the past few years I have learnt so much from you Sir and are forever grateful. I would like to say that I know now that basketball is a game of sound fundamentals and most importantly HARD WORK. I cannot leave out the legendary Mr Young game presence, the loud coach pushing his team on. It's a great attitude that I believe no-one can match Sir and that's fantastic. The years have been great Coach and I would love to have many more. I wish you all the very best and will definitely keep in touch with the world famous, fantastic Coach Young. No matter what you go through in life Sir, one thing I know for certain is that you will never lose who you are. You are a truly inspiring man, an exceptional man, and a man who deserves the very best.*

*Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

*You mean the world to me Sir. For all you have done.*

*God Bless*

*Brandyn Maia Were*

One of my greatest regrets is that Sir never got the chance to read my letter. Towards 'the end', letter in hand, I tried to visit him many times but when I saw that he had visitors I kept walking. On some of those 'visits' I thought about placing it in his mailbox so he could read it in his own time – but a letter in the mailbox didn't fit with my desire to share a special meaningful moment with him.

"I'm so sorry Sir for not acknowledging and thanking you for your impact in my life."



## Igniting the Flame

Mel has been flying high in heaven for two weeks now. I still feel hurt, confused, and lost. I've lost my mentor and my teacher; a man I looked to for support and advice. His funeral service, the hours before his service, but also the moments I shared with Mel since I met him, replay in my mind.

It's been a long day. School was school; sometimes fun, a lot of boring, and I'm ready to fall asleep. The bright and warm sun gazes upon me and the bus feels cosy, like my nan's mink blankets. This feeling reminds me of my Nan's house. I feel comforted. The bus crosses the bridge over the Waikato River, where Mel's family have scattered his ashes. Closing my eyes, I open my heart to the sadness that comes from losing my coach, but I also give thanks for having had him in my life.

My phone vibrates and I return to reality. I have an email and I'm shocked to see who it is from. It's Mel! The subject line says: Mel's last gem for us all, and inside, the email begins with the heading:

### **The Inventory of Success**

Successful athletes earnestly want to succeed, and they do something about it. Sounds a bit like the rest of life really.

- They set goals for themselves.
- Successful athletes realise that everything worth having in athletics has a price-tag in terms of training and competitive effort. They understand that success has its cost, but they pay their way knowingly. Keeping their eyes on their goals.
- They realise their future success in the final analysis will depend upon their own personal efforts.
- Successful athletes have a high frustration tolerance. They don't become discouraged at temporary setbacks. They learn from these setbacks and look ahead to the next competition with optimism.
- They avoid negative thoughts and defeatist thinking.
- Successful athletes don't have head trouble, but they do have guts.
- They are totally reliable and responsible in training matters.
- They don't give an alibi. They know the best excuse is the one you never make.
- Successful athletes set examples for others.
- They are cooperative with both coaches and teammates.
- Successful athletes are by far the easiest to coach.
- They are not injury prone. They have far few injuries than the less successful.
- Athletes who fail tend to be cynical. They believe their coaches are not leading them properly. They are unwilling to be impressed or

inspired. This is expected of the phony, the snobbish, the pseudo-intellectual,... but it dooms an athlete when the coach tries to inspire them, and they just sit there saying this is a lot of nonsense. The successful athlete does not ridicule the capacities and the ideas of the coach... THEY RESPOND!

“Thank you Sir, for showing me what genuine care looks and feels like. You have paved the way for my approach to coaching and how I live my life. It is an honour to be on our journey together. It will continue until we meet again.”



### Mel's Chair:

I am not a ray of sunshine in the morning, even on a good day. Now imagine trying to motivate fifteen physically and mentally weary teenagers who have been leaving Hamilton for Auckland at 5:30am, four days in a row. Even though we got a sleep in today, leaving at 7:30am, everyone is shattered. But we have one more day left in the tournament.

It's finals day, and I sense a nervous but excited energy. I can feel that the boys' minds are focused on winning and that is where I think their nerves are coming from. We need to recenter ourselves. I don't want the boys to approach today thinking that winning is the only thing that matters. I want them to know that we are so much more than what the scoreboard says. We are a family and belong to a kura whose basketball program was built on a 'bigger than basketball outlook.'

So today, we are going to visit Mel.

All 20 of us – players, coaches, managers, and whānau – have gathered in the lounge of our manager's whare. The boys are still waking up, rubbing

the piko<sup>5</sup> from their eyes, as we start our final day with the same two questions that I have asked them every morning this week:

“What is one positive you took out of yesterday?”

“What is one thing you want to bring for your team today?”

After the boys have shared, I take the conversation in another direction, and my phone vibrates. I have a message. I don't like to be interrupted when I'm with the team, so I ignore it. But it buzzes again. And then again.

“Oh my gosh, who is this!” I snap, frustrated, and open my phone.

It's from the team manager: 7:30. Kia Tere.

I have run over time, and we need to leave. I turn around to see she's sitting right behind me, with a 'oh no you didn't just say that' look on her face. The boys have figured it out pretty quick and erupt with laughter. 'I'm done' I think to myself – once you lose it at your manager its game over. Luckily for me, we both see the funny side, and laugh our way into the vans.

As we pull up at the Waikato River, I hear muffled words of confusion and curiosity.

“What are we doing here?”

“We're here to see Mel” I reply.

“Aye??”

They know who Mel is to me, and they know Mel isn't here anymore.

“Yeah, he's in the river” I joke.

More confusion.

Once again, my manager saves me.

“It's OK boys, Mel isn't waiting in the river – his ashes are in the river.”

Maybe I should be a touch more explicit next time to spare the boys from the 'risen from the dead' thought in their minds.

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<sup>5</sup> Piko is the term we use for the 'sleep' in our eyes. Pīkari is the actual kupu Māori for this term.

We begin the short walk to Mel's chair. It's a gloomy dark grey day. There is a chill in the air, and the clouds look full of rain. I can smell the dampness of the earth. Mel's tūru comes into sight and as we approach, I began to explain why this is a special place for me.

*"This is Mel's chair. His name is on this plaque. He is here sitting alongside his māmā. I come here often to spend time with him, to reconnect and to calm my heart and mind. Sitting with my coach once again."*

I feel a swirl of emotion inside of me and move to the back of the group. This is the first time that the boys have been here. Before today, they didn't even know Mel had this place. He was just this coach who spent 43 years serving the young men of Saint John's. It's really important for me that my boys are here with the pillar of our kura and the inspiration for my coaching. The OG legend of our game who paved the way for us to follow.

The boys are silent, and my hope is that they are taking it all in, connecting with Mel's wairua. Now is a good time for a waiata – and I am overwhelmed when they begin to sing without any prompting, arm in arm, I know the Lord.

*I know the lord, will make a way for me,  
I know the lord, will make a way for me,  
If I live a holy life, shun the wrong and do the right,  
I know the lord, will make a way for me.*

This is a fitting waiata, because the essence of our kura is our faith, which was at the centre of Mel's way of life.

I'm now in the waiata zone, and I want the train to keep rolling with another waiata.

I look over to my mate,

"I'll send you this song bro. Let's get it on the speaker and blast this for Mel."

We are in the zone, wairua is on; this is a perfect time for us to come together and strengthen our bond with each other. Not everyone knows the words, but we feel it.

Ma te kahukura, ka rere te mana  
Ka rere e koe, rua tae atu koe ki te taumata,  
Whakatau mai ra e, mau ana taku aroha,  
Whai ake ina whetu, rere totika rere pai  
Rere runga rawa ra e, mau ana taku aroha,  
Whai ake ina whetu, rere totiki rere pai,  
Rere runga rawa ra e, rere totika rere pai,  
Rere runga rawa ra e.

My heart is filled with pride, this is a pure goosebump moment.

“Thank you boys.”

Karakia is a fitting way to conclude our brief but powerful visit today.

Kia tau ngā manaakitanga a te mea ngaro,  
Ki runga ki tēnā, ki tēnā o tatou,  
Kia mahea te hua mākihiihi,  
Kia toi te kupu, toi te mana,  
toi te aroha, toi te reo Māori,  
Kia tūturu, kia whakamaua, kia tīna! Tīna!  
Haumi e, hui e, tāiki e!<sup>6</sup>

One by one, we reach our hands in, on top of each other over Mel’s chair. Together along with Mel, his mama, and all our tūpuna we say, “Brothers on three: 1, 2, 3... Brothers!”

Saying our final goodbyes to Mel, I take a mental picture of this special moment. As the team makes its way back to the vans, I feel an urge - the

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<sup>6</sup> Let the strength and life force of our ancestors be with each and every one of us. Freeing our path from obstruction, so that our words, spiritual power, love, and language are upheld; Permanently fixed, established, and understood! Forward together!

need to take one last glimpse back at Coach's chair and when I do, I know he is here with me.

In that moment, the clouds part and the sun appears. The mist disappears into the whenua. The grey gloom moves away and the awa glistens in the sun's brightness. It is a sign that we needed to come here today and acknowledge our Rangatira. We stop at the bottom of the hill just before we reach the vans and take photos, my manager even jumps up in excitement. This is special. I feel like Mel is watching over us and moved the clouds and rain away. Our angel above.



Figure 1: Photograph of Waikato River at Mel's Chair

"I needed that Mel. I needed you with me today."



## Conclusion

Mel and I have taken you through some special moments of our journey together. I believe our rangatahi should gain just as much as I did with Mel in their sporting endeavours. Sharing these pūrākau and acknowledging Mel's impact on my life has been an emotive and rewarding opportunity.

In the next Chapter, I will analyse these pūrākau and search for the deeper meanings and messages held within them. Remembering, reconnecting, and reflecting on these pūrākau will support me to make sense of the importance of these experiences in my life and coaching practice.

## Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this kaupapa rangahau is to understand how I might create more positive, personally grounded, and culturally specific learning experiences that support the holistic development of rangatahi through sport.

This Chapter has two parts. In part one, guided by Te Takepū Āta, I unpack what the special memories in the previous Chapter mean, how my cultural upbringing guided my actions, and make links to how the interconnected components of culture, context, and experience might inform the development of a Kaupapa Māori approach to coaching. In part two, I present my findings from my pūrākau analysis, introducing and describing my *Driving Coaching with Mana* framework along with some practical application possibilities.

### Āta: My Reflective Journey

#### Tōku Rangatira: Ko Mel Young

This collection of four vignettes are important to me because they personify my journey with Mel, and how his values and life lessons were embedded in his coaching practice. His kaupapa (vision, approach) was not solely basketball, he gave us tools that we could use in all facets of our lives.

#### I Just Couldn't Get Anything Right

In this vignette, I reveal and reflect on that fact that developing our relationship was not always easy; we had difficult moments that were challenging. However, in getting to know Mel and understanding that he genuinely cared, I was able to learn from the tough times and grow as a person. Reflecting on my experiences and seeking advice from my father helped me overcome my frustrations and doubts, even when I felt like giving up on basketball. I discovered that hard work and dedication were key to

making progress, I continued to follow Mel's teachings and over time, I learned to apply these lessons to other areas of my life. Today, I have completed my studies, earned a degree, and am pursuing a master's degree while also coaching basketball and helping others. I am grateful for the ups and downs of my journey and for Mel's support and guidance.

### I Care That You Are Here

After I got through the growing pains with Mel, I began to see the messages within his work. In this vignette I was late for training with Mel's friend, but Mel's issue was not that I was late but that I did not introduce myself. This memory highlights the importance Mel placed on being dedicated and present. That was an expression of care. Mel taught us to action values; they are more than words. And in this moment, he taught me to never allow challenges or uncomfortable moments to change how I respect others and live my life, to deal with them head on and make no excuses. Since that moment, I never felt pressure to perform better than anyone else when playing for Mr. Young. Using these opportunities as teaching moments, Mel held us accountable to the things that he expected, and in this moment, he showed me that basketball is more than a sport. What Mel cared about was the way we approached life. I think he preferred that we did not turn up rather than to be there and not work as hard as we could to be the best we possibly could be.

### Brotherhood

At Saint John's, brotherhood is an important concept. We are a whānau, our basketball teams are teams of brothers who have each other's back. Harnessing a Form of Life (Wittgenstein, 1953) – how our realities, values and beliefs of our community inform our ways of being – Mel aligned components of his coaching to the ethos of Saint John's, which we encapsulated within "Johnnies brothers". Importantly, he developed his coaching practice and program in a contextually specific way (Rothwell et al., 2019) and through this, he created a motivational climate where we were

inspired to grow as people and basketballers (Côté & Gilbert, 2009; Potrac et al., 2013; Vella & Gilbert, 2014).

Through his coaching, Mel fostered a culture of collaboration and care that centred on teaching and learning from others. He instilled in us a sense of whānau, encouraging us to look after each other and the gym. Mel applied the principle of Whanaungatanga (relationships) as he utilised the tuakana teina approach, which recognises the reciprocal relationship between older (tuakana) and younger siblings (teina) (Winitana, 2012), to provide opportunities for players to apply life skills, critical for positive youth development (Holt et al., 2020; Lerner, 2004). In my experience playing under Mel, juniors learned to work hard, and learn from older players, while seniors had responsibilities to teach and induct their teina into the culture of the program. The life skills held within tuakana teina included communication, relationship building, and leadership. Mel did not explicitly teach these skills, however, through the application of tuakana teina in practice he was able to see these skills embedded in us.

Ultimately, as our coach, Mel emphasised building strong player-to-player relationships within the team. Mel also gave me an opportunity to apply leadership and teaching skills when I coached on Fridays. He created a safe learning environment for my new student when he gave me activities to try that were outside my comfort zone; when I failed, he would say, “See there is always something to learn” which showed my friend and I that it was ok to fail. Learning is messy and non-linear, Mel was not angry I that mucked up, it was an opportunity for growth.

#### Steve Nash’s 20 Minute Workout and Mel’s Speedy Mazda

Mel was the head of our SJC family. He actioned Manaakitanga and Kaupapa by coaching life through basketball and creating opportunities for us to apply them in our lives. I had faith in Mel because I felt the genuine care he had for me. Faith and trust were important because even when I did

not understand his processes, I respected and trusted him enough to believe in his work.

Mel's way of building trust and respect complimented the values that I was brought up with. He challenged me to think critically, be more independent, and seize the moment when opportunities arise. This holiday training story is an example of how subtle his teachings were. As a student-athlete, he instilled in me the values of hard work and service and through this, I learnt how to achieve my goals, which holds great value to me.

Mel's blue-collar approach emphasised the importance of hard work and its transferability to other aspects of life. By assigning small tasks like mopping the floor and vacuuming before training, Mel taught us how to express care and respect for our "brothers", and our environment. Over the years, these small duties of care became habits as I began to understand the meaning behind them. As a coach, I too have passed on these expressions of care to the next generation of young men who have walked through the doors of the SJC gym.

I apply these values in my work by building trust and respect with the people I work with before supporting them with their schoolwork, or teaching basketball. Mel taught us to be independent, to work for what we wanted, and to invest in ourselves to achieve success. His teachings have become a lifestyle for me. I give my all to my coaching, and it requires time, passion, and effort to do it justice. Mel's dedication to preaching hard work has led to permanent changes in my life, and they are foundational to who I am as a coach and a person.

Mel's impact on my life cannot be fully described in words. His devotion to serving others and "coaching the right way" are elements of his practice that resonated with me. He is the inspiration for my decision to coach and work with youth. I believe that all people should have the opportunity to have the same or similar experience that I had with Coach Young.

Dear Mr. Young

As a 13-year-old, Mel and I had a connection beyond description. As a young child, my whānau remember that I always gravitated to people who were genuine but was also very quick to shut off from people who operated in a way that did not sit right with me. It is hard to describe in words, but I felt that Mel knew the real me and took time to build our relationship. Mel was genuine; what you saw is what you got, and I respected him for that.

This pūrākau expresses the regret I have about not acknowledging Mel's impact on my life. He taught me many life lessons and I never found the right time to give him my letter and mihi (thank) to him in his last days on earth. Additionally, this pūrākau depicts a significant moment in my life where, upon reflection, basketball culture and my Māori culture aligned and therefore shaped who I am and explains how my identity drove my actions.

During this traumatic time in my life, I was walking between, and actioning the values of two major Forms of Life. The first one being my cultural upbringing and values within my whānau, and the second was the Saint John's brotherhood.

Wittgenstein (1953) highlights that the values, beliefs and norms of our lives inform how we engage with the affordances in our environment. Rothwell et al. (2019) takes this notion further, explaining that our ways of being are contextually developed. Therefore, people who understand their environments are more likely to be successful in their engagement with invitations to act (affordances).

This pūrākau presents a critical opportunity to think differently about ecological dynamics and extend its ideas from skill and movement acquisition to contextually specific values. In this sense, Mel getting sick was an affordance in my environment to apply values I learnt through the Forms of Life I was part of. My whānau and sport environments are embedded with values and ways of being that aligned and connected with the values in my environment.

The values that were taught to me at a young age by my whānau and through my participation in basketball at Saint John's were similar and aligned. Mel's terminal illness and transitional stage to the afterlife was an opportunity to action Whanaungatanga (relationships) and Manaakitanga (care and the process of showing respect) - values that were privileged and taught in the ways of life within my whānau and culture, as well as at SJC.

When Mel got sick, wanting to be with him was for me a very natural response. Maybe it had to do with the fact that my sister had complex special needs and showing manaaki was a daily part of my life, or that whenever we lost someone in the whānau or their time was near we would be supportive in a range of different ways including shifts at the hospital, making sure everyone was fed, talking and spending time with one another. These are all learnt behaviours; values and norms within our whānau, which are informed by our culture.

Mel was whānau, so my natural response was to share as many moments with him as I could before he left. Even though I was only 13-years-old, the connection of genuine respect and understanding Mel and I had compelled me to reciprocate the manaaki and aroha (love) he had shown me - that made me feel special and valued for who I was. Writing this letter was my way of expressing in words all that he meant to me and coming to terms with the fact he might not be around anymore. In this sense, there were feelings of loss, confusion, and a desire to say all I wanted to say before it was too late.

Being part of the "Johnnies brotherhood" meant we looked after each other and Mel was the head of our basketball whānau. The culture he built centred on relationships, care, and respect, and supported my desire to stay connected with Mel. What I reflect on was his strength and resilience during an extremely tough time in his life when he was so unwell. Mel still had a love of people and was happy to spend time with us, including me. As a 13-year-old boy, I was compelled to follow who I am, and be part of the last chapter of Mel's life, by living my Form of Life – my Māori culture taught to me by my whānau, and the brotherhood, Mel fostered at St John's.

Trusting adult-youth connections, the teaching of life skills and opportunities to apply life skills are critical elements that contribute to positive youth development (Holt et al., 2020; Lerner, 2004). Holt et al. (2016) discusses the successful implementation of PYD means teaching life skills and providing opportunities through sport for rangatahi to apply them.

Analysing my letter in more detail, there is a sense that even at a young age and with a limited amount of time spent with Mel (two years), I felt like I really knew who he was as a person, or at least knew some observable characteristics of the man he was and the values he taught. My letter highlights the positive relationship I had with Mel, which is a critical part in achieving positive youth development (Holt et al., 2020). Additionally, in my letter I explicitly wrote down some of the life learnings Mel taught me and gave examples of how I had used basketball to apply them. Therefore, Mel's approach to coaching aligned with positive youth development and impacted permanent behaviour and mindset changes in my life.

The implications of the experience shared in this pūrākau was that I became a coach and I value having positive relationships, expressing care through my actions, and aspiring to provide players with the tools for life outside of sport - just as Mel did for me. Potentially, my desire to enhance the development of youth through sport is a direct consequence of my involvement in the Saint John's College basketball program, where Mel's coaching practice was infused with PYD elements.

Going through the trauma of my coach and mentor - whom I regarded as part of my whānau - passing on and not taking the opportunity to let him know how much I cared for him, is one of my greatest regrets. I was, however, thankful for reflecting on how critical Mel's passing was in the formation of my desire to serve others and continue his work. If he had not passed away so soon into our relationship, would I have been so intent and dedicated to carrying on his legacy and sharing who he was with the next generation? Would Mel's influence on my life be as significant or important to me if he was still around? I have pondered what my life would be if Mel

was still here; maybe I would not have started coaching and continued to focus on being a basketball player, or maybe I would have still become a coach and continued to learn from Mel as a mentor. No matter how hard I try, I cannot answer these “what if” questions. However, “Māori believe that the spirit is immortal” (Barlow, 2002, p.152), so I know and believe that Mel is with me, as I continue to coach rangatahi for the game of life.

## Igniting the Flame

Reflecting on Mel’s *Inventory of Success* today, I feel it has been a pillar and foundation for how I live my life. It was originally written in the context of sports but when you look through the lens of PYD, the teachings are transferable to many aspects of life. The qualities of hard work, respect, determination, and purpose are traits I would be happy to be known by.

This pūrākau illustrates how Mel’s kaupapa (vision, aspirations, approach) transcends time. In his last days on earth, Mel actioned Manaakitanga (showing care and respect) in writing his last gem and arranging for it to be shared so we could continue to strive for the success he hoped for us.

Even though his *Inventory of Success* is written in the context of sports, it carries the values and the messages Mel espoused as our coach. Not long ago, I was talking to a colleague about how we felt our players have a dream, but they do not realise the effort required to achieve it; they close their eyes, snap their fingers, and wonder why they open their eyes, and nothing has changed – it is simply a dream without action. I immediately said “They need to see the *Inventory of Success*” – the second bullet points states “...everything worth having in athletics has a price tag... they understand that success has its cost, but they pay their way knowingly. Keeping their eyes on their goals.”

The idea of working hard is a simple teaching, but Mel had a way of inspiring us to want to work hard. It must be intentional and move beyond words, otherwise, it can be lost. The *Inventory of Success* is important because it does not show the detail in terms of how he coached, but rather the lasting

messages within his work that are timeless. I guess that is the power of teaching life skills through sport.

Wanting us to walk our own path, Mel suggested where we might start. He wanted us to be successful, as people, in and out of sport and left us with a visionary pathway to get there; the luck I had was that I knew what some of those techniques were through his teachings and in my experiences with him. He did not talk about success when he was coaching, he talked about achieving goals through hard work. Everything he put in his final e-mail, he would talk about and action in his coaching – he lived by example. What he strived to teach; he was also doing himself.

The Inventory of Success reflects the kind of person Mel was, he focused on the values that are transferable in our lives and used basketball as his vehicle to do so. Mel provided the coaching blueprint that taught me the significance of keeping people at the centre of what we do. I want to build upon the values that guided Mel's coaching by bringing my cultural identity and values together in a personally grounded coaching framework.

When I realised that my passion and mission in life was to support others in basketball, I wrote a proposal for the SJC Basketball Committee and outlined some key areas that I wanted to put intentional focus on including relationships, goal setting, setting my team up for life after basketball, and improving their basketball skills. The difference between Mel and I is the way I apply the values that are important to me. When I began coaching, I felt that we needed to combine basketball and education through classroom sessions. These were opportunities for the boys to do their schoolwork while providing me the chance to get to know them better and highlight the importance and relevance of their education. I had to bring my own way of teaching and connecting with my team in a way that reflects who I am. Coaching practice needs to adapt as people and contexts evolve; what works for one person does not necessarily work for others (North et al., 2014; O'Sullivan et al., 2022).

This pūrākau explains why I am so passionate about coaching. Mel ignited a fire inside my soul and continue his legacy of inspiring the next generation to uphold and think about the values important to them in their lives. That is transformational coaching – that is driving coaching with Mana.

### Mel's Chair

This pūrākau is important to me because it highlights how my life experiences have shaped the way I coach and the values I strive to apply in my practice. What and who Mel was, and what he did for me, has shaped who I am as a person, but he also provided the blueprint for how I coach today through values. This was an extremely special moment for me as a person and as a coach; being able to connect the young men who I have been blessed to work with, to Mel's wairua (spirit).

One of the biggest goals I have in coaching at "Johnnies" is to make sure that the young men who walk through the gym doors know who Mel was and what he stood for. They all know "the 43" and that Sir worked there for 43 years, but I often wonder and question if they truly appreciate who Mel was and what he envisioned for us as Johnnies Brothers. Our connection and understanding of who Mel was at heart is a crucial part of continuing his legacy in developing and inspiring the next generation of young men educated through our kura (school).

When the boys sang "I know the Lord" off the cusp, I think that Mel's wairua connected with them and vice versa. When I say this I do not just mean wairua purely in the spiritual sense, but also connecting to the soul of a person (Best, 1900; Hēnare, 2015; Mika, 2007). Miller (2008) recognises that spirituality can be understood as three levels of connection: connection to self, connection to others, and a connection to a higher being or purpose. Therefore, connecting with faith is also a form of building connections and relationships. Faith and spirituality were at the centre of Mel's life. In the final speech he gave us he said, "I believe that at the heart of it all, I am a man with my life centred on the Marist Charism. That I am surrounded by it today

indicates its centrality in my life.” Similarly, I was educated in the Catholic school system where faith and spirituality have become important in my life.

As the pūrākau illustrates, visiting Mel’s chair was a special moment for me and my team that day. We were on the last day of a four-day national tournament, and we made the final! However, I was less worried about what the result of that game might be because I could feel the nervousness and anxiety from the boys. They had earned their spot in this game, but the pressures of a final were taking hold of them. We needed to take a step back, to remember who we are and where we come from, take a breath, and come together as one. United.

When I thought about the need to come together, Manaakitanga (showing care and respect) and Kaupapa are present. I actioned manaaki by recognising the anxiety building within the group and then addressing it. Manaaki is uplifting and strengthening and bolstering. Would they have gone to the tourney and played the same way if we had not visited Mel that morning? That particular week was about building culture and togetherness within our rōpū (team), and that day was a perfect opportunity to do that. 43 is a lifestyle that is bigger than basketball.

Whanaungatanga is also evident here. Mel passed many years ago but he built and valued relationships with us as his players. His focus on Whanaungatanga was a crucial part of who he was and who I am today. So much so that I immediately thought of taking the boys to his tūru (chair) that morning. Connecting this to literature, Whanaungatanga is the process of strengthening the ties and responsibilities within whānau and is a critical part of Māori life and customs (Harmsworth & Awatere, 2013; Te Whāiti et al., 1997). Relating and connecting to us was Mel to a tee. His connections were founded on trust and allowed us to begin the process of building positive habits because we knew he cared about us (Holt, 2016; Holt et al., 2020; Ka’ai, 1990; Stucki, 2012). He intentionally put in mahi to find *that thing* – something indescribable within us, and then used that to inspire us to want to be the best we could be. Leadership is personal, we do not experience life in confinement, we live it with others and therefore the quality

of our relationships with others determines the strength of the legacy we leave behind (Kouzes & Posner, 2006). Mel took leadership personally; he was not just a coach; he was part of the family. It takes a special person to really bring people together and develop a culture of care. Mel's teachings are korero/taonga tuku iho (lessons/gems passed on) that he has passed on. The quality of his relationships, his positive impact on others and the mana (respect) he earned through his actions has meant those he worked with want to pass on his teachings and values.

Mel's chair was the important location for this pūrākau, but this experience highlights how my coaching practice has evolved over the years to hold specific values. My own values come from my upbringing, my culture, and from my experiences – including those with Mel. Initially, I wanted to share this pūrākau to further highlight the impact Mel had on my life even after he passed away, however, upon reflection, this moment in my life signifies a moment where I transferred all my learnings into my coaching practice.

### Summary: Thinking about Driving Coaching with Mana

The goal of this Kaupapa rangahau is to utilise personal experience as a coach and athlete to inform a Kaupapa Māori coaching framework that is inspired to enhance youth development through sport. Using indigenous autoethnography as my method, I shared four pūrākau that enabled me to tell my stories and express who I am, shaped by the people I have been blessed to have part of my life (Denzin et al., 2008; Eketone, 2008; Kainamu, 2012). Reflecting on my pūrākau, I have seen an alignment with the abilities of indigenous autoethnography (Whitinui, 2014) and the principles of Kaupapa Māori autoethnography (Stewart, 2022) (discussed in Chapter Five). The ability to “heal” (Whitinui, 2014), resonates with me as it highlights how writing personal experiences can educate and recentre indigenous ways of thinking and being. Through my pūrākau I have been able to identify key cultural values working alongside coaching theories in order to bring them together in my Kaupapa Māori coaching framework – Driving Coaching with Mana – fusing culture and coaching together and

aspiring to better support the development of the next generation of rangatahi through sport. Additionally, I have been afforded the opportunity to share my story in my authentic voice, bringing who I am, and my culture to the community, consistent with the principles of Kaupapa Māori autoethnography (Stewart, 2022).

Throughout the analysis of my pūrākau, I have made connections to a Form of Life, Positive Youth Development, and key values derived from my culture that have been ever present in my life at home with whānau, in my high school basketball context with Mel, and at Saint John's. Importantly, I have highlighted how my learnings in sport have transferred into my coaching practice and daily life. These critical moments provide a window into the wider socio-cultural context that coaching could account for but can also impact people's lives beyond the basketball court. I am inspired to achieve positive youth development through the incorporation of cultural values, and a coaching approach that recognises the importance of the sociocultural dimensions of players in the design of a quality learning environment.

In this part of the Chapter, I have analysed and reflected upon my pūrākau, searching for the meanings of these experiences in my life, and their subsequent impact on my coaching practice. These experiences highlight the truly complex nature of coaching but showcase that coaching practice that is driven by values and a kaupapa bigger than just sport has taught me valuable lessons, which I have then applied in my life and my coaching practice.

This reflective process as a young Māori coach has been challenging and rewarding as my pūrākau are deeply personal and evoke my emotions. I have attempted to bring you on my journey with Mel and I, connecting key components together so we might start to think about coaching differently. My experiences have shown that coaching and culture can work together in unison. A Kaupapa Māori framework helps us to fuse the two together.

In part two of this Chapter, I articulate, illustrate, and present my Kaupapa Māori coaching framework; informed by culture, personally and contextually

grounded, and a reflection of who I am. I do not separate who I am as a person and as a coach - they are one and the same to me. Therefore, this is what I want my framework to represent.

## Coaching for the Game of Life

This kaupapa rangahau set out to develop a culturally grounded Kaupapa Māori coaching framework by examining my personal experiences as an athlete and coach in Aotearoa. I am inspired to enhance youth development in sport drawing on the constraint-led approach in a framework upheld by Māori values.

In this part of the Chapter, I introduce my framework and with it, I propose a new perspective of ecological dynamics that moves beyond skill acquisition, and towards creating an environment that affords people the opportunity to self-organise through values. In other words, making cultural values explicit in the learning environment and providing rangatahi the opportunity to connect with them, and apply them in everyday life.

I have argued throughout this kaupapa rangahau that there is more to the people we coach than their lives as athletes, and there is more to coaching than skill acquisition. Therefore, this Kaupapa Māori framework represents the fusion of culture and coaching, and my hope is that it will stimulate coaches whakaaro (thoughts, perspectives) and start a kōrero (talk, discuss) about the extent to which coaching can impact the lives of rangatahi who play sport.

## The Driving Coaching with Mana Framework

The Driving Coaching with Mana Framework (Figure 1) is represented using the rauru or double spiral design. The rauru symbolises the harmonious interplay between two interlinking elements surrounding a central space of energy (Stevens, n.d.; Victoria University of Wellington, 2016). The rauru can take different forms with a multitude of meanings (Victoria University of Wellington, 2016). In this context, the interconnected spiral patterns represent a journey.

The journey inward symbolises periods of self-reflection, self-awareness, and personal evolution, allowing us to gain deeper understanding and connection with ourselves. The outward spiral signifies the application of our inner discoveries and the sharing of wisdom with the world. It represents our ability to make a positive impact on others, to contribute to society, and to create meaningful connections that extend beyond ourselves (Yates-Francis, personal communication, 2023).

The nature of this framework and how it is represented, signifies that all the elements do not operate in isolation – they are interconnected in both their meaning and application. Using the rauru pattern, my articulation of Kaupapa Māori coaching brings these components together and symbolises the fusing together of CLA (a western understood approach) and Māori values held firm by Whanaungatanga, Manaakitanga (and the process of mana -aki), Wairuatanga and Kaupapa.

Below, I describe the key elements of my framework, how they can be applied, highlight the benefits of each element, and provide a set of reflective questions that may support the reader to more deeply understand how they action each element.

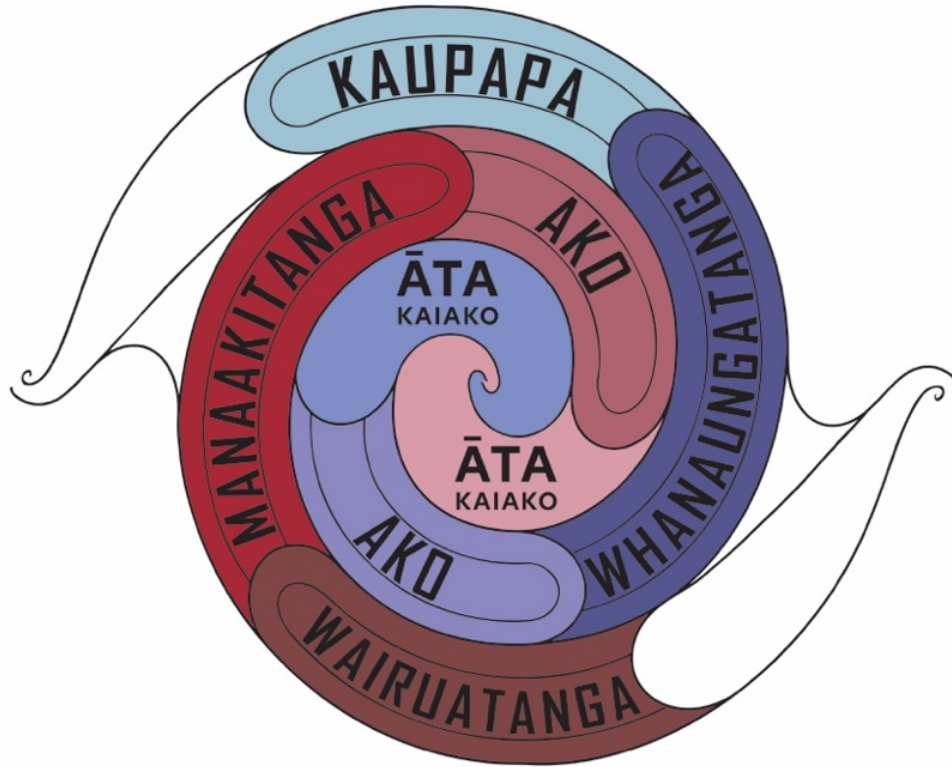


Figure 2: Driving Coaching with Mana Framework<sup>7</sup>

### Āta-kaiako

In Driving Coaching with Mana, Āta-kaiako refers to the coach (kaiako) and their commitment to purposeful reflective practice.

Āta-kaiako is inspired by Taina Pohatu's (2013) Te Takepū Āta, as discussed in Chapter Three. This element emphasises the importance for coaches to make intentional and deliberate reflection part of their everyday lives and coaching practices. I therefore recommend coaches consistently apply Te Takepū Āta and allow themselves to learn and adapt our practice from experience.

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<sup>7</sup> Illustration designed by Matangireia Yates-Francis

## *Application*

Engaging in the reflective process can be uncomfortable and challenging (Hall & Gray, 2016; Stodter et al., 2021), but is an imperative component of effective and personally grounded coaching practice (Piggott, 2012). In my experience, consistent with Stodter et al. (2021), reflective conversations are also a useful form of reflection. Thoughtful kōrero with coaches, parents, players, and my whānau has supported my reflective processes. Fleshing out ideas, opportunities for change, and moments of success are crucial for the development of our coaching practice.

Being Āta-kaiako requires coaches to dedicate time and space to being intentional with their reflections. The creation and analysis of my pūrākau is a demonstration of reflective practice. Reconnecting with my pūrākau has solidified my belief that Āta is vital to understanding self, and to intentionally inform coaching practice. Through these reflective processes, I have also come to realise that Āta-kaiako is enabled through the other elements of the framework.

Some readers may be thinking, how are rangatahi represented within the Driving Coaching with Mana framework? Recognising the unique and powerful role culture plays in our lives, Driving Coaching with Mana is focused on supporting coaches to develop contextually relevant learning environments for rangatahi. What has emerged from this kaupapa rangahau, is the desire to maximise both the potential of rangatahi, and coaches, as Āta-kaiako, to realise positive transformation.

## *Benefits*

Te Takepū Āta encourages intentional and deliberate reflection to support us in our relationships with others (Pohatu, 2013). When applied, Āta-kaiako will make reflective practice explicit within the coaching process. The goal is consistent reflection on coaching experiences to facilitate the growth and development of coaching practice. Taking time and space for reflective

practice is not usually possible, particularly in my experience as a voluntary coach.

Āta-kaiako will empower coaches to build and facilitate learning environments, first for themselves and then for their rangatahi and whānau. This leads to reflective practices becoming more evaluative, supporting continuous improvement by utilising Āta. This is where coaches, rangatahi, and whānau can determine how and to what extent they are realising their goals and aspirations, what is working well, and what needs adaption or improvement.

### *Reflective Questions*

To enable āta (deliberate reflection) as Āta-kaiako, the following reflective questions are suggested:

- What does being an Āta-kaiako mean to you?
- How do you allow yourself time and space to be reflective?
- What methods of reflection resonate with you? (e.g., journaling, reflective conversations)
- What standards can you make with yourself to commit to reflection?
- How can you implement the learnings from your reflection?

Reflective questions for each element have been provided in Appendix 2.

### Kaupapa

In Driving Coaching with Mana, Kaupapa means a commitment to using sport as a vehicle to teach life.

As discussed in Chapter Three (Methodology), kaupapa is an inclusive, future-focussed and collective vision for the achievement of success and excellence (G. H. Smith, 1997). The kaupapa of Driving Coaching with Mana is enhancing youth development through sport, utilising the link to culture within the constraint-led approach, upheld by the Māori cultural values in this framework. The Kaupapa element of Driving Coaching with Mana is crucial because from Kaupapa, the other elements work interconnectedly to support the achievement of the *utopian vision* (G. H. Smith, 1997).

### *Application*

I aim to work with rangatahi and their whānau to create opportunities where everyone can contribute through their unique skills and talents. Explicitly connecting the teachings of life in our basketball sessions, we can also provide rangatahi an opportunity to apply them by refereeing, having coaching responsibilities in training that build their leadership capacity but also ownership of their learning, and leading parts of our training (such as a 15-minute session during a team practice).

As a coach, I also work with whānau to make the financial cost of participating as low as possible (Whanaungatanga, Manaakitanga). To do this, I require rangatahi to be actively involved in fundraising to reduce that financial burden. The most important opportunities are the times where we can work in the community, supporting local events, grounding our rangatahi in the ethic of service. This teaches the players that there is value to working for something that you want that is off the court as well – taking a basketball teaching and making the explicit application to life and what it looks like.

Kaupapa means that coaches must see the long-term direction that underpins their coaching – the development of their athletes as people. There will be moments where our focus can become about the win and the competitive nature of sport. However, winning is not everything and we need to see the possibilities that come from learning life lessons through sport.

For example, I have worked hard over the years to not overreact to losing. As a team, we frame everything as an opportunity to grow and we focus on the process rather than the outcome on court. The focus is on whether we are seeing the values that we are trying to coach and play by, being applied.

### *Benefits*

The element of Kaupapa provides the opportunity for coaches to think deeply about what the purpose of sport, and their coaching affords to rangatahi. Additionally, Kaupapa encourages coaches to seek a greater understanding of their motivations and purpose as a coach – what their utopian vision (G.H. Smith, 1997) is and looks like in practice, but also for their players. Being a coach and recognising the value of Kaupapa, means a sacrifice of yourself in service of others. Coaching is a giving role, and when viewed through the lens of Kaupapa, it asks the question: are you here to achieve your own goals and fulfil your ego, or are you here to utilise sport as a vehicle for positive youth development, enhancing the lives of others?

Kaupapa as an element within the Driving Coaching with Mana framework affords rangatahi the opportunity to learn transferable skills, in particular critical thinking, through sport. Rangatahi can apply these skills in other facets of their lives (i.e., work, school, relationships). Additionally, Kaupapa could expose players to opportunities to explore potential interests and passions.

### *Reflective Questions*

To enable Kaupapa as Āta-kaiako, the following reflective questions are suggested:

- What does Kaupapa mean for us? As coaches, as players, as whānau?

- What do I need as coach to enable our shared vision? If I do not have those things, how can I grow my skills and talents?
- How can I as a coach ensure my practice aligns with our collective vision for the future?

## Ako

In *Driving Coaching with Mana*, ako means a commitment to personal, contextual, and culturally grounded coaching practice.

In Chapter Three, Graham Hingangaroa Smith's principle of ako refers to the importance of "culturally preferred pedagogies" (G. H. Smith, 2017, p. 87). In the context of youth sport, CLA supports coaches to make explicit their commitment to enhancing positive youth development, by accounting for culture in their practice. Ako within *Driving Coaching with Mana*, identifies the constraint-led approach as a coaching tool that affirms the importance of culture, context, and the diverse realities of rangatahi (Pinder & Renshaw, 2019).

### *Application*

Ako recognises the need to think beyond skill development. The application of Ako focuses on creating an environment that enables rangatahi to engage and develop through culture and values, for life on and off the court.

The element of Ako, while brief when compared to the other elements in this Chapter, should not detract from its centrality in *Driving Coaching with Mana*. Ako enables the embodiment of the interconnected elements of Āta-kaiako, Kaupapa, Manaakitanga, Whanaungatanga, and Wairuatanga. Therefore, Ako allows us to elevate the importance of culture and values to create a reciprocal learning environment for rangatahi and Āta-kaiako.

## Benefits

Ako provides an opportunity for coaches to think critically and facilitate learning environments that support the realisation of their kaupapa. Ako then reflects and aligns to who we are as rangatahi and Āta-kaiako, through contextually located and personally grounded approaches to learning.

Opportunities to inspire players to be the best they can be, to become enthusiastic about learning, and to realise their potential are possible benefits of Ako. Participating in an Ako informed environment builds rangatahi capacity to think critically, and to make explicit and to express their values.

### *Reflective Questions*

To enable Ako as Āta-kaiako, the following reflective questions are suggested:

- What does Ako mean for us? As coaches, as players, as whānau?
- What does personal, contextual, and culturally grounded coaching practice (Ako) look like and entail?
- How and to what extent do we enable exploration, creativity, and freedom for rangatahi to connect with the affordances present in their environment?
- How and to what extent do our approaches to learning (Ako) take into consideration our players backgrounds, life circumstance, and the role culture plays in their lives?

## Manaakitanga

In the Driving Coaching with Mana framework, Manaakitanga means a commitment to mana-enhancing practices.

Manaakitanga is the process of showing care, respect, love, and appreciation for people (Barlow, 2015; Kaa & Willis, 2021). The meaning of

manaaki can be more fully understood and expressed by looking more closely at the kupu that form it. Mana has many meanings and dimensions, founded on respect and guide how we act towards others (L. T. Smith, 2019). Aki means to “to enhance, to uplift” (Kaa & Willis, 2021, p. 163). Therefore, manaaki articulated as mana aki is the intentional enhancement of others, which also involves seeing and enabling the potential within them.

### *Application*

Applying Manaakitanga emphasises the importance of having a mana-enhancing approach to dealing with conflict, behavioural issues, and whānau problems, as similarly discussed by G.H. Smith (1997) within the principle of Kia Piki ake i ngā Raruraru o te Kainga. People make mistakes, which provide an opportunity for growth and learning. In these situations, Manaakitanga means a commitment to care and working together with whānau and other key stakeholders to develop a plan moving forward. If our coaching is guided by this element, we can use sport as a vehicle to move towards more consistent mana-enhancing behaviour. For rangatahi, this means that they are recognised as student athletes, and as such, are supported to be the best versions of themselves on and off the court. That requires coaches to accept that there is more to rangatahi than they identity as athletes. than sport. Therefore, there is a need to apply our coaching skills holistically, understanding their context, including wider sociocultural constraints and enablers (Dehghansai et al., 2020; Hapeta et al., 2022; O’Sullivan et al., 2022; Pinder & Renshaw, 2019; Rothwell et al., 2018; Rudd, 2021).

Overlapping with Whanaungatanga, regular catchups with players to talk about life, goals, school, home, or whatever is important to them is a critical application of the Manaakitanga element. Coaches must continue to show they care more than just sport, but about their lives as a whole.

## *Benefits*

The benefits of Manaakitanga ultimately manifest when rangatahi and their whānau are part of an environment, programme, or team where they feel safe and cared for, on and off the court. In this sense, rangatahi know that their coach, whānau, and their peers want what is best for them. This means that Manaakitanga also compels an appreciation for exploration – trying, failing, and trying again – and not being afraid to make mistakes, which are part of the learning process.

Coaching, as described in the Kaupapa Section of this Chapter, is about being of service to others and not expecting anything in return. However, showing manaaki as a coach presents a possibility for that same essence of care to be returned someday, in some way, shape or form. The benefit of Manaakitanga for coaches is that we become part of creating environments that uplifts the mana of the people around us (players and whānau).

## *Reflective Questions*

To enable Manaakitanga as Āta-kaiako, the following reflective questions are suggested:

- What does Manaakitanga mean for us? As coaches, as players, as whānau?
- How will we know we realising and experiencing Manaakitanga?
- How and to what extent does our programme ensure rangatahi are on a pathway to realising their aspirations on and off the court?
- How and to what extent does our programme enable exploration and learning, including through failure?

## *Whanaungatanga*

In Driving Coaching with Mana, Whanaungatanga means a commitment to building positive relationships.

As discussed in Chapter Three (Methodology), Whanaungatanga is the process of strengthening the bonds within whānau and is a critical part of Māori life (Harmsworth & Awatere, 2013; Te Whāiti et al., 1997). A commitment to Whanaungatanga is to value the importance of relationships in our coaching practice, with the aim being to enhance positive youth development (Hapeta et al., 2022).

### *Application*

An example of Whanaungatanga in action is when I meet my team for the first time in the season: we do not train, we spend the time learning about each other and start to build strong connections. I ask three questions to everybody – how much people share is up to them, but we want to build a culture of communication where they feel safe to be who they are. I learnt these three questions on a coaching clinic webinar I attended with a former national team basketball coach.

The three questions are:

1. What is your story?
2. What is your why?
3. What are your goals?

To create a safe environment, I lead the way by introducing myself and walking them through my story – what has the journey of my life looked like up to now. I want my players to know as much about my life and journey as possible so there might be things that they may relate to. Knowing my story gives my players a sense of who I am, what I care about, and the path I have taken to get to the present moment. When rangatahi then introduce themselves, they are safer in their sense that I am no longer a stranger to them.

Knowing my why gives my players a glimpse into the source of my passion to be their coach. I talk about Mel and how he inspired me to love basketball and to serve others. I became a coach when he passed, and now, I have

the honour of continuing his legacy. I acknowledge my love for my whānau and how their sacrifices have allowed me to live my life, pursuing what I love.

Then it is the players turn, it is up to them how much they share. The focus is Whanaungatanga, and we want our team environment to be a respectful and welcoming space for all.

In the spirit of Whanaungatanga, I also use Tetramap. Tetramap is a tool that helps people identify their personal strengths and qualities, and supports them to understand who they are, and how they work and relate with others (TetraMap Ltd, 2021)<sup>8</sup>. Using this tool with my team gives my players a chance to learn something about themselves and their teammates. From a coaching perspective, it gives me an idea of the type of players I have – what communication styles will work for them and how to approach certain situations with them and in ways they will understand, appreciate, and receive my feedback better. We revisit TetraMap throughout the year to reinforce our understanding of ourselves and each other.

Whanaungatanga can be applied through regular whānau communication. Starting each year, we have a whānau hui where I get to know parents and vice versa. We set our kaupapa, standards, goals, and collaborate with whānau about how we can work together to achieve the best possible outcomes for our rangatahi on and off the court. Players are also involved in setting the standards for the team and how we address issues of accountability.

We take as many opportunities as possible throughout the year to get off the court to do team building activities: spending time at Mel's chair, going to the pools, whānau kaitahi (shared meal), trips away to watch sports, and supporting whānau activities etc.

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<sup>8</sup> Refer to <https://www.tetramap.com/> for more information on TetraMap.

## *Benefits*

The benefits of Whanaungatanga are threefold. Firstly, Whanaungatanga elevates the value of relationships and highlights the importance of developing connections between the coach, players and whānau. This helps to create a whānau centred environment in which we all play a vital role in the success of our rangatahi. This in turn fosters collective responsibility and sets the platform to create a shared vision as a team, as whānau. Secondly, Whanaungatanga is nurtured through creating safe and respectful environments, which encourages players and whānau to determine and then communicate their goals and aspirations. Over the course of the season, players and whānau along with their coaches, have the opportunity to celebrate how far they have come, and in realising their individual and collective goals. Finally, Whanaungatanga supports coaches to achieve their kaupapa, their utopian vision (G. H. Smith, 1997) to develop rangatahi for life through sport. Achieving a strong sense of interconnectedness and working towards a shared vision builds trust and unity.

## *Reflective Questions*

To enable Whanaungatanga as Āta-kaiako, the following reflective questions are suggested:

- What does Whanaungatanga mean for us? As coaches, as players, as whānau?
- How and to what extent am I ready to practice reflectively?
- How and to what extent will we create safe and respectful spaces for sharing, on and off the court?
- What is our shared vision and how will we all contribute? How will we know we are on a pathway to realising our individual and collective success?

## Wairuatanga

In Driving Coaching with Mana, Wairuatanga means a commitment to spiritual connectedness.

Wairuatanga is the element that highlights the interconnecting nature of the natural and spiritual worlds. This connection is important as it influences how we as Māori relate to and interact with the environment and each other (Nelson-Becker & Moeke-Maxwell, 2020; Pere, 1982). This also leads to the recognition of identity and connectedness to our Atua (Māori deities), and the realms they govern including te taiao (the natural environment) (Heke, 2016). as discussed in Chapter Three it is also important to recognise that our connections through our whakapapa, and to our tūpuna (ancestors), whānau, and friends who have passed on including the experiences, practices, and values imparted to us, can remain very much present in our lives (L. T. Smith, 2015).

### *Application*

Applying Wairuatanga in the sporting context relates to connectedness and identity, as well as practices that respect our spirituality. A key example of this is the practice of karakia (incantations, prayers) that set the tone and see “practice as ceremony” in which we must be ready to be present in the moment (Wilson, 2004). Additionally, as illustrated in my pūrākau, learning haka and waiata so we can tautoko (support) our whānau, opposition, players, also invite and life wairua.

At SJC, faith is the essence of our kura and important in our lives. As a team, we respect the diverse faiths practiced by our players and their whānau. The concept of faith is also reflected in our identity as a brotherhood of the 43, which instils a sense of identity, belonging, and pride within our players, and connects them to the greater purpose within our basketball programme. Incorporating pūrākau into coaching practice is a

further application of Wairuatanga that supports and strengthens identity and connectedness (Hapeta et al., 2019).

### *Benefits*

Wairuatanga benefits rangatahi, their whānau, and coaches in the way that elevates the importance of identity for wellbeing (Independent Māori Statutory Board, 2019). Similarly, Miller (2008) advocates to not underestimate the contribution sport can play to advance spiritual connections (para. 3). She recognises “three levels of connection: to the self (inner strength), to relationships (our undeniable union with others), and to a higher being or purpose” (para. 4).

Within Driving Coaching with Mana, Wairuatanga fosters an environment that aligns with our culture, identity, and ways of thinking and being. Wairuatanga affords players the opportunity to appreciate who they are, including the spiritual values that they and their whānau hold, and that are respected collectively as a team. Wairuatanga also presents an opportunity for connectedness in the sense that it encourages all rangatahi to stay connected to and seek the support and guidance of people in our lives that are no longer here on earth - through karakia, visiting places of significance, and simply in kōrero with them, as we accept the “spirit is immortal” (Barlow, 2002, p.152).

### *Reflective Questions*

To enable Wairuatanga as Āta-kaiako, the following reflective questions are suggested:

- What does Wairuatanga mean for us? As coaches, as players, as whānau?
- How will we know we realising and experiencing Wairuatanga?
- How and to what extent does our programme ensure individually and collectively we respect our spiritual practices?

- How and to what extent does our programme enable rangatahi to develop of a strong sense of their identity, and as part of our team/programme?

## Evaluating Driving Coaching with Mana

### Bringing it all back to Centre: Making links to Kaupapa Māori Theory and Elements of Change

As a young Māori male who is passionate about improving coaching practices, and informed and inspired by a unique set of experiences, I have developed my own version of a Kaupapa Māori coaching framework: Driving Coaching with Mana.

Guided by Te Takepū Āta (Pohatu, 2013) I now evaluate Driving Coaching with Mana through the lens of Kaupapa Māori theory (G. H. Smith, 1997), which overlaps my Kaupapa Māori methodology. Graham Hingangaroa Smith's (1997) articulation of Kaupapa Māori theory identified six intervention elements that contribute to transformative change. Although Smith's work was focused on education, there are important connections between education and coaching. In this part of the Chapter, I evaluate Driving Coaching with Mana with these elements.

The evaluation of Driving Coaching with Mana is important for two reasons. Firstly, bringing Graham Hingangaroa Smith's (1997) elements of change as the dimensions of success within an evaluative process, provides a way in which to critically determine the connectivity of Driving Coaching with Mana to Kaupapa Māori. Secondly, by undertaking this evaluative process, I am demonstrating Āta-kaiako, allowing self-reflection to inform my understanding of how and to what extent I am realising Driving Coaching with Mana.

At this point, I should signpost that this Section may feel repetitive, but as Graham Hingangaroa Smith (1997) emphasised through the utilisation of the marae model,

The repetition of ideas is often employed as a stylistic tool on the Marae in whaikoorero (formal speech-making). In such circumstances a speaker may make the same point often, albeit in different ways for emphasis and to ensure that the point is understood and taken aboard (p. 49).

Driving Coaching with Mana reflects who I am as a young Māori male, and I believe that it is critical to assess my framework as a Kaupapa Māori initiative.

### Tino Rangatiratanga

Who I am, my values, and my experiences as a Māori male are engraved throughout this kaupapa rangahau. The opportunity to develop a cultural and personal framework that enhances the development of rangatahi has been emotive and rewarding. I have self-determined Driving Coaching with Mana and made the decision to recentre Māori ways of being and thinking that are important to me, and in coaching. The process of developing Driving Coaching with Mana is Tino Rangatiratanga being achieved, albeit on a small but still meaningful level.

Driving Coaching with Mana provides a platform to transform a Western understood approach into something that relates and reflects the aspirations of Māori. I acknowledge Graham Hingangaroa Smith's critique that simply creating a "brown" version of a "white" structure merely recreates the status quo (G. H. Smith, 1997, p. 467). I also contend that Driving Coaching with Mana capitalises on the potential for flexibility, diversity, and uniqueness of CLA, which is not limited to any one culture (Pinder & Renshaw, 2019; Renshaw et al., 2016; Rothwell et al., 2019). Ako can be linked to Tino Rangatiratanga, recognising the importance of creating an environment that is culturally responsive and supportive of athletes in their context. Having the autonomy to elevate values that are important to our cultural context,

provides rangatahi and Āta-kaiako the space to self-determine the learning environment and what they achieve together in it.

## Taonga Tuku Iho

Driving Coaching with Mana is one pathway to bring Māori ways of being back to the centre. Kaupapa Māori theory and principles have informed its formation and development. In that sense, this Kaupapa Māori framing of what culturally grounded coaching could look like in Aotearoa is an achievement of Taonga Tuku Iho. Wairuatanga is embedded in Driving Coaching with Mana, recognising the important spiritual connection Māori have to their culture (Kopua et al., 2020). Incorporating te reo Māori, the practice of karakia, and valuing who we are as Māori, is crucial if Driving Coaching with Mana is to be a successful Kaupapa Māori initiative and support the development of cultural identity (Kāretu, 1993; G. H. Smith, 1997).

Driving Coaching with Mana is underpinned and realised through Whanaungatanga, Manaakitanga, Wairuatanga, and Kaupapa. The importance of these elements cannot be understated or disregarded as they reflect the constantly interconnected synergies between culture, context, and coaching. Driving Coaching with Mana represents the potential to affect powerful, positive change within the coaching space - decolonising and indigenising the field.

The use of pūrākau is also a form of Taonga Tuku Iho. In this thesis, Pūrākau are drawn on as a way of remembering, reconnecting, and reflecting on my experiences, and their impact on my life and coaching practice. Guided by Te Takepū Āta, one could argue that the journey this thesis has taken us on has been a manifestation of Māori ways of thinking and being from Ko Wai Au to Pūrākau, and the final analysis leading us to this discussion.

A recent experience that comes to mind, is being invited to present my coaching journey to rangatahi as part of a leadership initiative. Naturally, my

kōrero reflected my kaupapa rangahau and the intentional and deliberate reflective journey I am on. I asked these young leaders to reflect on what their superpowers (their unique strengths or qualities) are. Later that day, I went to practice and asked my team the same question. Some of the responses were, “B, my superpower is being Māori.” These responses sum up what I hope Driving Coaching with Mana affords: a space to be you, to be Māori, and to be successful as Māori.

Driving Coaching with Mana is inclusive of culture, and I hope more of our rangatahi feel that being Māori is their superpower. This is an example of the transformational change Driving Coaching with Mana intends to facilitate and support.

### Ako Māori

As previously mentioned, the Ako component of Driving Coaching with Mana, drawing on CLA, accounts for culture, supporting autonomy and control of learning to rangatahi and Āta-kaiako. Understanding the cultural identity of our players is a significant component of session design (O’Sullivan et al., 2022). Additionally, if Āta-kaiako action Whanaungatanga within their practice they can better understand their players and their needs. In doing this, they recognise the importance of relationships in the process of designing quality learning environments (Orth et al., 2019).

Returning to Graham Hingangaroa Smith's words, we must recognise the need for culturally appropriate pedagogy that “...effectively connect with the cultural backgrounds and life circumstances (socio-economic) of Māori communities and individuals” (G. H. Smith, 1997, p. 468). Through the element of Ako, Driving Coaching with Mana argues that culturally appropriate pedagogy is coaching driven by mana (respect) and Māori cultural values.

Kia piki ake i nga Raruraru o te Kainga

G. H. Smith (1997) argues that we must understand the socioeconomic and sociocultural factors that impact students' lives, and that the application of Māori cultural values can create a collaborative culture that support learners' sociocultural and cultural backgrounds. An example from Kōhanga Reo, was whānau collectives supporting the care and transport of tamariki (children) when whānau need that tautoko (help). In the context of Driving Coaching with Mana, I do not see it any differently. The values of Whanaungatanga, Manaakitanga, and Wairuatanga intersect for the achievement of this principle.

Coaching does not exist in a vacuum and sport is not isolated, we must look further into the complexities of our learners' lives and cultural contexts if we aspire to develop supportive and meaningful environments that are focused on fit (O'Sullivan et al., 2020; Rudd, 2021; Wittgenstein, 1953). Whanaungatanga, Manaakitanga and Wairuatanga must be actioned, instilled, and developed in learning environments, not just within rangatahi, but also aiming to have an impact on whānau too. If a culture is created that whānau value, rangatahi and their whānau are more likely to be able to live and breathe the values within Driving Coaching with Mana. In my context of youth sport, whānau are key stakeholders and have a greater knowledge of the wider lives of my athletes. Therefore, whānau engagement is critical to the success of the overarching goals of this kaupapa rangahau - positive youth development through the realisation of Driving Coaching with Mana.

## Whānau

Whānau, as discussed previously, are crucial to drive the success of Driving Coaching with Mana. Whanaungatanga, Manaakitanga and Kaupapa are relevant here. Developed by examining personal experience and coaching practice, Driving Coaching with Mana highlights the need for coaches to look beyond their immediate practice environment and to create and maintain positive relationships by showing care for players and whānau. For Driving Coaching with Mana to truly promote positive youth development, it is essential that the coach's values and methods are supported by the whānau. Coaches working within Driving Coaching with Mana should

therefore prioritise building positive relationships and inviting the whānau to be part of the team's journey each year. This includes creating opportunities to foster a collaborative whānau-oriented environment (A. R. Bishop, 1995; M. H. Durie, 1985; G. H. Smith, 2003; Stucki, 2012).

## Kaupapa

Kaupapa is the drive to achieve the utopian vision (G. H. Smith, 1997). In the coaching context of this kaupapa rangahau, the Kaupapa is that positive youth development is enhanced when coaches indigenise CLA in a coaching framework upheld by Māori values - having a bigger than basketball approach. Being bigger than basketball means intentionality around positive youth development and life skills. We know there is nothing immediately magical about sport (Coakley, 2016), but it does provide a unique platform for building positive youth development (Holt et al., 2020; Theokas et al., 2007). Driving Coaching with Mana, as a kaupapa represents a focus on explicitly coaching life skills in practice and making these connections clear to players so they are “taught rather than caught” (Camiré et al., 2011, p. 258).

Also, in manifesting Manaakitanga, we can apply Kaupapa through our approach to issues, problems, and challenges with rangatahi in a way that is mana-enhancing, fostering continued growth. Life is full of mistakes; we all make them. Driving Coaching with Mana advocates coaches approach mistakes with care and dedicate time to teaching rangatahi how to address them. Coaching with care will support Whanaungatanga, strengthening the bonds between rangatahi, Āta-kaiako, and whānau.

## Summary

This kaupapa rangahau highlights the need to be deliberately and intentionally reflective. At the centre of Driving Coaching with Mana is Āta-kaiako, representing a reflective coach who seeks meaning and value from the experiences that make us who we are. Āta provides us the opportunity

to seek knowledge and meaning through intentional and deliberate reflection (Pohatu, 2013).

Driving Coaching with Mana reflects who I am. A key takeaway is not the framework in isolation. Rather, it is the process of developing one's practice by pursuing a greater understanding of your identity in context, and clarity of purpose.

There is more to the rangatahi we coach; they are people with lives, experiences, and are constantly navigating challenges and pressures. We do not exist in a social and cultural vacuum, so let's not coach like we are. Instead, let us utilise unique experiences, identity, and culture to develop an approach that is unique, personal, and cares deeply about people.

I want to make a final remark, explicitly linking Driving Coaching with Mana Framework to Graham Hingangaroa Smith's (1997) six elements of successful Kaupapa Māori initiatives. Just as Kaupapa Māori theory and research is not a rigid formula (Moewaka-Barnes, 2000; Pihama, 2010; G. H. Smith, 1997, 2015; L. T. Smith, 2015), the Driving Coaching with Mana framework is not either. Just like Kaupapa Māori, our practice, experience, and understanding will evolve over time in relation to our communities.

## Conclusion

Driving Coaching with Mana is a living framework that was born out of the intentional and deliberate reflection of key moments in my life, who I am, what matters to me, and why that is. As I continue my journey in coaching and working with rangatahi, my coaching practice will evolve as I continue to reflect on my experiences, as *Āta-kaiako*. The future of Driving Coaching with Mana rests in how we breathe life into the framework and seek a greater understanding of the impact it makes in the lives of rangatahi. Ultimately, this is just another waypoint on my journey, and in yours.

The challenge I pose to readers, be they teachers, coaches, or whānau, is that the framework itself is not the only takeaway. I have guided you through a step-by-step process of cultural and reflective learning. This process helps you form an approach that is grounded in your personal values and beliefs, taking into account your identity, cultural background and environmental context.

Take with you the synergies of culture and context. Allow yourself the opportunity to reflect and grow. I ask all of you to be reflective and intentional with your thoughts and actions; explore who you are and what your personally and contextually grounded framework might look like. Strong identity and connection of self, culture, and environment are vital to your practice as Āta-kaiako.

Mel and I will continue our journey. I will forever hold his legacy, his teachings, and his care in my heart as I build a legacy of my own and travel my own path. I humbly leave Driving Coaching with Mana with you. Now, I want to live my kaupapa and spend time with the people who make Driving Coaching with Mana a reality.

*Do things with faith and greatness. Mel Young.*



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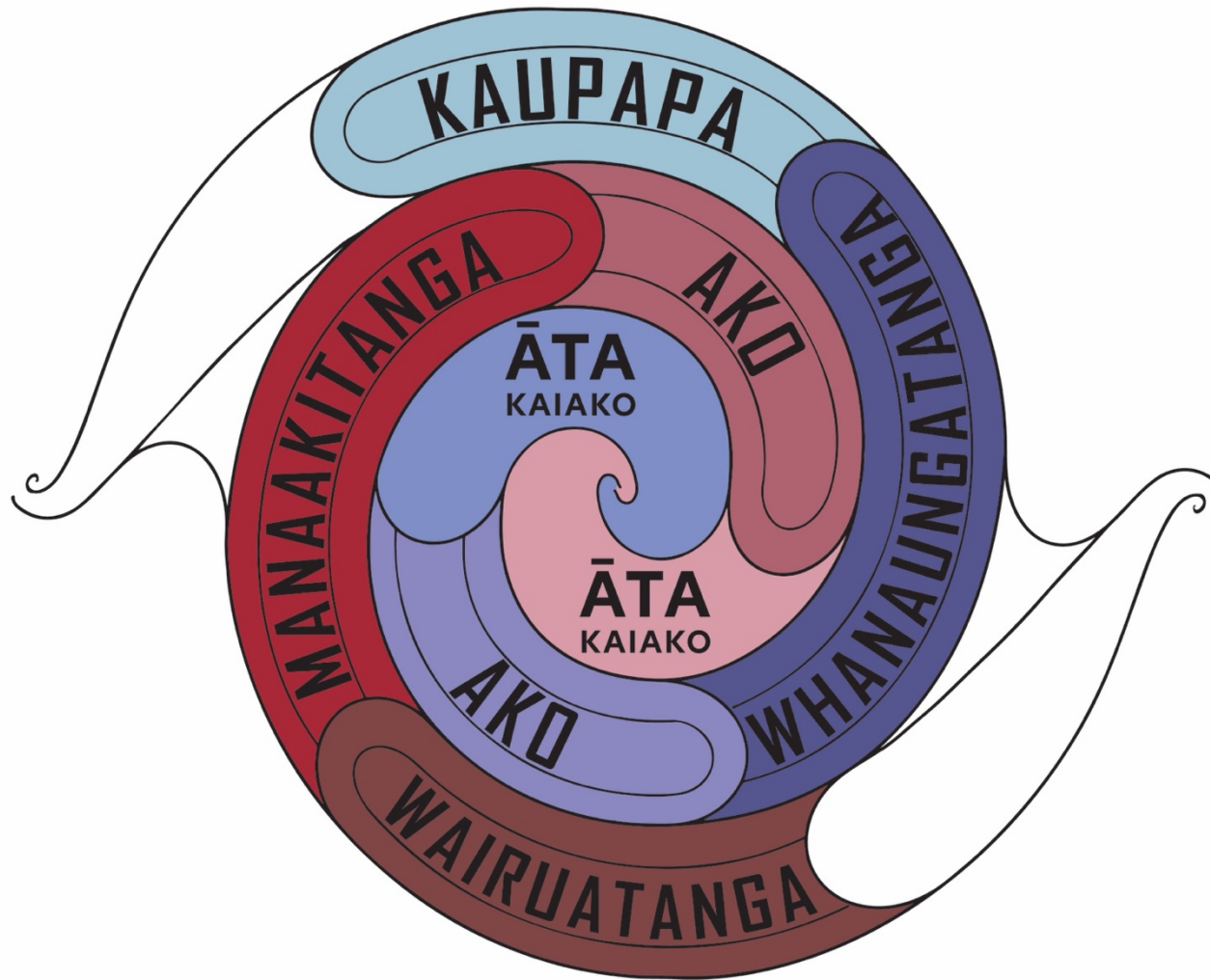
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Appendix One: Driving Coaching with Mana Framework



## Appendix Two: Driving Coaching with Mana Reflective Questions

Elements	Reflective Questions
Whanaungatanga	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does Whanaungatanga mean for us? As coaches, as players, as whānau?</li> <li>• How and to what extent am I ready to practice reflectively?</li> <li>• How and to what extent will we create safe and respectful spaces for sharing, on and off the court?</li> <li>• What is our shared vision and how will we all contribute? How will we know we are on a pathway to realising our individual and collective success?</li> </ul>
Manaakitanga	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does Manaakitanga mean for us? As coaches, as players, as whānau?</li> <li>• How will we know we realising and experiencing Manaakitanga?</li> <li>• How and to what extent does our programme ensure rangatahi are on a pathway to realising their aspirations on and off the court?</li> <li>• How and to what extent does our programme enable exploration and learning, including through failure?</li> </ul>
Wairuatanga	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does Wairuatanga mean for us? As coaches, as players, as whānau?</li> </ul>

Elements	Reflective Questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will we know we realising and experiencing Wairuatanga?</li> <li>• How and to what extent does our programme ensure individually and collectively we respect our spiritual practices?</li> <li>• How and to what extent does our programme enable rangatahi to develop of a strong sense of their identity, and as part of our team/programme?</li> </ul>
Kaupapa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does Kaupapa mean for us? As coaches, as players, as whānau?</li> <li>• What do I need as coach to enable our shared vision? If I do not have those things, how can I grow my skills and talents?</li> <li>• How can I as a coach ensure my practice aligns with our collective vision for the future?</li> </ul>
Ako	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does Ako mean for us? As coaches, as players, as whānau?</li> <li>• What does personal, contextual, and culturally grounded coaching practice (Ako) look like and entail?</li> <li>• How and to what extent do we enable exploration, creativity, and freedom for rangatahi to connect with the affordances present in their environment?</li> <li>• Does our method of teaching (Ako) take into consideration our players backgrounds, life circumstance, and the role culture plays in their lives?</li> </ul>

Elements	Reflective Questions
Āta-Kaiako	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does being an Āta-kaiako mean to you?</li> <li>• How do you allow yourself time and space to be reflective?</li> <li>• What methods of reflection resonate with you? (e.g., journaling, reflective conversations)</li> <li>• What standards can you make with yourself to commit to reflection?</li> <li>• How can you implement the learnings from your reflection?</li> </ul>