

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of green, ranging from light lime to dark forest green. The shapes are primarily triangles and polygons, creating a dynamic, layered effect. The overall composition is clean and modern, with the text centered in a white space.

# Indigenous research methodologies within postgraduate curricula: Querying appropriate applications of a Kaupapa Māori Approach

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# Introduction

- ▶ This presentation explores the scope of Kaupapa Māori research methodology within the Master of Applied Practice - Social Practice (MAP) programme at Unitec Institute of Technology in Auckland, New Zealand.
- ▶ I offer this presentation in my role as Discipline Leader for the MAP programme (1 year)
- ▶ The MAP is a research-based qualification centring on community and employment contexts for social workers, counsellors and community developers. There is a focus on transformative change leading to socially just outcomes.

# Introduction

- ▶ In the past few years, the MAP has seen an increase in the number of Māori students enrolled. Currently approximately 30% of MAP students are Māori.
- ▶ This trend is likely to continue
- ▶ Hence, the role of Kaupapa Māori research methodology within the programme takes on particular importance.
- ▶ The programme receives significant and ongoing advice about the embedding of mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) and te ao Māori (Māori world views) in its curriculum and pedagogy. For example the Social Practice Māori Champion, the School Kaihautū (Māori leader), and Māori Advisory Board members for the MAP have all contributed to the content I cover today in this presentation.

# Kaupapa Māori Principles

- ▶ Kaupapa Māori methodology is a decolonising approach to research, derived from Māori worldviews and frameworks.
- ▶ Graham Smith (2017) writes that Kaupapa Māori theory evolved out of Māori struggles to create alternative education systems in Aotearoa, and “is not so much a set of principles but a space where Māori can work in ways free of dominant cultural pressures and constraints (p. 85).”
- ▶ Smith (2017) does articulate six Kaupapa Māori (KM) principles that have been taken up in research practice.

# Kaupapa Māori Principles

These are the principles of:

- ▶ Tino rangatiratanga: self-determination or relative autonomy
- ▶ Ngā taonga tuku iho: validating and legitimising cultural aspirations and identity
- ▶ akoranga Māori: incorporating culturally preferred pedagogies
- ▶ Kia piki ake i ngā raru o te kāinga: mediating socio-economic and home difficulties
- ▶ Whanau/whakawhanaungatanga: incorporating collective rather than individual cultural structures
- ▶ Kaupapa: a shared, collective vision and philosophy

# Kaupapa Māori Principles

- ▶ In addition, ethical values or principles that are central to KM have been codified. Stevenson (2017, p. 55) cites Smith (1999) and Cram (2001) regarding the development of “seven community-up research practices that assist and guide researchers’ ethical considerations when wanting to engage in research with Māori communities. ...

# Kaupapa Māori Principles

... These are

- Aroha ki te tangata: a respect for people;
- He kanohi kitea: the importance of the seen face;
- Titiro, whakarongo... korero: looking and listening before speaking;
- Manaaki ki te tangata: sharing, hosting and being generous;
- Kia tūpato: being careful;
- Kua e takahia to mana o te tangata: being aware not to trample on the mana of others;
- Kia māhaki: being humble.”

# Kaupapa Māori in the MAP

- ▶ Core courses in the MAP include coverage of indigenous methodologies: not only KM methodology but also, for example, Talanoa methodology (a Pacific methodology).
- ▶ In addition, core courses for any and all students – both Māori and tauwiwi (non-Māori) – specify learning outcomes that cover the application of “a Kaupapa Māori approach” to all aspects of developing research projects, including: identifying community priorities, addressing research questions, designing a research approach, selecting appropriate methods, and gathering knowledge/data.
- ▶ The rest of this presentation will explore some implications of the MAP asking all its students to draw on a KM approach, broadly understood, for all research projects – whether or not Māori are involved.

# Kaupapa Māori in the MAP

- ▶ In doing so, the MAP is furthering its key aim to support students' work with individuals, whānau and groups to transform practice in ways that enhance social justice and reduce inequalities for communities.
- ▶ The primary way in which MAP students learn to apply a KM approach to their projects is by engaging what Stevenson (2018) refers to as Kaupapa Māori axiology, or underpinning values/principles for research.
- ▶ It is important to note that KM research methodology does not specify exactly how one should undertake research (Stevenson, 2018; Walker, Eketone & Gibbs, 2006). In this sense, it is recognised as legitimate to separate out KM values from any specific set of research procedures, or research methods.

# Kaupapa Māori in the MAP

- ▶ However, applying a KM approach to any and all MAP projects raises a critical set of questions about the scope of KM values and principles.
- ▶ On the one hand, centring KM in this way responds to decolonising efforts to de-centre ‘Western’ approaches to research. In MAP courses, instead of taking Western research epistemologies as a ‘given’, KM is taken as a given.
- ▶ This approach aligns with a key principle of Unitec’s current Manaakitia Te Rito, or institutional renewal strategy: namely, that learnings promoting Māori student success will also promote *all* students’ success.

# Kaupapa Māori in the MAP

- ▶ On the other hand, there is a risk here: namely, that the use of KM principles for research projects that are not conducted by and for Māori specifically could end up generalising these principles to the point that tino rangatiratanga – Māori sovereignty and self-determination, which is central to a KM approach – could be seen to be compromised, or ‘watered down’: i.e., assimilated for other uses.
- ▶ In a worst-case scenario, KM principles could simply be appropriated for projects which do not, principally, aim to highlight or enhance te ao Māori.

# Kaupapa Māori in the MAP

- ▶ For this reason, it has been important for MAP instructors to stress the following: the application of KM principles to projects that are not using KM methodology proper involves a process of *translation* into terms that are relevant for a given research project.
- ▶ Drawing upon KM axiology (underpinning values/principles) in this way acknowledges a KM approach to research as a powerful *model*. KM research values have been recognised internationally as one of the most well-developed set of values for transformational research anywhere in the world (Chilisa, 2019). Arguably, these values can be applied in a range of research contexts.

# Kaupapa Māori in the MAP

- ▶ What is important here is to apply these values in a way that does not attempt to ‘universalise’ (i.e., assimilate) te ao Māori.
- ▶ An example from an Arab MAP student’s research proposal is instructive.
- ▶ This student is researching the experiences of Arab families in New Zealand caring for an autistic child. She cites the principle of tino rangatiratanga, or self-determination, rooted in the goal of Māori controlling their own culture, destiny and aspirations.

## Kaupapa Māori in the MAP

- ▶ She then translates this principle into terms appropriate to her project. She notes that her research “will be with an Arab minority living in New Zealand, which has its own identity, culture and aspirations, and has the right to preserve its cultural identity. Consideration must be given to how uniquely Arab cultural factors effect the therapeutic process for the autistic child and their family.”
- ▶ Also, consider the situation for projects which may or may not involve Māori participants (depending on who accepts a participant recruitment invitation). Here, the use of KM axiology as an underlying approach – translated into terms that are appropriate for a given project – mean that if there are Māori participants, the researcher will be in a good position to work in a culturally safe manner with them.

# Conclusion

- ▶ In conclusion, in the MAP Kaupapa Māori approaches are engaged at various levels of depth and detail. For (an increasing number of) Māori students working with Māori, KM methodology may encompass most, of not all, research procedures and modes of engagement with participants.
- ▶ For tauwiwi (non-Māori) researchers, usually working with culturally mixed groups, projects draw upon and *translate* KM axiology (values and principles) into terms that are appropriate for their particular research contexts.
- ▶ The intention here is to centre KM as a core research paradigm. In the process, there must be rigorous avoidance of any generalised use of KM which could be seen to ‘water down’ its kaupapa.

# References

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