

Realising Maori Potential: Increasing the Maori Students Participation and Completion in Tertiary Education

Te Pakihi o Matauranga Maori - The Business of Maori Education

Purpose – This paper introduces a model to teach business to encourage and increase Maori student participation in business studies.

“A great job for every graduate” This is a big promise and this promise is nigh on impossible given the growing number and diversity of students entering the New Zealand education system. In business to make a promise you can’t deliver can result in an epic fail. However we could have the capacity to do this for Maori students through building a robust foundation and pathway based on principles such as Potikitanga (Tapsell and Woods, 2008) Rangatiratanga, Kaitiakitanga and Nohokotaitanga.

Where once Maori were the minority in the business class room this now applies to all New Zealanders on a large and rapidly growing scale. We live in a world of globalization, privatisation and corporatisation where rapid paced change is the norm, we need to be more nimble, resilient and proactive. In order to keep up with this pace an understanding of international business is necessary.

In business, the best way to know what your customer values is to ask them so in education ask the students what they value, ask industry what they value and integrate these drivers into teaching. Bring Maori business, students and educators together to korero on a regular basis from a Maori social and economic perspective.

The education system burdened with bureaucracy and institutional politics moves too slowly to take up entrepreneurial opportunities. The education sector can learn a great deal from small medium enterprise, if you don’t move quickly when opportunity knocks you will miss the waka.

Maori have an “entrepreneurial flair” (Henry, 2007). Teaching could be pitched around nurturing this “entrepreneurial flair” and provide the appropriate and necessary tools to develop skills that are actually required in order for students to build businesses and make a sustainable living doing what they have a natural talent and passion for.

Although Maori are among the most entrepreneurial indigenous ethnicities in the world, the antithesis to this is they are among the highest rate of business failure (GEM, 2005). Many businesses do not plan, there is much to learn and a plethora of dynamic issues to think about

while in operation. Perhaps the key is in nurturing the entrepreneurial and innovative spirit innate within Maori “the Mauipreneur” (Keelan and Woods, 2006). Provide a support structure and “Poutama” that works with them and works with the external factors within a global environment, to enable ongoing development of the latent Maori competitive advantage advantage (MEPD, 2012). Having a tertiary qualification doesn’t set you apart in the world anymore but being Maori does.

Maori possess huge potential and opportunities from a global perspective are plentiful (BERL, 2011). Recent interviews conducted with Auckland Maori business owners showed that being tertiary educated was important however one of the most successful Maori entrepreneurs in the group dropped out of high school at 14. Students need to learn from those who are out there doing it along with the fundamental conventional principles required to succeed. This is not a question of can it be done but rather how can we do this now.

Ngairé Molyneux: Unitec, Department of Management and Marketing

Lecturer: Strategic Thinking for Managers, Leadership and Maori Business

Iwi: Tuhoe and Ngati Kahungungu