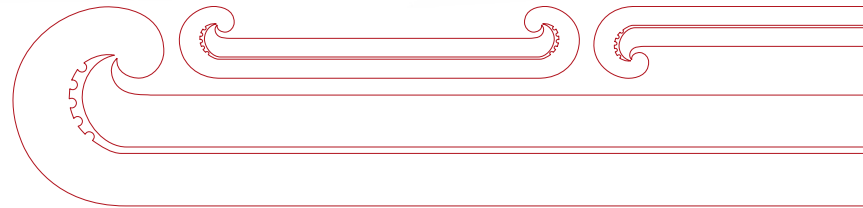


The Scope of Talanoa Research Methodology within a Postgraduate Curriculum

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Unitec Institute of Technology



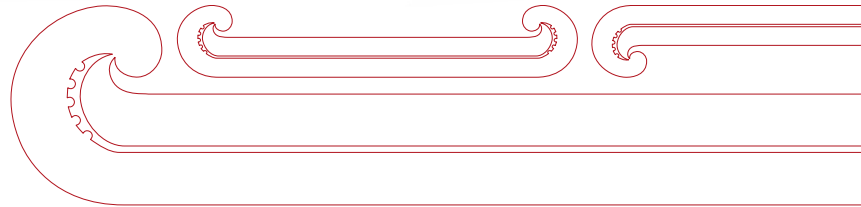
Introduction

- This presentation explores the scope of Talanoa research methodology, as taught in the Master of Applied Practice Social Practice (MAP) at Unitec Institute of Technology
- The presenters are:

Dr. Helen Gremillion, Discipline Leader for the MAP

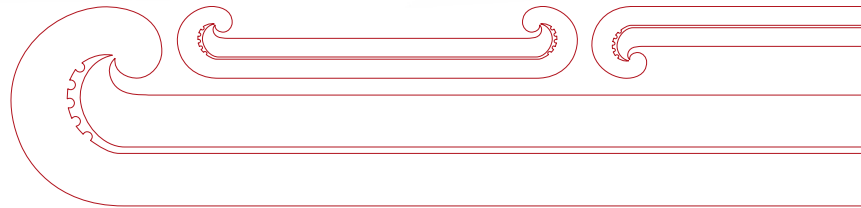
Dr. Falaniko Tominiko, Director of Pacific Success at Unitec, and
MAP supervisor

Jason Hallie, Pacific Champion in Social Practice at Unitec



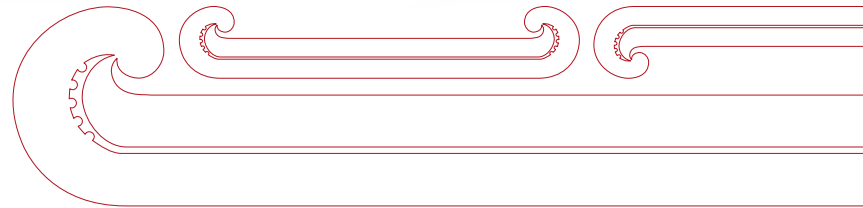
Context

- In the past few years, the MAP has seen an increase in enrolment of Pacific students
- More than 30% of students currently are Pacific
- This trend is likely to continue
- This is why we are looking at a strong focus on Talanoa methodology in our teaching



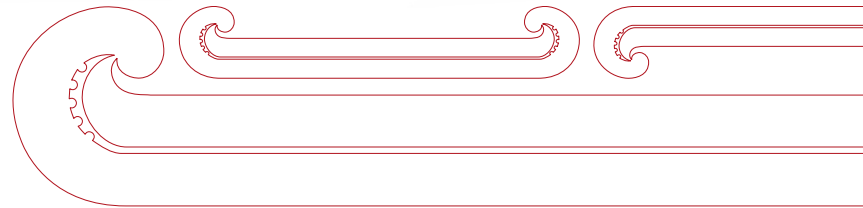
Talanoa Methodology

- Vaioleti (2013) states that Talanoa methodology is aligned with phenomenology, but is unique in its cultural specificity.
- It can be considered pan-Pacific, but has a “diversity in meanings” (Tagicakiverata & Nilan, 2018, p. 3), e.g. across Tongan vs Samoan vs Fijian contexts. This diversity reflects cross-cultural differences in understandings of talanoa as an everyday cultural practice or way of being.



Values of Talanoa (Pan-Pacific)

- Mo'oni (pure, real, authentic)
- Mālie (energise and uplift spirits to create a positive state of connectedness and enlightenment), which leads to:
- Māfana (warmth)
- Faka'apa'apa (respectful, humble, considerate)
- Anga Lelei (kindness, tolerance, helpful, calm, dignified)



Principles of Talanoa Research

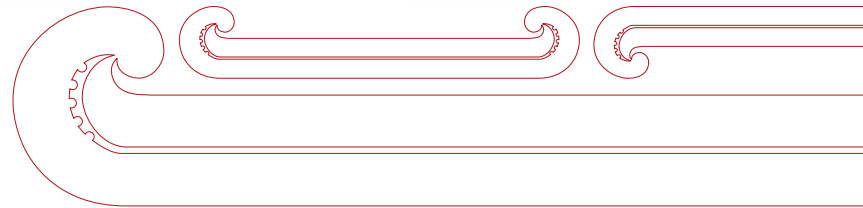
These values lead to research that:

- Breaks down power relationships
- Creates and promotes reciprocity
- Is conducted face-to-face
- Is participant-led: the participant can take the discussion wherever they choose to go



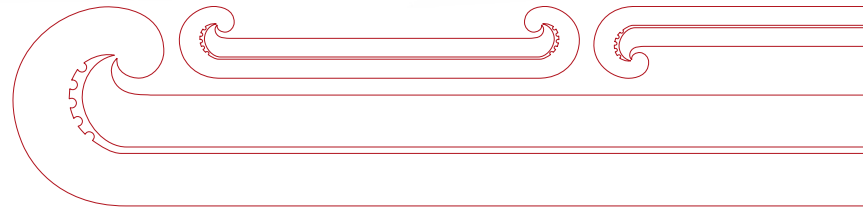
Talanoa as Methodology and Method

- Vaioleti (2013, 2011) has identified at least eight possible forms of talanoa for research purposes: e.g. talanoa vave (quick, surface-level talk) vs talanoa faka'eke'eke, which is closest to an interview (see also Fa'avae, Jones & Manu'atu, 2016). These are talanoa methods of data collection that can sit within an overall talanoa approach, or methodology.
- It is interesting to note that, in contrast to Kaupapa Māori methodology, Talanoa methodology is usually understood to be inclusive of specific (talanoa) methods.



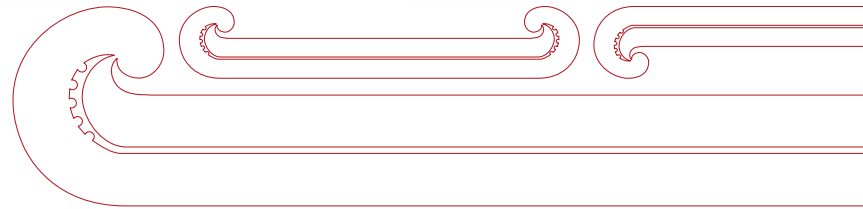
Talanoa as Methodology and Method

- In their writing about talanoa research, Suaalii-Sauni & Fulu-Aiolupotea (2014) do allow for the use of methods that are not Pacific per se; but ultimately, they settle on a preferred practice for Talanoa research where both methodology and methods are talanoa.



Talanoa and non-Pacific Methods

- These scholars are uneasy combining talanoa methodology (overall research approach) with non-Pacific methodologies (such as phenomenology or interpretive constructivism), but they are willing to bring together “talanoa... research methods with other social research methods” (p. 336).
- Further, they see “little difference in practice” between talanoa methods “and an interview or focus group in terms of the general mechanics of actually carrying them out” (p. 337).



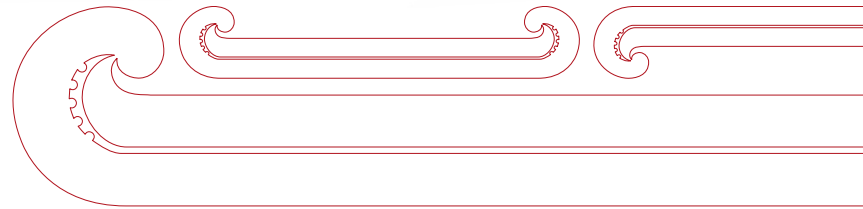
Talanoa as Methodology and Method

- However, they go on to state that for projects using Talanoa methodology: “in actually saying to ourselves” that specific data collection methods were talanoa sessions, “we seemed to be able to better keep on top of our minds the Pacific values” that are central to talanoa (p. 337).
- In other words, even if the ‘mechanics’ of a talanoa method do not differ greatly from an interview or focus group, there is still a very important difference.



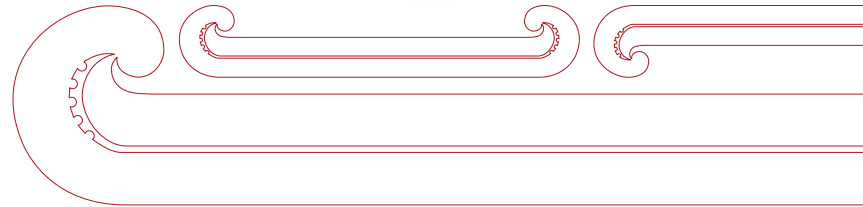
Talanoa as Methodology and Method

- In summary, even for Pacific scholars who accept the idea of combining Pacific and non-Pacific methods, the preference and encouragement is for the methods to be Pacific.



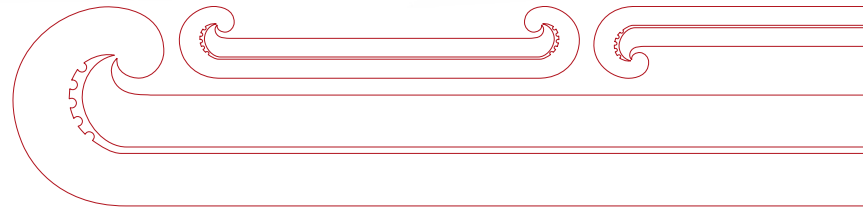
The Scope of Talanoa Methodology

- In contrast, researchers using Kaupapa Māori methodology often engage a wide range of research methods (e.g. interviews, focus groups). As Stevenson (2018) notes, “Kaupapa Māori does not inform how to carry out the research project” (p. 55) in terms of specific methods – or the use of aligned methodologies.
- This set of issues raises a key question for us within the MAP: whether or not to encourage combining a Talanoa approach (methodology) with non-Pacific methods.



The Scope of Talanoa Methodology

- If we do encourage combinations of methods in our teaching, it seems important to stress the need to maintain talanoa values and a Pacific world view throughout all aspects of the research -- just as a Kauapapa Māori researcher maintains Kauapapa Māori values throughout the research process.
- Quote from a Tongan MAP student's proposal



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