

The Case of Tapatoru: Building the Capability of Foundation Educators Through Professional Standards

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Anne Alkema

Abstract

This thesis is a story within which many stories are told. The central character is Tapatoru – a professional standards framework for foundation level educators. Tapatoru’s development, introduction and use are examined through several peoples’ stories – those who informed it, those who developed it, those who introduced it, and those who used it.

As this is a Doctorate of Professional Practice (DProfPrac), this thesis is also the story of my practice as a professional researcher. Telling this story has been more difficult than telling the stories of others as it is about what I research, how I research, why I research, and the reflective and reflexive processes used. It has been challenging to look inside myself and in the DProfPrac journey show this inside to others. He kokonga whare e kitea; he kokonga ngākau e kore e kitea – a corner of a house may be examined; not so the corners of the heart.

Launched in late 2018, Tapatoru incorporates three dimensions: Ō Tātou Uara – what we value; Ō Tātou Mōhiotanga – what we understand; Ā Tātou Mahi – what we do. The framework builds from work overtime in Aotearoa New Zealand and provides a clear and succinct articulation at the national level of the dimensions that contribute to foundation educator practice. Further it is the cultural underpinning and the placement of values at the top and the learner at the centre that makes this a distinctly Aotearoa New Zealand framework.

Given Tapatoru is new to the tertiary education sector, this research project provides the opportunity to gain insight into the contribution professional standards make to guiding, informing, and attesting to foundation-level educators’ capability. This was discovered through an exploratory case study with data drawn from literature, observations, interviews, artefacts, and ongoing personal communications with the developer and deliverer of Tapatoru.

Tapatoru was introduced at a time of uncertainty in tertiary education. Firstly, the Reform of Vocational Education (RoVE) and then COVID-19 arrived. Both these factors, along with the challenge of getting the sector to understand what a professional standards framework is, have contributed to lower uptake than anticipated.

However, the stories of the early adopters told in this thesis show the value of Tapatoru to them. Firstly, their recognition and articulation of Ō Tātou Uara – the values of whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, wairuatanga, and aroha and the ways in which these values allow educators to think about, build towards, or affirm their cultural capability. Secondly, the extent to which going through Tapatoru has enabled deliberate reflection-on-action, and for some, reflection-in-action in relation to their knowledge, practice, and values. Thirdly, the reflective commentary process for Tapatoru allows for articulation of practice in a way that has not been asked for previously. Combined, these three factors have enabled a broader understanding of what it means to be a professional in the foundation education sector in Aotearoa New Zealand. Given these findings, the value of Tapatoru to educators and organisations is in its use as a professional practice framework.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to foundation educators across Aotearoa New Zealand.

Acronyms

ACE:	Adult and Community Education
ALEF:	Adult Literacy Educator Fund
ALNACC:	Adult Literacy and Numeracy and Cultural Capability
CoVES:	Centres of Vocational Excellence
EER:	External Evaluation and Review
FAQs:	Frequently Asked Questions
HEA:	Higher Education Academy
HTW:	He Taunga Waka (professional development programme)
ILN:	Intensive Literacy and Numeracy
ITO:	Industry Training Organisation
ITP:	Institute of Technology and Polytechnic
MOOC:	Massive Open Online Courses
NCALNE:	National Certificate in Adult Literacy Numeracy Education
NCLANA:	National Centre of Literacy and Numeracy for Adults
NZCALNE:	New Zealand Certificate in Adult and Numeracy Education
NZQA:	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
NZQF:	New Zealand Qualifications Framework
PIAAC:	Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies
PLD:	Professional Learning and Development
PTE:	Private Training Establishment
RoVE:	Review of Vocational Education
RPL:	Recognition of Prior Learning
RSLGs:	Regional Skills Leaderships Groups
TEC:	Tertiary Education Commission
TEO:	Tertiary Education Organisation
TES:	Tertiary Education Strategy
TITO:	Transitional Industry Training Organisation
UKPSF:	United Kingdom Professional Standards Framework
WDCs:	Workforce Development Councils

Following Patricia Grace, (Catherall, 2021, May 8, p. 9) there is no Māori glossary in this thesis. Grace's reason for omitting a glossary in her 1986 novel, *Potiki* was, "I didn't want the Māori language to be treated as a foreign language in its own country." In 2021 I hold that this should be more than ever the case, given the recognition of te reo Māori as an official language under the Māori Language Act 1987. In line with this thinking, Hart (2021, May 10, p. 15) notes that as a nation we have moved away from being tokenistic users of te reo Māori as we have developed a deeper understanding of it and the insights it provides into te ao Māori.

Figures and Tables

Figure 1.1: Capability building eco-system	9
Figure 1.2: The Tapatoru Framework	13
Figure 2.1: Theoretical Position	23
Figure 2.2: Relational Practice Position	25
Figure 3.1: Data Analysis Approach	51
Figure 4.1: A Coherent Capability Pathway	58
Figure 4.2: ALN Effective Practice Model.....	64
Figure 4.3: Capability Building Model	74
Figure 4.4: Integrated Framework for Capability Building.....	79
Figure 5.1: Draft Tapatoru Framework Version One	83
Figure 5.2: Draft Tapatoru Framework Version Two	84
Figure 5.3: Ngā Āhuatanga.....	85
Figure 5.4: Tapatoru Cards.....	92
Figure 5.5: Use of Cards to Set Questions.....	94
Figure 5.6: Reflective Commentary Template	95
Figure 7.1: Education Ecosystem	122
Figure 7.2: Six Conditions of Systems Change	123
Figure 8.1: Practice Framework	147
Table 3.1: Example of Coding.....	49
Table 4.1: NZCALNE Enrolments and Completions.....	66
Table 7.1: Research Questions and Answers	137

Smith (October 12,2021) has granted specific permission for figures 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6 to be used in this thesis or any other related publications now or in the future, including online publications. Smith reserves the right to be acknowledged as the co-creator of the Tapatoru along with Dr Joe Te Rito and note that this work is licenced under the Creative Commons New Zealand non-commercial sharealike 4.0 international licence along with other Ako Aotearoa work.

Contents

Abstract.....	I
Acknowledgements.....	II
Acronyms	III
Figures and Tables	IV
Chapter One: Introducing the Story.....	5
Positioning research as storytelling.....	5
Motivation for a professional practice doctorate	6
The rationale: contribution to practice and knowledge	7
Practice	7
Knowledge	8
The educator ecosystem	9
The ecosystem in a time of change	10
The aim of this thesis.....	11
Tapatoru: What is being researched.....	12
Tapatoru: How it is being researched	13
The professional researcher as a researching professional.....	14
Thesis structure	15
Concluding reflections on the introduction	16
Chapter Two: Positioning Practice	17
Theoretical positioning.....	17
Learning	17
Theoretical underpinnings.....	19
Theoretical position	23
Practice positioning	23
Reflexive practice.....	24
Types of positionality	25
Unconscious positionality	25
Conscious positionality	30
Positionality and ethics	31
Positionality awareness and the need for reflexivity	32
Concluding reflections on positionality.....	34
Chapter Three: Research Approach.....	35
Introduction.....	35

Case study approach	36
Tapatoru as the case	37
Being kaupapa Māori informed	38
Methods	39
Data collection	39
Sampling method	41
Getting the Tapatoru participants	42
Sample size	42
Interview approach	43
Observations	46
Artefacts	47
Reflections	48
Data analysis	48
Validity/Validation	52
Triangulation	53
Strengths and points about which to be mindful in the research approach	54
Ethical process	54
Concluding reflections on the research approach	55
Chapter Four: Context Review - Other People’s Stories	57
Introduction	57
Review approach	58
Background	59
Educator workforce: values, skills, and capabilities	60
The compulsory education sector	60
The tertiary education sector	61
Defining capability	63
Setting the direction for capability building in foundation education	64
Building the capability of the foundation educator workforce	65
Formal Learning: qualifications	65
Non-formal professional learning and development for foundation educators	68
Approaches to capability building through PLD	72
Drivers for capability building	74
Professional standards	76
Concluding reflections on capability building	78
Chapter Five: The Story of Tapatoru – From Development to Delivery	80
The development of Tapatoru	81
Getting started	81

Developing Tapatoru.....	82
Tapatoru dimensions	85
Introducing Tapatoru to the sector	86
Getting the evidence collection processes sorted.....	88
Starting delivery: setting up the online Facebook groups	91
A framework for reflecting on practice	92
A second trial group arrives.....	96
Digital badges	97
A third trial group arrives	100
Concluding reflections on development and delivery	101
Chapter Six: The Story of Tapatoru Participants.....	103
The participants.....	104
Participant vignettes.....	104
Drivers for uptake.....	106
Drivers for Ara Poutama Aotearoa	106
Drivers for individuals.....	108
Achieving the Tapatoru award	110
Tapatoru award requirements.....	110
The reflective commentary.....	111
Referee attestation reports	114
Operating in the distance learning environment.....	115
Capability building and attestation	116
Ō tātou uara and cultural capability	117
Reflective practice.....	118
Articulating practice.....	119
The value of Tapatoru	120
Concluding reflections on participants' stories.....	121
Chapter Seven: Tapatoru Discussion – Making Meaning of the Stories.....	122
Introduction.....	122
How the system operates.....	123
Policies, practices, and resource flows	123
Relationships and mental models.....	124
The challenge of introducing professional standards	125
How professional standards can work.....	127
Tapatoru – more than a professional standards framework	128
Descriptors of educator capability.....	129
From description to practice.....	130

Attesting to practice	132
A reflective practice tool.....	134
A guide to professional learning	136
Answering the research questions	137
Concluding reflections on the impact	138
Chapter Eight: Professional Practice Discussion	140
From the beginning	141
In the middle	142
By the end.....	146
New framework of practice.....	147
Impact of the framework.....	148
Concluding reflections on my framework of practice	149
Chapter Nine: Conclusion – The Story for the Future.....	150
Getting to the research policy practice nexus.....	150
Widen the thinking about Tapatoru	150
Framing research practice	152
Further research.....	152
Concluding reflections.....	153
References	154
Appendix: Research Artefacts.....	174
Information sheet for Ako Aotearoa	174
Information sheet for education providers.....	177
Information sheet for educators	180
Question frame for educators.....	183
Primary data table	185
Tapatoru: Survey	187
Participant survey report for Ara Poutama Aotearoa	191
Tapatoru framework.....	191
Tapatoru process	192
Comment	193

Chapter One: Introducing the Story

The purpose of this chapter is to open the narrative, to provide information that aids in the understanding of my research project, and to show the direction this thesis will take. In this thesis, I tell the story of my research project - an investigation into the development and use of Tapatoru, a professional standards framework for foundation educators (Smith & Te Rito, 2018). I also tell the story of my professional framework of practice as a social science researcher that has developed through deliberate reflective (on action - after the event) and reflexive (in action - dynamic continuous, deep, and intentional) practices (Goldblatt & Band-Winterstein, 2016). These have occurred through the research project and in my wider work as a professional researcher.

In writing this thesis I position myself as the knitter of the narrative that combines my professional practice story with the stories of others, “woven and tangled in ever-changing response to one another” (Bateson, 2016, p. 67). I choose the knitting metaphor because of the role knitting has played for women in my family. Collectively, over time, I have seen my great-grandmother, grandmother, mother, myself, one of my daughters, and now one of my granddaughters knit. It is part of our anglo-celtic heritage (Nicholson, 1998). Knitting is practical. It requires technical know-how, the ability to read instructions and patterns, but also allows for creativity. This thesis is quite simply a cable-knitted narrative for which I take ownership of the construction and shape. The two strands of professional practice and research project each have their time in the foreground and background and in twisting together bring depth and strength to the story told in this thesis.

While the thesis combines both these stories, it is only a story that can be told through the willingness others have had to tell me their stories and share their insights into Tapatoru. Talking with others and “learning and reflecting on it” (Johns, 2010, p. 2) has taken me from the professional researcher I was at the start of the Doctorate of Professional Practice (DProfPrac) to the critical learning professional I have become as I put this thesis together. It has been a journey of reflexive criticality that has led me to better know the art and science of my practice and better be a values-led, social science researcher.

Framing this thesis as a series of stories that tell the ‘big’ story has been selected as the approach, as it “breathes life into the abstractions of philosophical pursuit” (Bateson, 2016, p. 64). It also takes me away from using the voice of the “disembodied omniscient narrator” (Richardson & St Pierre, 2005, p. 1413). However, I am mindful that Bateson (2016) also notes that stories can also be relegated to “fluff” and Diefenbach (2009, p. 876) argues that cases studies are “... nothing else but more or less interesting stories (fairytales) we are told.”

As this is a DProfPrac, I start this thesis by introducing my view of social science research, and my motivation and rationale for undertaking this doctorate. I follow this with an outline of the context in which it is undertaken, provide an introduction to Tapatoru, and the methods used in the research project. This chapter concludes with how this thesis is knitted together.

Positioning research as storytelling

Around two years ago my then nine-year old granddaughter said she wanted to be a scientist when she grew up. I explained to her that I was a scientist – a social scientist. She did not seem that

interested or impressed. I went on to say that this meant I talked to people, asked them questions, and then wrote their stories. Again, not much interest. A few months went by and she was staying with me when I mentioned I had to go to work. She looked at me, “But I didn’t think you worked. ... I thought you just wrote stories”. Two things resonate here. Firstly, she had remembered what I had told her about social science research (she might have been more interested and impressed than I had originally thought) and secondly, the idea that writing stories is not work.

But as those of us involved with all types of research know, writing and telling stories is our work. As researchers, we are storytellers who are privileged to be allowed into the lives of others (through personal interaction or interaction with their data) so that we might speak on their behalf, representing and re-presenting their views as ethically and responsibly as possible. We have a duty to tell stories in ways that resonate with audiences and grow their understanding of issues. Look how familiar the general population has become over the last year in the COVID-19 environment with the stories of genome sequencing and R-values, simply because a complex story has been well-told.

I currently hold a professional identity as a social science researcher and have worked over the last 11 years as an independent, self-employed contractor. My work, in the main, is to research and evaluate government policy, telling the stories of what happens for people, how they think and feel, what they would like to see more or less of, and what they value. I have worked in a range of fields including police, transport, emergency services, the volunteer sector, and education. It is the latter in which I am most interested, particularly in relation to adult education for those who are often referred to somewhat ironically as ‘second chance’ learners. I use the term ‘ironically’ given that many of these learners, due to their own circumstances and those of the education system, did not have a first chance.

Motivation for a professional practice doctorate

So, what motivated me to undertake doctoral study? Am I intrinsically or extrinsically motivated? Do I want to prove to others that I am ‘good enough’? Do I want to prove to myself that I can do this? Do I want to continue to grow and improve my research, reflective and reflexive skills? Do I want to give back to a community that has enabled me to work professionally as a self-employed researcher for the last 11 years? Do I want to give back to foundation level educators and learners who have allowed me into their lives over the last 11 years? The answer is probably a little bit of all of these.

Following Fenge (2010), I see myself as a practitioner rather than an academic. I have considered traditional doctoral study in the field of adult education for some time but have never found a topic that either completely interested me, or one that would make a new or original contribution to the body of knowledge in adult education. For example, I had talked with a university colleague about a doctorate in the history of adult literacy and numeracy in Aotearoa New Zealand, but ultimately to what end – and as it turns out this has been written (Walker, 2011). I thought about building from work on measuring literacy and numeracy practices (Coben & Alkema, 2017, 2018). However, Stephen Reder and New Zealand’s Damon Whitten are leaders in this field, and I follow their work closely (Reder, 2009, 2012, 2019, 2020; Reder, Gauley & Lechner, 2020; Whitten 2018a). Finally, I had considered workplace-based learning for workers with low literacy and numeracy skills, but I

have undertaken a considerable amount of work in this area (Alkema, 2020a). I also recognise that research on workplace-based learning has been well served nationally and internationally, for example, (Alkema & McDonald, 2014; Billett, 2001, 2004, 2015; Chan, 2011; Fuller & Unwin, 2004; Kerehoma, Connor, Garrow & Young, 2013; Vaughan, O’Neil & Cameron, 2011).

While much of my research has been in the foundation education field, I do not consider myself an expert. Simply rewriting what I have already said is of little value to me as a researcher, to educators and learners, or to government agencies who fund and set policy direction. I needed to find a topic new in the field of adult education. I also needed to professionally develop myself. To be a more informed researching professional I needed to look at my own practice within the specific context of a research project for, “it is only in practice - in the fabric of everyday doing of living lives - that knowledgeability, reflection, changing understanding comes about. In theory of practice, knowledgeability follows *from* practice, not the other way around (Martire & Lave, 2016).

The rationale: contribution to practice and knowledge

Serendipitously two things occurred. A colleague mentioned CapableNZ had introduced a DProfPrac and suggested it could be something I pursue. Here was the type of doctorate that went beyond the theoretical nature of a traditional doctorate. It is applied, workplace-based, and allows me to explore, reflect, and continue to grow as a social science researcher. At the same time, Ako Aotearoa launched Tapatoru. This provided the context that enabled me to tell the story of something new in the field of adult education -a professional standards framework for foundation educators. This then gave me the opportunity to be a researching professional within the context of being a professional researcher.

Being a social science researcher who investigates her own practice within the context of a research project means there are interwoven, cable-knitted stories to be told with contributions being made to the research profession, the workplace, and academic theory (Fulton, Kuit, Sanders, & Smith, 2012). As this thesis unfolds, the stories of practice, process, and product are revealed.

Practice

Undertaking a professional practice doctorate within the context of foundation education provides the opportunity to contribute new knowledge to both the practice of research and to the capability-building of educators in the foundation education sector. It is “the development of professional practice within the real-world context, taking into account all of the ambiguities, issues, complexities and difficulties which this implies ...” (Fulton, et al., 2012, p. 131).

This dual process of describing, developing, and evolving a framework of professional practice, described in Chapter Two, reshaped in Chapter Eight and nestling unspoken in the intervening chapters, along with conducting research has been more challenging than anticipated. Growing up in a Pākehā, working-class family we were not encouraged to talk about ourselves or our achievements. The culture of cutting down tall poppies in Aotearoa New Zealand means we are further conditioned to say little about ourselves. As the whakataukī says, Kāore te kūmara e kōrero mō tōna ake reka – the kūmara doesn’t speak of its own sweetness.

However, on this doctoral journey I have realised that articulating practice does not mean talking about my own sweetness. Rather it is about being transparent about what I research, how I research, why I research, and the reflective and reflexive processes used. It has been challenging to look inside myself and in the DProfPrac journey show this inside to others. He kokonga whare e kitea; he kokonga ngākau e kore e kitea – a corner of a house may be examined; not so the corners of the heart.

Research is often considered to be academic and theoretical, with product taking precedence. How it is produced seemingly happens within a black box, with the practice and processes relatively closed off. Even with fellow research colleagues, apart from those with whom I am working in teams, I do not often talk about the technical aspects of a research project. I tend to talk about the interesting people I interview rather than the methods used to do this, or why I chose a particular interview method. Yet, borrowing and extending from Schön (in Thompson & Thompson, 2008), the practice of a social science researcher, while being academically and theoretically underpinned, is part science and part art.

The science is driven by the rigour of the processes used, from the setting of questions, the data needs, the sampling processes, the methods used to collect data, and the methods used to analyse the data. All these factors aid the integrity and credibility of qualitative research. The art comes from relationships established with commissioners, research teams, and participants in the research. It also comes with the coding and theming of data, and the writing up or presenting of research in a way that resonates with intended audiences, while at the same time doing justice to the stories of the data and the participants.

Knowledge

Alongside evolving practice comes the contribution to knowledge about building the capability of the foundation teaching sector. A review by Alkema, McDonald, and Whatman (2017) concluded the overall approach to capability building in the foundation education sector in Aotearoa New Zealand lacked coherence. This, in turn, had led to sector confusion about how professional learning offerings fitted together, how they might best be combined, and the extent to which they enhance the foundation teaching sector's capability. We also concluded the approach was confounded by system issues related to funding mechanisms and compliance; a lack of overarching guidance for capability building; and the overall diversity of the foundation tertiary teaching and learning system.

One of the factors contributing to the lack of coherence was the lack of a mechanism to describe practitioner capability and thus a platform from which to build professional learning pathways. Building from the work of the New Zealand Productivity Commission (2017) we recommended that a professional standards framework for foundation educators would provide such a platform.

We also thought the advantage of establishing such a framework is that it describes capabilities and allows practitioners to navigate their way from novice to expert through a combination of their own professional learning, external professional development, and qualifications. It would also serve as an organising framework for aligning all professional learning activities – so there would be a coherent capability-building pathway. While the field of foundation education is well known, the

literature (see Chapter Four) and my experience of working in it, show there are still gaps in knowledge at the point of educator practice and the differing ways capability can be built, for example through qualifications, Professional Learning and Development (PLD), informal learning, and reflective practice.

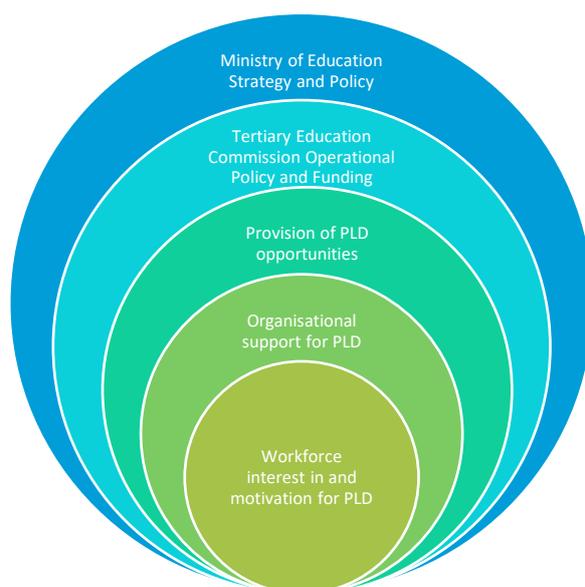
Given my involvement with the recommendation to government I have a real interest in following the Tapatoru framework from development to delivery, and to explore how it is used and the extent to which it contributes to growing the capability of those working in the adult education sector. It is also of interest given the lack of professionalisation in the adult teaching sector along with the fact that little has been done in Aotearoa New Zealand generally in relation to professional standards in the tertiary education sector (Suddaby, 2019).

The educator ecosystem

At the outset, and as the story of Tapatoru unfolds, we need to take cognisance that the foundation education workforce is nested within a wider tertiary education ecosystem and as such is dependent on other players in the system to afford those in this workforce opportunities to learn, practise, and grow. The system operates on three levels – the macro (government level); the meso (organisational level); and micro (educator workforce level).

Each layer of the system needs to interact to effect change and there needs to be relationships across the layers of the system (Kania, Kramer, & Senge, 2018; Lowe & French, 2021). At the macro and meso levels this is about the provision of enabling conditions and the development of relationships with each other and with those at the micro level. At the micro level, educators need to engage with the meso level and professional learning opportunities, and also develop agentic behaviours that enable them to make decisions about their own learning and practice (Kania, et al., 2018; van Wijk, Zietsma, Dorado, de Bakker, & Marti, 2019).

Figure 1.1: Capability Building Ecosystem



(Source: Researcher created figure.)

The outcomes for foundation learners are dependent on all parts of the system working together. The literature in Chapter Four highlights the role and impact a capable educator workforce has on these learners. As such, learners are not included in the ecosystem outlined in this thesis. Rather, they are the recipients of quality education that occurs when the parts of the education capability building ecosystem work together.

The system can also be thought about as a market with supply and demand sides. Here supply is by government who makes enabling (or not) policy and provides funding for

professional learning opportunities. Demand comes from the education workforce - organisations and individuals who want to build their capability.

This research project aims to inform each layer of the system about how a capable educator workforce can be built. It may not lead to change (unless all levels of the system align), but it can help to specifically inform the extent to which Tapatoru might guide capability building and more generally inform the role of professional standards frameworks in capability building. Groups from each level of the system may be interested in the findings from this project.

- The Ministry of Education as the government ministry that owns the Tertiary Education Strategy (TES) and as the policy setter.
- The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) as the Crown Agency leading the Government's relationship with the tertiary education sector. TEC funded the development of Tapatoru, and funds ongoing capability development through qualifications and PLD and is required to give effect to the TES.
- The Adult Literacy and Numeracy and Cultural Capability team at Ako Aotearoa who deliver PLD to the foundation education sector.
- Tertiary Education Organisations (Wānanga, Te Pūkenga, Private Training Establishments (PTEs), Transitional Industry Training Organisations (TITOs), Adult and Community Education (ACE) providers) who will be looking to support the development and capability building of their foundation educator workforces.
- Individual members of the foundation education workforce.

The ecosystem in a time of change

Tapatoru was introduced at a time of enormous change in the vocational education sector which overlaps with the foundation education sector. This change arrived in the form of the Review of Vocational Education (RoVE) which saw the unification of 11 Industry Training Organisations (ITOs) and 16 Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITPs) into one organisation, which came to be known in 2020 as Te Pūkenga.

Announced in February 2019, the Minister, Chris Hipkins, described the ITP sector as “broken”. The ITPs had “lost \$53 million in 2017” with four of them having received \$100 million in bailouts in 2018. The proposed reform also looked to address “weak governance and management capabilities” (Hunt & Redmond, 2019, February 14). While Hunt and Redmond’s reporting of the announcement focused on the negative terms, Minister Hipkins’ own press release (2019, February 13) was far more positive. The strong labour market meant it was time to “reset” and “rethink” how vocational education is delivered. He recognised the proposed change is “ambitious” and that the new approach will bring about increased consolidation of programmes and consistency across the country.

The consultation process from 13 February to 5 April 2019 showed there was not an overly strong mandate for the changes Hipkins proposed (Ministry of Education, 2019). Nevertheless, the changes went ahead and over the last two years we have seen, in addition to Te Pūkenga, the introduction of

Workforce Development Councils (WDCs), Te Taumata Aronui, Regional Skills Leadership Groups (RSLGs), and Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs).

In relation to this research project, while the structural changes and introduction of new organisations and systems are expected to address the problems Hipkins describes, the reforms are silent on the capability of the sector to deliver quality vocational education. Ako Aotearoa (2019) was clear in its submission to the Ministry of Education for the RoVE consultation, that the lack of detail in the reform proposal was a cause for concern in several areas, one of which was the lack of attention to teaching and learning. To mitigate this, Ako Aotearoa (2019) urged that a parallel stream of work be set in place in the transition phase to focus on quality teaching and learning. It proposed two ways to do this:

- The implementation of professional teaching and learning standards.
- Incentivising practitioners to take up professional learning and development programmes.

Despite Ako Aotearoa's recommendation there are limited references to capability building as part of the transformation process. Buried on page 44 of a 64-page consultation findings document, is the idea that capability building needs to "be part and parcel of the transition stage, rather than post-transition" (Ministry of Education 2019, p. 44). Looking back at this statement two years after the release of the consultation report and the standing up of the various new organisations, I find no evidence that capability building has formed any part of the conversations I have had, papers I have read, or presentations I have been to about RoVE. It is still absent in work on the operating model announced on March 29, 2021, which will provide the blueprint for how Te Pūkenga will operate.¹ However capability building is referred to in Te Pūkenga's recent research (2021, p. 10) in relation to the role it has "to maximise learning potential".

The aim of this thesis

Given the motivation and rationale for this doctorate, this thesis aims to tell the story of how Tapatoru guides and informs capability building in the foundation education sector. I started the DProfPrac with the working hypothesis (akin to a proposition) that Tapatoru would do this. In order to substantiate, or disprove this, I explored: how Tapatoru was being used to inform capability building; the organisational and individual drivers for its use; and the barriers and enablers to its use.

My key finding is that while Tapatoru does guide capability building it does not do so in the way I had anticipated. I had expected it would be used to guide practitioners' professional learning in relation to new knowledge and practice. Instead, it has been used by the sample in this research as a tool that has enabled them to investigate and describe their practice and become truly reflective practitioners. It has acted as a professional practice framework rather than a professional standards framework.

¹ See Te Pūkenga, (March 29, 2021) <https://xn--tepkenga-szb.ac.nz/news/category/News/what-is-the-operating-model>

Tapatoru: What is being researched

Launched in late 2018, Tapatoru is a four-level framework that describes the capabilities foundation education practitioners need in order to develop the knowledge and skills of foundation level learners. These people are learning in:

- community settings through ACE
- workplace settings for literacy and numeracy programmes and level 1 - 3 industry training qualifications
- PTEs for adult literacy and numeracy and some level 1 - 3 qualifications
- Wānanga for literacy and numeracy (English and Te Reo) and level 1 - 3 qualifications
- subsidiaries of Te Pūkenga for level 1 - 3 qualifications.

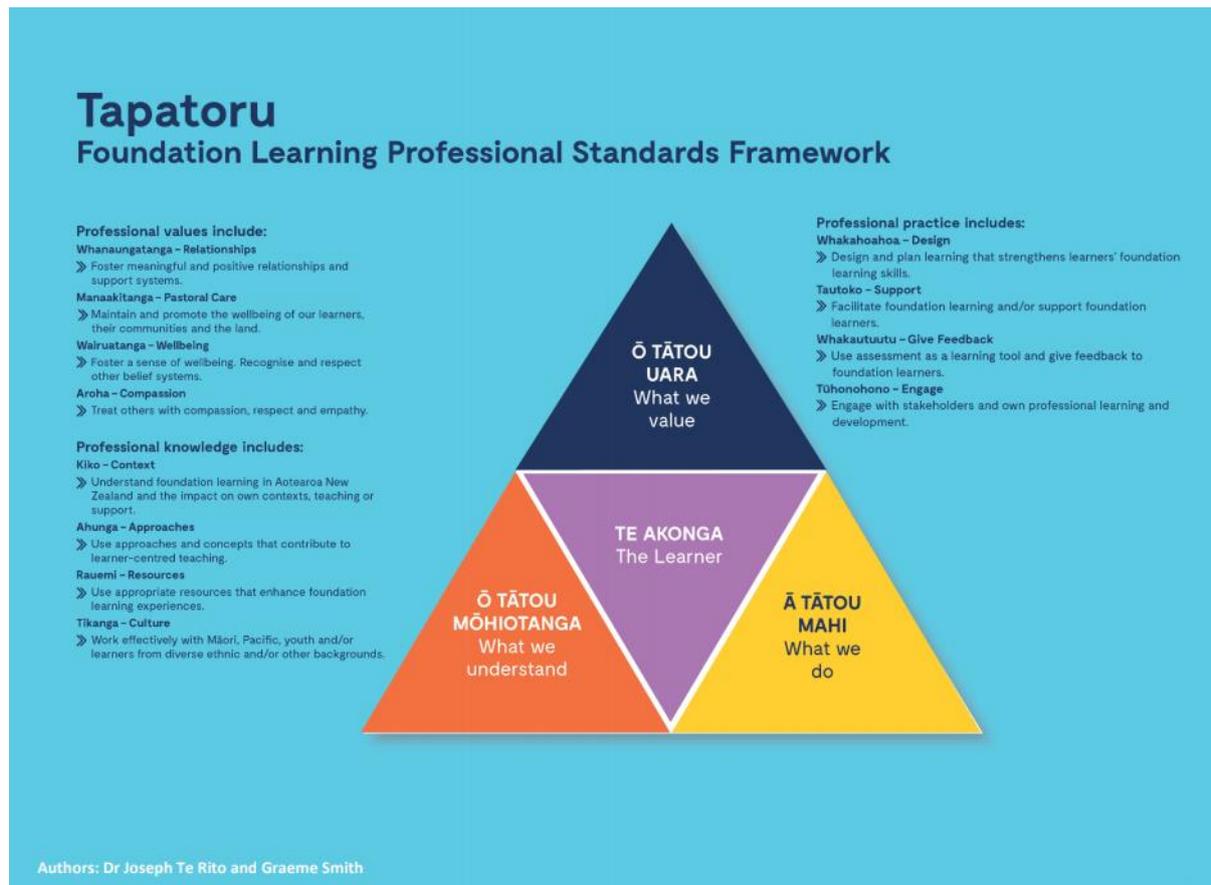
The four papa (skill levels) of Tapatoru are designed to cover the range of roles in the sector. For example, the first level is for those who are providing support for learners, such as training advisers in industry training contexts, librarians or student support staff in Te Pūkenga; the fourth level is for those who are directly delivering and/or managing adult literacy and numeracy programmes in tertiary education settings in PTEs or subsidiaries of Te Pūkenga.

Each of the papa is an award built around the dimensions of Ō tātou uara; (what we value); Ō tātou mōhiotanga, (what we understand) and Ā tātou mahi (what we do). The descriptors of each of the papa are expected to guide professional learning along with guiding the evidence practitioners submit for a Tapatoru award (Smith & Te Rito, 2018, p. 6).

While this professional standards framework is similar to those for foundation educators in England and Scotland, it is the cultural underpinning and the placement of values at the top and the learner at the centre that makes this a distinctly Aotearoa New Zealand framework.

The cultural underpinning of Tapatoru is the proverb, 'Hūtia te rito o te harakeke' which represents caring and nurturing – values that teachers need. The Tapatoru triangular shape is reminiscent of the growing tip of the flax plant. "Hūtia te rito o te harakeke, kei hea te korimako e kō? Kī mai ki ahau he aha te mea nui o te ao, Māku e kī atu, he tangata, he tangata, he tangata" If you pluck out the centre shoot of the flax, where will the bellbird sing? Ask me what the greatest thing in this world is, And I will say, it is people, people, people (Smith & Te Rito, 2018, p. i).

Figure 1.2: The Tapatoru Framework



(Source Smith & Te Rito, 2018, p. 15. Ako Aotearoa. [Creative Commons CC BY-SA 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/))

Tapatoru: How it is being researched

This research uses an exploratory case study approach (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2009, 2014). This is used to explore ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions and to allow for explanation and description based on different perspectives and interpretations (Merriam 1998; Yin, 2009, 2014). Data were gathered between late 2018 through to early 2021 in several ways, including: interviews, a small survey, Facebook posts, emails, portfolios of evidence, observations, Tapatoru artefacts, and my learning log. These methods are described in Chapter Three, along with changes that had to be made given the impact on the vocational education sector of RoVE and the impact of COVID-19 on the delivery of professional development. The following questions guided the research.

How does Tapatoru, the professional standards framework for foundation educators in the tertiary sector, guide and inform the capability building of this sector?

- How is Tapatoru being used to inform capability building?
- What are the organisational and individual drivers for the use of Tapatoru?
- What enables and inhibits organisational and individual use of Tapatoru?

The term ‘capability’ is used throughout this thesis given it is the term used in Tapatoru. “Each papa or skill level describes a broad set of practitioner capabilities encompassing a wide variety of roles

and integrating the three dimensions of the standards” (Smith & Te Rito, 2018, p. 6). Here then, capability is about having the capacity to or being able to, for example, commit to professional values, engage with teaching practices and professional learning (Smith & Te Rito, 2018, p. 12). While there is the temptation to see the dimensions of Tapatoru as competencies – the skills and knowledge to perform the roles, they are not a discrete and fragmented checklist (Bowen-Clewley, 2016) in that, it is the practice of the dimensions that makes them capabilities.

... capability is a much more holistic, integrating, creative, multidimensional and fluid phenomenon. Whereas most conceptions of competence concentrate on assessing demonstrated behaviours and performance, capability is more about what is going on inside the person's head (Scott, Coates, & Anderson, 2008, p. 12, in Scott, 2016, p. 44).

Lester’s description of capabilities and competencies is in line with this thinking. While both competencies and capabilities are about being able to do, assessing capabilities is a more challenging process as “it has a know-it-when-you-see-it property that cannot easily be translated into standards and specifications ... [they are] less normative or prescriptive ... encompassing competence but going beyond it in a number of ways” (2014, p. 37). In relation to Tapatoru, while not overly problematic, putting portfolios of evidence together based on the capabilities, combined with its newness, meant there were no benchmarks to guide the early adopters, some of whom wanted more transparency in relation to the assessment process. This is further discussed in Chapter Seven.

The professional researcher as a researching professional

Along with the story of Tapatoru, this thesis also tells the story of my developing practice as a researcher. It describes and explains the changes associated with developing, articulating, and adopting a slightly altered framework of practice to that I had envisaged at the outset. These changes in the main have occurred as a result of more reflexive thinking. They have been enabled by the freedom of researching a context of my choosing in a way that I choose. This flexibility means process and practice sit along-side product as being of equal importance. This does not happen in my world of work where product takes precedence for commissioners of research.

Describing my practice is more challenging than telling the story of Tapatoru. Maybe this is because I do not want to, nor am I used to, exposing the corners of my heart. Or it might be, as Johns (2010, p. 16, citing Rinpoche, 1992, p. 31) suggests, “We don’t really know who we are or what aspects of ourselves we should identify with or believe in.”

As a professional researcher, I am used to telling the story of others. Here I can remove myself, or thought that was what I did. However, reflecting on theoretical positioning for this doctorate has led to deeper thinking about positionality and how I situate myself in relation to research participants and the subject matter, how I build new knowledge in an interpretivist and constructivist way, and how I re-present this as research findings. Reflectivity has developed into reflexivity. This reflexive approach has developed and become part of my way of working as a researcher. Now I am aware of and can articulate how my “social background, assumptions, positioning and behaviour” (Roulston, 2010, p. 116) and “my personal characteristics or theoretical vantage points” (Fujii, 2017, p. 1) impact on my practice. I now know that “as a researcher there is no escape from the self” (Roulston, 2010, p. 127).

My learning log has helped me chart this story and serves as data for this thesis. It captures 'aha' moments from reading and practising as a researcher. It also captures the highs and lows of the DProfPrac journey.

Have had time to reflect over the week and after some reading concluded that the ethics application process is not just hoop jumping, but a way for me to articulate the ethical practices I use and the considerations I take during a research project. It was good to talk with Martin about this. The RoL assessment came through while we were talking. Passed by two reviewers, but the third reviewer wanted more detail about the changed frame of practice that will happen during the DPP. Not too bad a result as it was a minor addition and am holding on to reviewer three's comment, "I recommend a Pass for this piece of work – a most interesting, delightful, thoughtful read" (February 11, 2019).

Been worried about this case study thing after reading the Pearl Smith article on case studies. Just feel sick at the thought of having to redo the methodology. However - I think what I've come up with in terms of restating what the cases are will work. Will see what M&M think. ... Good conversation with M&M and talked about the practice part as illuminating practice - looking underneath self (October 8, 2020).

Thesis structure

The story in this thesis is knitted in the following way. Chapter Two is my story as I lay out my framework of practice. It tracks my theoretical and practice positioning as a social science researcher and the framework of practice I held at the outset of the DProfPrac. The chapter also charts the shifts that have occurred as a professional researcher becomes a researching professional. Here I surface and describe the complex and sometimes messy process of learning in practice. I also explain the reflexive practices used in my work as a researcher generally, and the extent to which these practices have developed during this professional practice doctoral study.

Chapter Three describes the exploratory case study research approach, the rationale for it, and the multi-methods used for primary data collection. The story in this chapter charts the trials of working in a real-world context with the challenges of putting the theory of research into practice, the challenges of working in a disrupted context - RoVE, followed by COVID-19, the challenges of a research project where there was little uptake of the subject to be researched – Tapatoru, and the adaptations that had to be made along the way.

Chapter Four is the context review. In essence it is other people's stories about how to build capability in the foundation education sector. These are national and international stories told through research and evaluation, policy statements, and professional standards frameworks. The chapter works from the premise that there are three broad factors contributing to educators' capability - professional standards describe capability; PLD builds capability; and professional learning communities enhance and sustain capability (Smith & Te Rito, 2018, p. 4).

Chapter Five is the story of Tapatoru from development to delivery. It is an important story to tell given this is likely to be the only place in Aotearoa New Zealand where this is written. I describe the challenges of the development of the framework and the way it moved from an essentially English model to being indigenised for Aotearoa New Zealand. I also describe Tapatoru in more detail along with the processes required for achieving the award. While it is the story of Tapatoru it is also

Graeme Smith's story as the developer and person with responsibility for delivering it. Smith has granted permission to be named throughout this thesis and has reviewed the findings in Chapters Five, Six and Seven.

Chapter Six is the participants' stories. Here the early adopters describe their rationale for starting on Tapatoru and tell of their experience of going through the Tapatoru process. What they say contributes new knowledge about what it means to be a foundation educator and how to articulate practice based on the dimensions of Tapatoru. This description is then extended to further explanation of the role values and reflection play in the practice of foundation educators.

Chapter Seven takes the 'what so' of the stories in Chapters Four, Five and Six and turns this into the 'so what'. Using a system lens as the analytical framework, I provide my view and narrative about the development and delivery of Tapatoru and the enabling and disabling factors that contributed to the low uptake. I also examine the extent to which there is sufficient evidence to say the proposition set out into Chapter Three holds – that professional standards support and guide the capability building of the foundation education sector. This chapter also proposes some alternative ways of thinking about Tapatoru and its potential to be used more widely in the foundation education sector.

Chapter Eight picks up from Chapter Two and comes back to my story. This is about the change that happened as the professional researcher became a researching professional. It shows how, over three years of reflection in and on action, my thinking about how I research changed. This in turn impacted on the practice itself and allows me to define a new framework of practice.

Chapter Nine is the summary statement which looks at the way forward for Tapatoru and how this might be achieved. It also outlines how my professional practice framework might be further developed.

Concluding reflections on the introduction

In this introduction I have set the direction for this DProfPrac thesis. I have outlined the context of the research project - an investigation into the development and use of Tapatoru, a professional standards framework for foundation educators (Smith & Te Rito, 2018). I have also outlined my view of social science research, and my motivation and rationale for undertaking this doctorate.

This introduction is the preface to the story of the introduction of Tapatoru and to the story of a researching professional who is endeavouring to be honest about the practice of research. Along the way I have realised that in the process of this study and in putting this thesis together I am mirroring what the Tapatoru participants had to do in their portfolios of evidence. Interviewee Seven sums this up when she says,

But how do we know what is right in this story of Tapatoru. We don't until we start getting feedback, we don't know what we've done is actually okay, whether it is too much on the surface, whether it is too deep, too long, too wordy ... (Interviewee 7).

Chapter Two: Positioning Practice

The previous chapter opened the narrative of this thesis by outlining the stories that are to be told. It positioned research as storytelling, introduced Tapatoru, and placed the story of capability building in the foundation education sector within the wider tertiary education system.

This chapter builds from the introduction and in cable-knit fashion, brings the story of my framework of practice to the foreground. The purpose of this chapter is to continue the narrative established in the introduction. It is the story of my theoretical and practice positioning as a professional researcher and the framework of practice I held at the outset of the DProfPrac. I start by describing what learning means for me and the learning opportunities I have experienced. This is followed by underpinning theories that help me to learn, along with the critical reflective and reflexive practices that contribute to this.

The chapter then charts the shifts that have occurred as a professional researcher becomes a researching professional through doctoral study. It enables me to surface and describe the complex and sometimes messy process of learning in practice. It also explains the reflexive practices used in my work as a researcher generally, and the extent to which they have developed during this professional practice doctoral study.

The overall intention of this chapter is to demonstrate awareness of prior knowledge and practice, to provide a firm foundation for the model of practice at which I arrive, and which is further described in Chapter Eight. While it has been challenging, the process allows me to make sense of myself, my professional practice, my professional identity, and the world in which I work.

Theoretical positioning

Learning

To begin I establish what ‘learning’ means for me and, as it has turned out, for those in this research project who went through the Tapatoru process. In relation to my learning, I borrow from Jarvis (2010) who takes learning beyond the cognitive and incorporates elements of affective domains, experience, and social practice.

The combination of processes whereby the whole person – body (genetic, physical and biological) and mind (knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, emotions, beliefs, and senses) – is in a social situation and constructs an experience which is then transformed cognitively, emotively or practically (or through any combination) and integrated into the individual person’s own biography resulting in a continually changing (or more experienced) person (2010, p. 39).

This definition resonates with me as it incorporates knowing, doing, and feeling, using head, heart, and body, so they come together to enable change and growth. It goes beyond the more traditional theories of adult learning that deal, in the main, with the cognitive aspects of learning (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 1998). It also resonates with kaupapa Māori approaches to ako, described in Kerehoma, Alkema, Murray, and Ripley whereby, “[teaching and learning happens in a] holistic way that acknowledges employees’ culture, their way of thinking, and their values. ... [It] allows for

recognition that learning is about the cognitive, affective, and emotional domains - ako, manaakitanga, and wairuatanga” (2019, p. 5).

Recent work in Aotearoa New Zealand (Brice, 2020) also highlights the importance of the affective domain in learning and the need to acknowledge and connect with the emotions of learners. While Brice relates this to second-chance learners, I believe this is applicable to learners wherever they are on their learning journey. Brice (2020, following Pihama, Greensill, Manuirangi, & Simmonds, 2019), uses the term kare-ā-roto, meaning “ripples within ourselves that are the physical and spiritual manifestations of how we understand and feel emotions.” Brice terms this a “pedagogy of emotion” (2020, p. 172).

My learning happens in formal, non-formal, and informal ways (Merriam & Bierema, 2014). Jarvis (2010, p. 42) describes these ways as happening in “intended and incidental situations”. Formal learning is usually associated with classrooms (virtual and real). It is also associated with learning that occurs in workplaces in structured and deliberate ways (Billett, 2004). My early thinking was I would go to school and then university and be filled with knowledge and skills and set for life on some sort of career path. Little did I know that along the way I would have career changes and dip in and out of formal learning when I felt the need to know more, do my job better, or for credentialing purposes.

However, in keeping with lifelong learning research (Kanwar, Balasubramanian, & Carr, 2019; OECD, 2021), in my life’s personal and professional trajectories formal learning has been but a small part with non-formal, for example workplace training/professional development courses, conferences, and professional reading taking more time than formal learning.

But it is informal learning that is tacit and integrative (Merriam & Bierema, 2014), that is self-directed and self-determined (Kanwar et al., 2019), that occurs through watching, listening, talking, and doing (Billett, 2001) that has taken most time. This watching, listening, talking, and doing is incidental. It is how I reflect on and evaluate what happens, or what I did, including the critical incidents, that turns it into learning. This in turn improves and/or creates new knowledge and practice (Cartmel, 2011; Fook, 2015) and helps to make meaning from the experience. It is from this meaning-making that theories (with a small “t”) of practice are drawn.

I sometimes think of smaller “t” theory as a kind of vernacular theorization; the hypotheses that people form when they go about making meaning in their everyday lives, when something causes them to think, “how can I classify this incident?” “Is it like this other experience that I had or is it different?” This seems to me to be a practical everyday work of theorization. So, I’m very drawn to this idea of levels of theoretical register. I think that is a helpful way of understanding theorization as a form of practice (Béres et al., 2011, p. 87).

My long life of learning has been a tuakana-teina process where the tuakana expertise has come from various people – academics, colleagues, learners, friends, and family; and from various places – school, university, work, and community. When the learning process is examined more closely, as it has been for this DProfPrac, I recognise it is underpinned by learning theory.

Theoretical underpinnings

The two theories of social cognitivism (Bandura, 2001) and constructivism (Dewey, Piaget, & Vygotsky, in Merriam & Bierema, 2014) are salient to my way of becoming and being a social science researcher. These theories operate within the epistemological system that has been established through being a Pākehā and educated within a eurocentric education system that has privileged my ways of knowing and being. The DProfPrac journey has provided the opportunity for me to reflect more deeply on this and recognise it has given me the foundation on which to build knowledge and also to question my ways of knowing and doing. The DProfPrac has also helped me recognise and articulate my underpinning value-base of social justice and equity.

Social cognitivism

Bandura's (2001) theory of social cognitivism provides a framework to describe my career development and career choices. Here there has been intentionality and forethought in that I have been motivated to achieve outcomes for myself, and to work in research, policy and practice settings in professions that make a difference for learners in schools and tertiary education settings (including workplaces) in Aotearoa New Zealand. This process has incorporated elements of self-regulation and reflection. Over time, through successes and failures, I have developed a sense of self-efficacy, which Bandura (2001) sees as central to people being able to persevere and bring about change as a result of actions.

Agency is the enabling factor here. Bandura (2001) notes the factors associated with agency, namely intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness, and self-reflectiveness. Each of these plays out as I seek new knowledge or ways of working as a professional researcher. Borrowing from Bandura (2001, pp. 6-10) intentionality occurs as "proactive commitment" to improving practice; forethought comes with deliberate goal setting, which in the case of this DProfPrac is to develop as a professional researcher by being a researching professional; self-reactiveness means giving shape to intentions and forethought, being self-directed and undertaking new learning; and finally, self-reflectiveness, whereby I reflect on what I have done and the impact it has on me, while also recognising the impact my actions have on others. In the case of professional research, and this research project, this is about the impact of my actions through all stages of the research process. These factors can be seen at play in the research approach and findings chapters of this thesis.

Whitten (2020) talks about agency as a sense of feeling empowered or enabled to do something. From a personal perspective this is driven from a range of personal and professional factors, the contexts and environments in which I live and work, and the successes and failures I have had in learning, life and work. As Whitten notes,

People are not viewed as wholly shaped by their environments, societies, situations or circumstances but are able to comprehend, predict and modify their actions to alter the course of events, override environmental factors, and purposely shape their life outcomes for the better (2020, p. 10).

While I have a sense of personal agency, this operates within the social structures/systems within which I work and live. Here I give effect to what Bandura (2001, p. 13) describes as "proxy agency", where I have worked through others to achieve outcomes, and "collective agency", where I work in

teams to achieve outcomes and where there is a sense of 'collective efficacy'. This is evidenced in the *Moving to Conscious Positionality Vignette* later in this chapter.

Constructivism

The description above is the cognitive perspective from Bandura (2001), but he sees this as only part of the picture and locates learning within a triangle – learning, the person, and the environment – that sees these aspects as engaging with each other (Bandura, 1986, in Merriam & Bierema, 2014). His approach has relevance for research wherever it is conducted - in workplaces, communities, and tertiary education settings. Here I have learnt through observation or from others in mentoring or expert/novice - tuakana/teina arrangements where the concepts of ako and whanaungatanga play out.

Connected to this idea of learning happening in the interaction with the environment is the constructivist perspective whereby I make meaning from experiences within a range of contexts. This means learning with the tools of the job and from interactions with others. Merriam and Bierema (2014, p. 36) note this approach draws from a number of theorists including, "Piaget, Dewey, and Vygotsky." This is in keeping with Lave and Wenger's (1991) social practice theory that sees people learning in social spaces - work, home, community - with others all the time. It also aligns with Fook (2015) and Martire and Lave (2016), who work from the idea that it is practice and deliberate reflection on it that makes for new knowledge and new theories.

Both social cognitivism and constructivism theories work from the premise that learning happens individually and collectively. Building from Coben and Alkema (2017, 2018) and Vaughan, O'Neil and Cameron (2011) who follow Billett (2001), learning has two extant factors. Firstly, the capacity an individual has to engage with learning - their personal attributes (e.g., motivation, persistence, self-efficacy, confidence); their ability to engage (i.e., their skills and knowledge); and their agency (the control they have to act independently, intentionally, and take action in situations).

Secondly, the opportunities individuals are afforded in the workplace to develop as professionals and practitioners of their craft. As Billett notes, "The moment-by-moment learning ... occurring through everyday engagement at work is shaped by the activities individuals engage in, the direct guidance they access and the indirect contributions provided by the physical and social environment of the workplace" (2001, p. 210). As a professional in workplace environments I have been afforded opportunities that those less privileged than me do not have access to. This is in keeping with Billett,

Those with higher levels of education are afforded greater levels of learning support at work and are afforded opportunities for higher levels of learning through their work. ... So here it would seem that levels of educational achievement are affirmed as a predictor of opportunities for learning through work and across working life (2015, p. 226).

These affordances sit within the frame of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984). Kolb's theory sees learners going through four stages, "concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation" (in Dyke, 2017, p. 25). Here learning happens, not from just the primary experience alone, but by thinking about it, reflecting on it, or turning it into

action. This thinking is at the heart of Fook's work (Fook, 2015; Fook & Gardner, 2007) whereby it is the thinking about concrete practice that enables the development of practice theory.

Later work by Jarvis (in Dyke, 2017) critiqued Kolb's model stating learning does not happen in such a linear or cyclical way. In my experience this is true. The stages are circular and iterative and happen in individual social contexts, through interactions with artefacts and people, and through reflection.

... learners are capable of moving freely between concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation. [And] reflection can occur simultaneously with action as 'reflection in action' – it need not occur simply after the event as 'reflection upon action' (Dyke, 2017, p. 25).

Learning through the 'd' concepts

This 'reflection in action' approach comes from Schön (1983). It is the process whereby practitioners understand and look at their practice while they are engaged in it. Practitioners call on their in-depth knowledge, improvise, and create new ways of doing things. Schön calls this "professional artistry" that comes about when there is an experience of surprise or discomfort. The surprise and discomfort concepts build from a range of theorists who variously describe these states as, "disequilibrium" (Dewey, in Miettinen, 2000), "disjuncture" (Jarvis, 2010), "dissonance" (Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, & Fung, 2007), "unsettling" (Fook & Gardner, 2007).

Jarvis (2010, p. 104) talks about learning happening when there is, "disjuncture". He views this as creating conditions for learning and an enabling learning environment. Jarvis (2010, p. 112) follows Mezirow for whom "discordant" experiences or life crises establish learning sequences. Here I take Jarvis, (2010), following Mezirow (1997) to mean deep and transformational learning that leads to changed thinking and subsequently changed practice. This aligns with Fook and Gardner who use the term "unsettling" to describe the process that can be used in critical reflection.

In this sense, it is important that the assumptions be unsettled in a way that is in fact experienced as unsettling for the individual participant involved. In other words, there needs to be a degree of discomfort or unease in order to motivate learning (2007, p. 17).

I would suggest, but do not have proof, that what I am calling the 'd concepts' outlined above, are perhaps true of agentic learners who have had positive learning experiences. However, my work with adult foundation-level learners suggests the 'd concepts' are the last things these learners need when embarking on new learning journeys. Adults in foundation level learning have not felt comfortable with learning or in learning environments. Their common experience is one of feeling confronted by learning experiences, not feeling part of education environments, and a subsequent checking out from them (Benseman, Sutton, & Lander, 2005; Brice, 2020; Whitten, 2018b). These negative learning experiences, especially for Māori and Pacific Peoples have resulted in "learning trauma" leaving people "feeling dumb or being anxious around learning environments" (Kerehoma, et al., 2019, p. 24). The 'd concepts' do not align with Kaupapa Māori values-based approaches, such as those in Tapatoru – whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, wairuatanga and aroha. Working with these values sees educators place learners in comfortable and affirming learning spaces.

However, the intersection of some successes in learning and having learner agency means I have the capacity to work through disjuncture, disequilibrium, discordance, discomfort, and being unsettled when I experience ideas and practices outside my cultural norms, or when things do not go as expected or planned, or do not align with previous assumptions. While these terms possibly mean the same for the theorists, I see them on a continuum with disjuncture being a more critical experience than that of being unsettled.

Dealing with the 'd concepts' and the often-associated messiness is something I have to work at. I recognise I am quite process driven and want things to go to plan. As a professional researcher I have had to learn to adjust during research projects and to deal with the messiness of theory in practice and the surprises that happen along the way. This is further described in the following chapter and in Chapter Eight. Undertaking this DProfPrac has allowed me to understand this messiness, the accompanying surprises and discomfort a bit more, and recognise the practice and knowledge growth that develops from it. It has also helped me to understand that working my way through mess is an art, as it encourages more reflection in action on what is happening and why, along with thinking about what is going to happen as a result of this.

Reflective and reflexive practice

Knowing about learning and recognising its theoretical underpinnings comes through reading, interaction with others, and reflection. Reflective practice is a complex and contested space, with the practice having multiple meanings (Finlay, 2008; Moon, 2007; Johns, 2010). In this work I follow the critical reflective lens of Fook (Béres et al., 2011; Fook 2015; Fook & Gardner, 2007), "So, critical reflection is making meaning from experience through a process of unearthing assumptions, particularly fundamental assumptions about power, but somehow, doing that gets us back to learning from experience" (Béres et al., 2011, p. 86). I also follow Johns, whereby critical reflection grows out of experience and what is done with this. "Reflection is essentially concerned with being in the world (ontological) rather than doing (epistemological) ... the act of reflection on experience is an experience itself" (2010, p. 6).

This thinking on reflection resonates with me given its connection to social practice theory that is integral to my ways of learning and growing as a social science researcher. Following from these theorists:

- reflection is deeper than popular notions of 'thinking'
- critical reflection is based on an understanding of the individual in social context and links between individual and society
- critical reflection is both a theory and a practice
- critical reflection links changed awareness with changed action (Fook and Gardner, 2007, p.16).

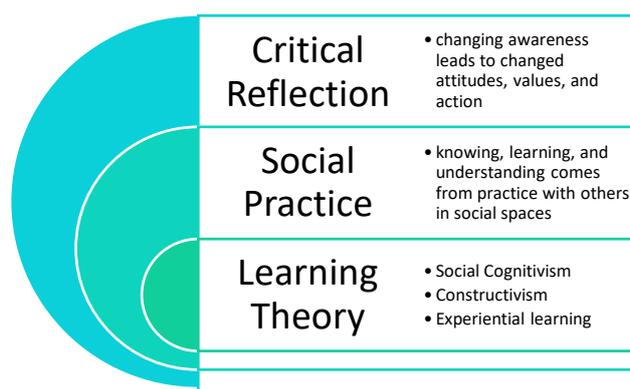
It is reflective practice that has encompassed my theoretical position at the outset of the DProfPrac as shown in Figure 2.1 below. However, as this chapter and the thesis progress, it reveals the story of a transformative process that sees critical reflection develop into reflexivity – a process by which I pay attention to and acknowledge the role I have in the research process. "Research reflexivity

refers to the researcher’s ability to be able to self-consciously refer to him or herself in relation to the production of knowledge about research topics” (Roulston, 2010, p. 116); “Reflexivity is ... not just about developing greater self-knowledge, but is about developing practice through a more critical knowledge and understanding of the role of power relationships within the structures and institutions in which we work” (Fenge, 2010, p. 651).

Theoretical position

As stated above, I am socially and culturally constructed as Pākehā, female, from a working-class background. Through formal, non-formal, and informal learning I have had the opportunity to self-construct who I am and how I live and work. I acknowledge I have been afforded a formal education most of which incorporated a eurocentric, te ao Pākehā world-view. Alongside this, as a research professional, I recognise I have needed to question the values, beliefs and assumptions that come from growing up with that world-view (Brookfield, 2003) and when I critically reflect, take cognisance of Dewey’s thinking and be “conscious of the layers of cultures weaved in the observations. They can be prejudices and carriers of the circumstances of past time, therefore being an obstacle for sensible action in the present circumstances” (Miettinen, 2000, p. 63).

Figure 2.1: Theoretical Position



(Source: Researcher created figure.)

In summary, from a theoretical perspective, my *becoming* and subsequently *being* a social science researcher has happened by learning through and with others in a range of settings, using a range of approaches. It has happened through practice and interaction with peers and experts. And it has been encompassed by critical reflection and growing reflexivity that enables me to think deeply about what I have done, considering what has happened while at the same time trying to be cognisant of my own cultural and social subjectivities.

Practice positioning

Conducting social science research does not happen from a neutral standpoint or from an objective perspective. As Tett (2019, p. 16) notes, “there are no views from nowhere” and both researchers and research participants bring their values and thinking to what is being investigated. Ideas about reality, truth, and knowledge differ depending on the epistemological stance of individual researchers (Cunningham & Fitzgerald, 1996) and the multiple perspectives and realities of the research participants and research teams (Patnaik, 2013). “Positionality is thus determined by where one stands in relation to ‘the other’. More importantly, these positions can shift” (Merriam, Johnson-Bailey, Kee, Lee Ntseane, & Muhammad, 2010, p.411).

Reflexive practice

Reflecting on theoretical positioning for this doctorate has led to deeper thinking about positionality and how I situate myself in relation to research participants and the subject matter, how I build new knowledge in an interpretivist and constructivist way, and how I re-present this as research findings. Reflectivity has developed into reflexivity.

Being reflexive involves a continuous internal discourse, exploring questions such as 'What do I know?' and 'How do I know this?' ... [It] is both a state of mind and a practice ... [and] leads to deepening ... understanding of the self and others (Goldblatt & Band-Winterstein, 2016, p. 101).

Reflexivity would be an ability to understand yourself in your own social location, understanding how you as an individual influence your location and vice versa. It is also about how you make yourself in context. How do I understand myself in relation to other people? (Béres et al., 2011, p. 90).

This reflexive approach has developed and become part of my way of working as a researcher. Now I am more aware of and can articulate how my "social background, assumptions, positioning and behaviour" (Roulston, 2010, p. 116) and "my personal characteristics or theoretical vantage points" (Fujii, 2017, p.1) impact on my practice. I know now that "as a researcher there is no escape from the self" (Roulston, 2010, p.127). It is not surprising then that Palaganas, Sanchez, Molintas, and Caricativo (2017) and Goldblatt and Band-Winterstein (2016), note that reflexivity is a significant and essential component of qualitative research practice. "Reflexivity is qualitative researchers' thoughtful and self-aware examination of the intersubjective dynamics between themselves and study participants, evoking insightful understanding of others" (Goldblatt & Band-Winterstein, 2016, p. 100).

There are always views or pre-conceptions (conscious, unconscious, unchecked) at the start of research projects and these can change and shift as projects progress, as evidence is gathered, and data are sifted and re-sifted. However, there is no denying that who I am, where I have come from and my epistemological stance influence choices and decisions I make throughout the research process. This also includes the conclusions I draw, regardless of whether, at the outset, I hold an unconscious or conscious position on the topic. This aligns with Malterud's thinking.

A researcher's background and position will affect what they choose to investigate, the angle of investigation, the methods judged most adequate for this purpose, the findings considered most appropriate, and the framing and communication of conclusions. Contemporary theory of knowledge acknowledges the effect of a researcher's position and perspectives, and disputes the belief of a neutral observer (2001, pp. 583-484).

Halliwell, (2010, citing Willing 2001) talks about this as personal reflexivity and epistemological reflexivity. Here the former involves reflecting on the ways in which who I am – my beliefs and values - impact on the research process. With epistemological reflexivity I reflect on the approaches to the research, for example, the questions I ask, the assumptions I make and the subsequent impact this has on the research (Palaganas et al., 2017).

What is important, is the process of reflexivity that occurs throughout the course of a research project whereby I acknowledge my position(s), views, and pre-conceptions. Patnaik (2013) refers to

this as introspective reflexivity. This in turn has the potential to open thinking to a wider range of ideas and possibilities. This acknowledgement ‘unsettled’ me to start with as I have not previously thought about my researcher self as a valid form of data or the extent to which that self has the potential to influence what I do and what I find. As with Fenge (2010) the DProfPrac journey has provided the impetus for putting an increasingly critical lens on my work – why I do it, how I do it, and for whom I do it.

Given that much of my work is commissioned by government agencies and used to inform policy, there has been a requirement for the research to be seen to be as objective as possible. Also, I want to conduct research in a rigorous way and be seen as (very) capable in the fields within which I work. In addition, as an ethical researcher, I want to be able to represent the voices and experiences of the research participants and re-present these in as true a way as possible.

Such positionality is deeply influenced by my family background and the notion that, as noted in the previous chapter, *Kāore te kūmara e kōrero ana mō tōna ake reka* – the kūmara does not speak of its own sweetness. It is not that I am overly humble or modest or shy in coming forth with ideas – I am thrilled when my thinking is picked up and used to inform policy and/or practice. Rather, in my professional world I have never thought that the overt, seemingly self-centred, subjective voice of Anne Alkema has a contribution to make.

Figure 2.2: Relational Practice Position



(Source: Researcher created figure.)

Given this thinking, reflexivity shifts my thinking in relation to operating in the real world of research. Here, following Doucet (2007, p.74) and her three gossamer walls, “the thin and tenuous lines that exist in research relationships,” I am more cognisant of the research process as the interaction and connections that the researcher-self has with the research commissioner and/or audience, and the participants/phenomenon. Relationships develop and shift over the course of projects and require understanding and acknowledgement of positionality that influences my thinking and interpretations of research participants’ stories.

Types of positionality

As Merriam et al. (2010) note, positionality is not fixed. It moves and shifts with experience and a growing understanding of the contexts in which we work. The vignettes below set out different positionings from my work as a professional researcher and serve to exemplify that if I am aware of my position then I am able to manage this within the research I do.

Unconscious positionality

In terms of the researcher-self, Doucet’s (2007) thinking is that researchers do not always know what drives our research and that hidden influencers come into play as the research progresses. This

thinking is supported by Walshaw (2008) when she talks about the idea that the 'real' identity or 'true self' is an illusion. Such unconscious positionality occurs when as a researcher, I know nothing, or little about a topic, think that I hold no particular view on it, and go into a research project believing that I am taking a totally objective stance. This is despite knowing that I have a theoretical positioning kākahu sitting around my shoulders. Walshaw (2008, p. 327, citing Pink, 2001, p. 21) provides the possible reason for this. "The identity of any individual comes into being in relation to the negotiations that it undertakes with other individuals." In the case of the vignette below, my 'self' emerged in an unexpected way as literature was explored.

Unconscious positionality vignette

In 2011, I was commissioned by the International Labour Organisation to conduct a literature review to inform the organisation's policy on pacific seasonal workers' migration to New Zealand and Australia (Alkema, 2012a). Fairly new in my role as an independent contractor, I wanted to be seen as a rigorous, capable, and objective researcher.

Not being steeped in the literature or subject area, I read widely using key word searches related to migration and followed this with the snowball method of checking the reference lists of publications. With the latter lies the potential for unchecked bias as, while on the one hand I could argue that I was looking for as many and as wide a range of views as possible, I need to acknowledge that sometimes I was more drawn to the literature that was not as positive about the outcomes for workers as it was for employers.

Like much of my research, it kept me awake at night, kept me paralysed from writing as I looked for the next piece of research that would provide the definitive answer, and filled my head with images of vulnerable people having to work away from their home country and families. Finally, drawing on the evidence provided in over 80 pieces of literature, I had to put pen to paper.

While I did not take cognisance of, or articulate it at the time, the social-justice perspective, based on my thinking that workers were being 'ripped off' had likely affected, in Doucet's (2007) hidden influencer way, the choices I made about the literature to use in the review and the final conclusions I drew. At the time temporary migration schemes were touted as 'win, win, win' for the employer, the migrants, and their home countries. However, I concluded that the schemes were not quite like this, and more attention needed to be paid to reintegration services for home countries to achieve the economic benefits touted by the temporary migration schemes.

This vignette highlights the challenge of seeming objectivity in qualitative, social science research. As a researcher I am affected by the views I hold even if I do not recognise their influence at the time. Here reflecting on epistemological stances is important. But it is also important to be open to the idea that I cannot 'see' everything during a research project. As Doucet notes,

There may be limits to reflexivity, and to the extent to which we can be aware of the influences on our research both at the time of conducting it and in the years that follow. It may be more useful to think in terms of 'degrees of reflexivity' with some influences being easier to identify and articulate at the time of our work while others may take time, distance and detachment from the research (2007, p. 77).

Doucet’s point is worth noting in my research work in the field of adult education where I have been closely involved with national policy development – both in informing it and reviewing it. I must take care to ensure that I am open to new ways of thinking and be prepared to let go of old ideas. This has happened during the research project at the centre of this thesis. I had expected Tapatoru to be taken up by practitioners in certain ways. It has not been. So, as the research project story in this thesis shows in the findings and discussion sections, I have had to let go of old ideas and make way for new ones.

Moving to conscious positionality

As already noted, positionality is not fixed and can shift over time and through experiences (Doucet, 2007; Fujii, 2018) and research projects themselves can lead to positionality shifts in relation to the phenomenon (Merriam et al., 2010). Here there are some pre-conceptions based on prior knowledge and these move and change, as research projects progress and I work in teams with other researchers. For me, working cross-culturally has provided the mechanism for rethinking where I sit in relation to other cultures. Being conscious of my te ao Pākehā world-view, has been critical to widening my understanding when working with other researchers and with culturally diverse research participants. As such it helps the process of self-construction.

In 2018/2019 I worked in a research team with Māori and Pacific researchers on the *Hinātore* project (Kerehoma et al., 2019) as we investigated how and why Māori and Pacific employees in lower-skilled jobs engage with workplace learning. Working in a team with Māori and Pacific researchers in what Barnes (2013) describes as praxis-related research brought about changes to my thinking and actions about research for and with Māori and Pacific Peoples.

As an ‘external-outsider’ conducting research in a community different to that in which I was raised (Merriam et al., 2010) it also caused me to challenge my positionality, cultural norms and ways of working as a researcher in keeping with Barnes (2013) and McIntosh (2011).

Moving to conscious positionality vignette

Along with interviews with employers, employees and educators, the Hinātore project involved observations of employee training sessions. To help the different researchers collect similar data we built on the work of others² and designed an observation framework. This was based on akoranga (teaching and learning strategies), manaakitanga (relationships), rangatiratanga (learner engagement), wairua/mauri (spiritual/emotional connection), and whānau/aiga empowerment (family empowerment) and the practices that exhibit these.

While the field work was conducted, in the main, by Māori and Pacific researchers on the team, on occasions I had the opportunity to join them. This served to highlight how differently we view the world.

² The observation framework built from: The *Te Kotahitanga* Observation Tool (Berryman & Bishop, 2011); the kaupapa Māori wellbeing assessment model *Hei Ara Ako ki te Oranga* (Hutchings, Yates, Isaacs, Whatman, & Bright, 2013); Professor Sir Mason Durie’s *Te Whare Tapa Wha* model (Durie, 1994, in McNeill, 2009); and Fuimaono Karl Pulotu-Endemann’s *Fonofale* model (2001).

Sitting in a training room observing a Māori facilitator run a session that included four Māori employees, I was mentally ticking off akoranga and the strategies being used and the considerable engagement of the learners. Then it dawned on me, “Was my fellow Māori co-researcher seeing this session in the same way?” In short, after a conversation, the answer was “no”. While I was busy ticking off cognitive aspects, my co-researcher was more taken by and looking for the values that underpinned the facilitation approach. Here whanaungatanga, manaakitanga and wairuatanga were the important aspects for him.

Conversations with my co-researcher and reflections on this experience have grown my understanding about the importance of connecting to adult learners through what in Pākehā terms we see as emotional and affective domains and the limitations of drawing only on teaching and learning strategies which are, in the main about the cognitive domain.

Making sense of this from a te ao Pākehā perspective has allowed me to use this as a reference point to grow my knowledge and understanding of kaupapa Māori thinking and approaches in my research practice.

Enabling the positionality shift

The vignette above highlights what McIntosh (2011, p. 63) calls the “conundrum of interpreting difference across a cultural divide”. Throughout the *Hīnātore* project I needed to be able to re-position myself through a sense-making process in which I drew on previous knowledge and developed new knowledge. I am still not sure of the extent to which I can describe myself as culturally competent, but the approach is akin to cultural competence definitions in the health sector offered by Curtis, Jones, Tipene-Leach, Walker, Loring, Paine, and Reid (2019, p. 8), with “cultural competence as a continual process of striving to become increasingly self-aware, to value diversity, and to become knowledgeable about cultural strengths.” It is also a process of “respectful and effective engagement with people of different cultures” (Parton, in Alkema, 2016a, p. 4).

I was enabled to grow my cultural competence through working with incredibly open Māori and Pacific researchers who provided a safe space for discussions about cultural interpretations and what the findings meant for them. As a cross-cultural team we operated as a community of practice in which we truly and deeply engaged with each other, produced new knowledge and made artefacts together (Wenger, 2010). The artefacts included: a report (Kerehoma et al., 2019); a journal article (Alkema, Kerehoma, Murray, & Ripley, 2019); and a good practice guide (Skills Highway, n.d.).

Earlier in this chapter I talked about learning through episodes of surprise, discomfort, or disquiet. However, the *Hīnātore* project was not a learning experience like this. It was more akin to Andrew and Le Rossignols’s (2017, p. 229) “unfurling” as I was able and enabled to widen my cultural knowledge and understanding. The ‘abling’ came from making connections to the learning theories of social cognitivism and constructivism that underpin my practice.

The ‘enabling’ came from each researcher on the *Hīnātore* project team openly acknowledging their cultural lens and subsequently how this informed data capture, interpretation and analysis, and reporting. As a Pākehā/palagi I undertook very little data collection. Firstly, because I did not think I was sufficiently culturally competent. Secondly, because of the power dynamics and perceptions I thought research participants would have of me as a cultural outsider and the impact this would

have on the ways in which they told their stories. As McIntosh (2011) notes, it is important to do this, because we need to take note of what we know, or do not know, about people and acknowledge the impact this has on research and the participants. However, what Hepi, Foote, Marino, Rogers, and Taimona (2007, p. 40) say is important is, "...that the researchers are trustworthy, and that they build credibility through their integrity as people and by their actions, whether they be indigenous or not, bi-cultural or not."

In the *Hīnātore* project, data interpretation and analysis was a challenging and interesting process. My role in the team was to develop the first coding frame. After two days of putting data in boxes based on the project observation framework, I realised, while this approach was one way to do it, it simply did not do justice to the data. It was leading to a reductionist and narrow view of what was happening for Māori and Pacific workplace learners. Above all, it did not incorporate a kaupapa Māori way of thinking and working.

From further discussions as a research team we drew on Māori cultural perspectives and took a more holistic approach to thinking about what the data meant. Here Cain Kerehoma's thinking came to the fore and the thematic framework of *ako, mahi, whānau* was born (Kerehoma et al., 2019, p. 15). As it turns out changing the data analysis approach is not unusual in qualitative research.

... Although researchers might also begin the qualitative content analysis process with pre-existing coding systems, these systems are always modified in the course of analysis, or may even be wholly discarded in favor of a new system, to ensure the best fit to the data (Sandelowski, 2000, p. 338).

Changing the approach gave us wider scope for describing what was happening and enabled us to tell a story about *ako, mahi* and *whānau*, and the interaction of them that led to successful outcomes for Māori and Pacific Peoples. We then sense-checked this thinking at a hui with some of the participants and their *whānau/aiga* to test the extent to which the findings resonated with them.

Can I get 'inside' the perspectives of Māori and Pacific Peoples in a deeply connected and spiritual way? I cannot. "Māori cultural epistemology ... the implicit understanding that Māori have a distinct way of viewing and interpreting the world" (Baker, Pipi & Cassidy, 2015, p. 118) means I am an outsider. However, what I can do is appreciate the perspectives and openly acknowledge my limitations when working with people from cultures other than my own. As Mikaere says,

When you think about it, there is nowhere else in the world that one can be Pākehā. Whether the term remains forever linked to the shameful role of the oppressor or whether it can become a positive source of identity and pride is up to Pākehā themselves. All that is required of them is a leap of faith (2011, p. 119, in Barnes, 2013, p. 25).

I can also recognise that there are other ways of seeing, thinking about, and talking about the world. As researchers in Aotearoa New Zealand we need to realise there is a role for cross-cultural teams to advance the thinking about what can work in Māori (Bishop, 1996, in Hepi et al., 2007) and Pacific communities. I have been privileged to be part of such a team.

I fully acknowledge that I am a novice in the field of kaupapa Māori approaches and the risks associated with being a novice. While I note my growing cultural competence that occurred in the

Hīnātore project, it is something I have needed to work on as this research project unfolds. As Curtis et al., note,

Cultural competency is not an abdominal exam. It is not a static requirement to be checked off some list but is something beyond the somewhat rigid categories of knowledge, skills, and attitudes: the continuous critical refinement and fostering of a type of thinking and knowing—a critical consciousness— of self, others, and the world (2019, p. 11).

Conscious positionality

Conscious positionality happens when as a professional researcher I go into a research project knowing I hold a position based on both who I am and the knowledge gained through practice.

Conscious positionality vignette one

Around a year after the Hīnātore project finished, I was asked by an organisation working on a Māori action research project to help them with their milestone reporting which had been rejected by the funding organisation. I was familiar with the work in this project and prior to the Hīnātore project would probably have unquestionably accepted this. However, knowing I do not walk in two worlds I had a discussion with the organisation about whether I was best placed to do this. I agreed to the work given the knowledge I had of the project and the fact that what was required by the funder was some research language to wrap around the milestone report. In my learning log I noted my reaction to the rejected milestone.

I am incensed that [funder] rejected it. Based on a very Pākehā notion of, firstly what counts as evidence in a project such as this and secondly, that they had not looked more closely at the report and accompanying material provided and seen that the answers were there. This makes me think about what counts as reporting. [The project] has a wonderful booklet - photos and info shared with the communities on the awa. Also has a Facebook page seen by so many people, e.g., one page 160 people. How many other projects have this sort of visibility within their communities? ... (Learning log, December 12, 2020).

While my work as a professional researcher led to the conscious positionality in the case above, working on doctoral studies has led me to critically examine my position in relation to what has been my main area of research - adult foundation level education.

Conscious positionality vignette two

Over several years I have been working on the reach (the number of learners who go through programmes) and impact of the Tertiary Education Commission's (TEC) Workplace Literacy and Numeracy (WLN) Fund which supports around 7000 employees a year to undertake training in workplaces (Alkema, 2015; Alkema, 2016b; Alkema, 2017; Alkema 2020a, 2020b; Alkema, 2021; Alkema & Murray, 2019, 2020; Skills Highway, 2018). Evidence is gathered through: quantitative data on the reach of the fund; qualitative data on the impact of the fund through written documentation that some employers are required to provide to the TEC; and through interviews with employers and employees. I am not involved with setting the parameters of what data are collected and how, but I do determine, based on the evidence needs of the sector, the coding framework and the lens to put across the data, which subsequently influence the story that is told.

I now recognise I take a (relatively) subjective stance, driven by my theoretical positioning related to social justice and equity, and by the impact I have witnessed on employees who are attaching to and engaging with learning for the first time in their lives. However, it is done under the guise of objectivity and herein I really have to reflect on the literature I select that supports (or negates) the argument that is run, the way I analyse and re-present findings, and the extent to which there is a need for greater transparency in relation to this.

For me as a professional researcher the subjectivity/objectivity conundrum has previously been a point of tension. It is as Walshaw states,

In understanding the subjectivity of the researcher, the subjectivity of the participants, and the intersubjectivity of the two, out of which the research account is produced, other factors are crucially important. The place of emotions is a case in point. What needs to be emphasised here is that the concept of the authorial self, held in place so that the voice might surface, has been found wanting (2008, p. 326).

Reflexivity helps to resolve some of this tension (Olukotun, Mkandawire, Antilla, Alfaifa, Weitzel, Scheer, Olukotun, & Mkandawire-Valhmu, 2021). Also, in the process of “unfurling the self” for this doctoral study (Andrew & Le Rossignol, 2017, p. 229), I have realised that there is no need for this tension and have recognised that the ‘self’ is ever present. And as long as there is cognisance of the self, then that is acceptable. This is a new way of thinking for me as a professional researcher and has influenced my most recent report for the TEC whereby my colleague and I placed ourselves overtly in the research through the use of the pronoun ‘we’ and through sections entitled ‘reflections’ throughout the report (Alkema & Murray, 2021).

Positionality and ethics

Whatever position I hold as a researcher, ethical behaviour needs to be at the forefront of what is being done. Here I am guided by the practices and behaviours in the Social Policy Evaluation and Research Unit’s (2015, p. 18) code, namely, “care, respect, inclusion, protection”. My ethical approach is detailed in the methodology chapter, but in relation to positionality I need to recognise the informal mandate I have been entrusted with.

The most fundamental privilege all researchers enjoy is being allowed into other people’s worlds. Being granted time by participants is a privilege, not a right ... she may not control how a given session unfolds, but she does control how she treats people, interprets their stories, draws inferences, writes up her findings, protects identities, and decides what and where to publish (Fujii, 2018, p. 91).

What a responsibility. Based on experience I would extend Fujii’s (2018) thinking to what is done with data – how and where it is stored, and how and if it is shared. Over the years and across numerous research projects I have only once been asked for the raw data. The request came from a government agency who did not commission the research but had requested the research be done. It was jointly funded by two other organisations. Towards the end of the project the government agency asked for the raw data to check that we (the research team) had interpreted the data in the ‘right’ way. Despite considerable pressure, as we had not sought permission from the interviewees to share their data, we declined to hand it over on ethical grounds. We did offer a compromise in the

form of a cached, anonymised data set that a government agency researcher could access on our premises. The compromise was declined.

This ultimately impacted on the view the government agency and the funders had of the research team. We made no friends in the process. However, I still hold that not handing over the raw data was the right and ethical thing to do. And as for the final report ... it was well received by the government agency, the funders, and the sector.

Positionality awareness and the need for reflexivity

Awareness of positionality comes about through a process of constant reflection in and on action to determine how I locate myself in the practice of the research. This ongoing process of reflexivity (Fenge, 2010; Fook, 2015; Fook & Gardner 2007), the personal and epistemological reflexivity approaches, provide the space for critical thinking about where I stand in relation to the research commissioners, the purpose of the research, the topic, the participants, the data I collect and the ways in which I do this, the data analysis approach, and then re-present it as findings as a form of 'truth'.

However, reflexivity is not a straightforward process and as noted above, there are degrees of it. In relation to reflexivity, Webster (2008, p. 65) describes it as a "slippery concept" and talks about the multiple forms and multiple purposes it takes. Here he perhaps follows Lynch's (2000, p. 26) thinking that reflexivity can be confusing because of the ways in which it is viewed and talked about and argues for a simple way of framing it. "... 'reflexivity' is not an epistemological, moral or political virtue. It is an unavoidable feature of the way actions (including actions performed, and expressions written, by academic researchers) are performed, made sense of and incorporated into social settings."

Malterud (2001) and Johns (2010) use the metaphor of reflexivity as a "mirror" that needs to be held up so there is open acknowledgement of how knowledge is built throughout the research process. This is in keeping with Patnaik (2013, p. 100) who talks of the need for self-awareness in the research process and the need for researchers to turn an "investigative lens" on themselves as they reflect on what they know and how they know it. The *Hinātore* project described above is an example of this. Throughout the two years of the project, I started by connecting my existing knowledge to cross-cultural forms of knowledge and then in turn was able to contribute, in a small way, to new ways of thinking about workplace learning for Māori and Pacific workplace learners.

In addition, Malterud (2001) holds that reflexivity impacts on research in that the position or motives researchers hold affect how they approach a topic. She also thinks that such positioning should be acknowledged at the outset and shared in discussions of the strengths and limitations of the research process and findings. From a practice perspective this point is worth noting for my own work. While I usually include a strengths and limitations section in reports, this tends to apply to data sources and data collection methods rather than where I stand in relation to a particular phenomenon and the extent to which data collection and analysis are impacted. I have never positioned myself in a study, until my most recent work (Alkema & Murray, 2021) and considered the impact that I have as a participant in the process.

This positioning is comes from undertaking a considerable amount of work for government agencies who, possibly driven off the positivist paradigm, have come to expect that research be as objective, or be seen to be as objective as possible. From the world of quantitative research, they want findings with validity, reliability, and generalisability. My experience of working with staff in government agencies suggests some of them are not yet ready to understand and accept constructivist frameworks related to trustworthiness that is established through criteria such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (King & Horrocks, 2010; Patnaik, 2013).

Nor do they want to see a researcher's voice in reports. I am mindful of questions from commissioning reviewers over the years when I have used phrases that include a point of view such as, "an interesting point to note" or, "it is disappointing that." Here their comments have been along the lines of, "interesting or disappointing for whom" or questioning my right to make value statements, seeing these as subjective interpretations in relation to findings. However, I am sensing change is in the wind. In my most recent work for the TEC there is stronger acceptance of the researchers' views as being a valid form of data.

Starting out in my career as a researcher I thought objectivity was at the heart of the matter and that all research had to be approached in this way; that research questions were set and then answered through various data collection methods and re-presented as objective truth and reality. I have realised over the last two-three years of my practice as I work on the DProfPrac that this is not the case - and does not need to be.

Rather, the concept of truth and reality is socially constructed. At all phases of the research process, I am subjected to the socially constructed reality of research participants which I then place within my own reality in accordance with my theoretical positioning. This is not necessarily a negative, but in the process, there needs to be acknowledgement of this, so that the concept of truth is seen in light of this:

Directing enquiry towards the self is central to the researcher's bringing out the inter-subjectivity inherent in qualitative work. From an examination of how one's values and attitudes influence the choice of topic to an exploration of the epistemological foundations of knowledge claims, reflexivity at each stage is central to contributing to the richness of the research and contributing to its credibility (Patnaik, 2013, p. 98).

Achieving reflexivity

The metaphor of the "mirror" noted above is sound if I can really see myself as I am. But a mirror is a self-reflection and reflexivity requires more than this with the challenge being, how do I know I am truly being reflexive. Am I reflexive because I say I am? As Robinson notes,

The reflexive capacity of the researcher to shape interviews, assess power relations and prejudices relies upon the ability of the researcher to know the shape and limit of her own subjectivity as well as then be able to work with problems ... (2002, p. 5).

As such, reflexivity happens in the moment when as a researcher, I am aware of my subjectivity, acknowledge my prejudices about certain theories or schools of thought in education, and temper questions in relation to this. Research is not an adversarial process, rather it is a process of enquiry

that allows participants to tell their stories, without them needing to hear mine. This, for me, is a work in progress.

Concluding reflections on positionality

At the beginning of this chapter, I noted that telling this story of self was harder than telling the stories of others. While this is true in terms of exposing who I am as a researcher, it has also provided the opportunity to tell the story of developing from a reflective to a reflexive practitioner through the DProfPrac process, along with the extent to which this has impacted on my practice over the last two-three years.

For the first time in my career as a professional researcher I have taken the time to deeply interrogate and subsequently articulate my practice. Here I have been able to surface my position and the extent to which it influences everything about the research process. It has also given me permission to articulate my-self in the work I do. The extent to which this will be accepted by commissioners of research is yet unknown. But perhaps as Richardson and St Pierre (2005, p. 1415) note, “readers (and reviewers) want and deserve to know how the researchers claim to know.”

But the big questions remain. How do I know I am being reflexive? Am I reflexive just because I say I am? Is reflexivity that virtuous? The first two questions are relatively easy to answer in that I follow Goldblatt and Band-Winterstein,

Accordingly, reflexivity is a critical approach, exposing beliefs and ideologies that subject the research to a scrupulous examination when formulating the research questions, choosing the methodological approach, as well as selecting data collection techniques and data analysis (2016, p. 101).

However, whether others see me this way may be another story (and not one to be told here). The final question about the virtuosity of reflexivity brings some criticality to this notion of reflexivity. Lynch (2000) calls into question the extent to which reflexivity guarantees the success of a piece of work and that work is likely to be successful without it. However, I argue that reflexivity in the research process is not about being virtuous. It is a process for confronting positionality (Olukotun et al., 2021). It is about being open, honest and ethical in all stages of the research process and, coming back to Robinson (2002, p.5), knowing the shape and limit of my own subjectivity and being able to work with that.

Chapter Three: Research Approach

Introduction

In the previous chapter I described my position as a professional researcher and the extent to which being a researching professional shifted my thinking and my practice. This chapter continues to foreground the practice story by detailing the (social) science of the research process. However, as this story unfolds it shows art had to intervene in the science when, “Between the idea and the reality Between the motion and the act falls the Shadow” (Eliot, 1925). In this case it was the shadows of RoVE and COVID-19 which meant a rethink and reframing of the research approach. At the heart of this chapter is the description of, along with the rationale for, how I went about getting the answers to the key question and sub questions of this research project.

How does Tapatoru, the professional standards framework for foundation educators in the tertiary sector, guide and inform the capability building of this sector?

- How is Tapatoru being used to inform capability building?
- What are the organisational and individual drivers for the use of Tapatoru?
- What enables and inhibits organisational and individual use of Tapatoru?

In this chapter I describe the exploratory case study approach and the methods used in a way that aligns with and has supported the ongoing development of my framework of practice. I explain, given the changing context discussed in the introduction and in the following chapter, the need to gather data from sources outside of educators undertaking Tapatoru (which had been the original intention), and why the approach changed from the intended multi-case approach to a single case approach.

While I know there is methodological freedom in qualitative research, there is also the need to be mindful of and open about the rationale for the approach, and the extent to which this impacts on what is done, what is found, and the conclusions drawn.

There is more methodological freedom and room for creativity in qualitative research than it seems at first glance. On the other hand, there is a need for a greater methodological awareness particularly concerning possible downsides of subjectivity, the generalisation of the findings, conscious and unconscious biases, influences of dominant ideologies and mainstream thinking. Above all, there is a great need for rational critique (Diefenbach, 2009, p. 875).

In highlighting the changes that have had to be made along the way, I provide commentary and critique on the rationale for them, along with the impact of the changes on the research and my practice. I do this in the form of epistemological reflexivity but, while doing so, am mindful of Lynch’s (2000) comment on the extent to which it is possible, or the extent to which I am capable of engaging in a deep rather than superficially reflective way.

This chapter also describes the multi-method approach used for primary data collection. This includes, 19 narrative and semi-structured interviews conducted face-to-face (2); by phone (5); and Zoom (12); written, electronic artefacts; observations of online forums; a small survey; three portfolios of evidence provided by Tapatoru participants; ongoing (over almost three years)

conversations with Graeme Smith, the developer of Tapatoru and deliverer of the Tapatoru programme; and my learning log. The primary data table is included in the Appendix. The chapter concludes with the ethical approach used, and an overall summing up of the courage it has taken to be creative when the shadows fell.

Case study approach

There are varying views about what case studies are: “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the ‘case’) in depth and within its real-world context” (Yin, 2014, p. 15); a choice of what to study rather than a methodology (Stake, 2005, in Creswell, 2013); a comprehensive research strategy (Merriam, 1998); and a methodology (Creswell, 2013).

While Creswell states it is a methodology, in his definition below he describes it as an approach. Therefore, to avoid a terminology debate I go with the case study in this thesis as an exploratory **approach**.

... a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary, bounded system (a **case**) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving **multiple sources of information** (e.g., observations, interviews, audio visual material, and documents and reports), and reports **a case description** and **case themes**. The unit of analysis in the case study might be multiple cases (a **multisite** site study or a single case (a **within-site** study) (2013, p. 97).

The case study approach is not without its critics (Corcoran, Walker, & Wals, 2004; Diefenbach, 2009; Smith 2018). Corcoran et al. (2004) call the approach into question because of the emphasis on stories of success but a corresponding lack of theorisation. Diefenbach (2009, p. 876) questions whether case studies are “... nothing else but more or less interesting stories (fairytales) we are told.” Given the central tenet of this thesis as a story, it is important to ensure the evidence gathered and the methods used make for an evidence-based story rather than a “fairy tale”.

Rationale for the case study

The rationale for the case study approach is that it is useful for studying the process of the introduction, development, and uptake of Tapatoru and allows for going deep (Corcoran et al., 2004) to explore ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions. For example: Why was Tapatoru developed? Why has Tapatoru been/not been picked up? How has Tapatoru been promoted by Ako Aotearoa and used by organisations and individuals? What did the early adopters of Tapatoru think about it? What worked and what did not? It also allows for explanation and description based on different perspectives and interpretations (Creswell, 2013; Merriam 1998; Yin, 2009, 2014). The availability and use of multiple data sources (Smith, 2018) provided the opportunity for an in-depth appreciation of both Tapatoru and the landscape into which it was introduced.

The case study approach I take has overtones of phenomenology (Sandelowski, 2000) in that the exploration of the ‘why’ and ‘how’ gets into the participants’ lived experiences. It is capturing these experiences and garnering meaningful insights into them that is important to this research project. It is particularly important for those early adopters of Tapatoru in terms of describing what they experienced and how (Creswell, 2013).

Of note in the case study approach is the need for, and use of, multiple data collection methods. Smith's (2018) critique of the case study approach is that in her experience they are built from single sources of data such as interviews, or when they are said to have multiple sources, little attention is paid to the analysis of all the sources of data. Therefore, I needed to be mindful to give attention to the data from observations and electronic artefacts, taking cognisance of Hancock and Algozzine (2011, p. 16, in Smith, 2018, p. 1044) of the "deep and varied sources of information." As it turns out, these data proved to be more useful than I had originally anticipated. I collected observation data and electronic artefacts throughout the research project as a way of journaling the introductory processes used for Tapatoru. As Chapter Five shows, the electronic artefacts have made a considerable contribution to backstory of Tapatoru and to the capture of the evolving process from development to delivery. In summary then, the case study approach has been taken as it allows for, "A portrayal of the case for others to see. ...the case is dynamic. It operates in real time. It acts purposively, encounters obstacles, and often has a strong sense of self" (Stake, 2006, p.3).

Tapatoru as the case

The original intention of this research project was that the 'cases' would be educators from each of: an ITO (which subsequently became a TITO); a Wānanga; a PTE; and a (now) subsidiary of Te Pūkenga. Educators' perspectives along with those of their managers, and the provider of professional development, Ako Aotearoa, were to be gathered. Educators were selected as cases (the unit of analysis) rather than sites as I anticipated having to source educators from more than one of each of the sector sites. The cases were to be "bounded" (Yin, 2014) within a period of six-nine months in order to track the extent to which any PLD (e.g., face-to-face workshops, webinars, professional reading, participation in communities of practice) was being guided by the Tapatoru framework.

But then the shadows fell. The vision had to be adjusted when in 2019 RoVE arrived and put the then ITPs and ITOs into a state of uncertainty. As is discussed further in Chapter Five, the advent of RoVE contributed to four of the five organisations, which had shown interest in participating in a pilot in 2019, not committing to doing so. Then in 2020, COVID-19 arrived, which further disrupted the sector and subsequently the uptake of PLD as foundation educators grappled with the content and technology of online delivery and directed their energies towards that (Alkema, 2020b). The complex situation led to the single case approach, bounded by a longer time-period, 2019-2021. This enabled a wider investigation of the development and uptake of Tapatoru and the associated challenges.

The change in approach meant I could still work with the original theoretical proposition. Building from Alkema et al. (2017), I expected professional standards would guide and bring greater coherence to building the capability of the foundation teaching workforce. This is akin to a "working hypothesis" (Yin, 2014, p. 68), but is seen in the light of a 'proposition' based on the literature review in Chapter Four and my knowledge as a researcher in this sector.

However, the caveat was I needed to remain open to rival premises (Yin, 2014) and to the emergence of new ones (Merriam, 1998). This is allowed for through the exploratory case study approach and through an initial inductive rather than deductive approach to data analysis, described below. It also required me to be deliberately critical of my previous research and thinking that

professional standards would bring coherence to professional learning in the foundation education sector.

In being a researching professional for this DProfPrac I have learnt along the way, as described in Chapter Two, about the elements of subjectivity that lie within qualitative research. But, as Diefenbach (2009) and Roulston (2010) point out, it is not a matter of excluding subjectivity. Rather it is a matter of being clear about where I sit and the impact this has on the methods I use, the ways in which I conduct interviews, the data analysis approach, and the conclusions drawn.

How positioning and reflexivity play out

Theoretical positioning guided the data to be collected and the analysis approach. With regards to subjectivity, it was about being aware, not only in relation to data collection – what is collected and how, but also the extent to which this impacts on the questions asked and the points of note in observations. In keeping with Roulston (2010, p. 121), “Subjectivity needs to be acknowledged rather than treated as a problem.” Acknowledging a position and subjectivity also needs to be done in the writing, given that the readers of research deserve to know how conclusions are arrived at (Richardson & St Pierre, 2005). Acknowledging and declaring a position is a personal and epistemological reflexive process requiring “thoughtful self-aware analysis ... [and] critical self-reflection of the ways in which researchers’ social background, assumptions, positioning and behaviour impact on the research process” (Roulston 2010, p 116).

It is also about the connection with my constructivist world view (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Poortman & Schildkamp, 2012). This calls for ongoing reflexivity and acknowledging my role as a participant in knowledge construction whereby I am not an objective outsider (Patnaik, 2013). Reflexivity allows for the interrogation of research methodology, “to change, remember, understand, learn and discover new insights” while researching (Hiha, 2015, p. 131). This resonates with the ‘aha’ moments that have occurred throughout this research project, for example the moment in which I understood the difference in cultural competence between te ao Pākehā and te ao Māori, with the former relating to knowing about and being informed by a world view, and the latter to living and being the world view.

Being kaupapa Māori informed

While case study is the overarching approach, as a researcher in Aotearoa New Zealand, I also need to be informed by, kaupapa Māori ways of thinking about and conducting research. Here I follow Cram (2001) who argues that while non-Māori cannot conduct kaupapa Māori research they can work and research in a way that works for Māori and, as Jones (2020, p. 190) notes, “think with a Māori-informed point of view.” This is especially important for this research on Tapatoru given its cultural underpinnings, and also for my wider work in the foundation education field.

Inherent in the reason for being informed by, rather than conducting kaupapa Māori research is noted by Hiha.

The other thing about Kaupapa Māori is that ... [I]t is ours. It is our language, our terminology, and we will make it what it will be. When I think about Kaupapa Māori research, I see it really simply: it's a plan; it's a programme; it's an approach; it's a way of being; it's a way of knowing; it's a way of seeing;

it's a way of making meaning; it's a way of being Māori; it's a way of thinking; it's a thought process; it's a practice; it's a set of things you want to do (2015, p. 130, citing Smith, 2011, p. 10).

Kaupapa Māori research locates Māori at the centre of enquiry. It has of necessity an understanding of the social, economic, political, and systemic influences on expanding or limiting Māori outcomes and can use a wide variety of research methods as tools (Curtis, 2007). And it has, as noted in Chapter Two, a Māori cultural epistemology (Baker et al., 2015). While a Kaupapa Māori approach uses a wide range of methods, it does involve the interrogation of methods in relation to cultural sensitivity, cross-cultural reliability, useful outcomes for Māori and other such measures (Cram 2006).

Essentially, as I understand it, Kaupapa Māori is literally 'a Māori way'. Kaupapa Māori research locates Māori understandings as integral to the research design, process, analysis and intended outcomes (Cram, 2001) and it affirms the right of Māori to be Māori (Pihama, Cram, & Walker, 2002). It is an approach,

... new in a Western education sense simply because tertiary institutions for the most part have been a hostile place for Indigenous students and staff. Thus, Indigenous research is said to be 'arguably one of the newest research fields on the block, albeit with ancient veins' (Ruru, 2021, p. 17).

The *Hinātore* project described in Chapter Two was praxis-related research (Barnes 2013) in that it brought about changes to my thinking and actions about research for and with Māori. It also caused me to challenge my own cultural norms and ways of working as a Pākehā researcher in keeping with Barnes' (2013) thinking about the need for reflexivity during the research process. Hence in this research project I have endeavoured to incorporate Kaupapa Māori approaches in interviews and in the ethical approaches used in the research project as a whole.

Somewhat ironically as the research project developed, I realised what I was doing was incorporating the values of the Tapatoru framework. Here it was about whanaungatanga, and in particular, the place of whakawhanaungatanga in interviews. As researchers we have such a short time with people and establishing rapport and a sense of trust is key to our being able to "elicit details, emotions, and facts that provide rich descriptions of events or experiences, ... so that participants share their stories honestly" (Mirick & Wladkowski, 2019, p. 3061).

The interviewing process also included manaakitanga, by ensuring those who were unsure in the interviews were supported to tell their story. Finally, it was about aroha and treating interviewees with respect and empathy. The latter relates not only to the interviews but also to the use of participants' data and the telling of their stories.

Methods

Data collection

In keeping with the shadows falling on the research approach, it also fell on the sample and the methods. The original intention (the vision) had been to conduct:

- Semi-structured interviews with a sample (up to 20) educators who attended literacy and numeracy PLD events or undertook their own professional learning and went through the Tapatoru portfolio submission process
- Ongoing digital data collection with this sample using the social media tool Slack
- Narrative interviews with up to five managers of the educators (over two time periods)
- A short online survey of educators who attend adult literacy and numeracy PLD workshops in 2020
- Narrative interviews with:
 - experts in the field of professional standards
 - staff from ACE Aotearoa who have their own professional standards framework for teaching
 - Ako Aotearoa professional development staff (starting with the pilot project and ongoing).

Given the impact of RoVE and COVID-19 on the uptake of Tapatoru, I had to expand my thinking about data collection. In relation to COVID-19 the impact was not unique to me as qualitative researchers the world over adjusted “to the unique challenges as a result of the disruption of COVID-19” (Lobe, Morgan, & Hoffman, 2020). In the adjustment process, art and science had to work together to sort through messy times, through the reality of real-world research. It is as Johns notes,

... we must hold our ideas and frameworks loosely for their value to inform each encounter. Research is like this, something lived, a mystery unfolding. An over-reliance on method – ‘this is how you should do this’ resists play, forcing things into a certain shape and in doing so distorting the truth. Truth needs to find its own expression (2010, p.2).

In the reality of this new world, I did indeed have to hold the original framework loosely and reframe the data collection. This took the following form over a two-and-a-half-year period, most of which was throughout 2020. And as described below, it was of necessity purposive and convenience driven, taking advantage of “unexpected opportunities” along the way. In brief, the data collection and methods include:

- Context review, including both context and literature
- Interviews with 19 people. These interviews were conducted by phone (5), in-person (2); Zoom (12). The interviewees included:
 - The developers of Tapatoru (2)
 - Experts in professional standards (2)
 - Staff from two organisations who indicated interest in the original Tapatoru pilot (2)
 - A staff member from an education organisation who has developed a micro-credential for foundation educators (1)
 - Educators who went through Tapatoru (9)
 - Education managers with staff going through Tapatoru (3)
- Observations of a webinar and Zoom sessions with an online group of Tapatoru participants
- Collection of electronic artefacts, including Facebook posts, emails, and materials to support Tapatoru participants through the process of completing the portfolio submission process

- Ongoing personal communications, including Zoom sessions and emails with Graeme Smith from Ako Aotearoa who developed, delivers, and assesses Tapatoru
- A small online survey of five participants from one organisation who had gone through Tapatoru
- A reflective learning log which captures three years of learning about my practice as a professional researcher and the learning that has come through being a researching professional, both in the Tapatoru project and in my working life as a researcher.

Sampling method

In terms of the Tapatoru case the sampling method includes purposive, convenience, and opportunistic approaches (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). It was purposive in respect to seven interviewees who were selected for the specific knowledge they held about: Tapatoru; professional standards; adult literacy qualifications; and staff from two organisations who had not progressed with Tapatoru. Convenience sampling was used with 12 interviewees who participated in Tapatoru – either directly by going through the Tapatoru process or as education managers in an organisation that promoted it to their staff. It was also opportunistic in that I was able to take advantage of unexpected data (Creswell, 2013) in relation to the artefacts developed for Tapatoru, along with the webinar and Zoom sessions that allowed me to get inside the experience of the introduction of Tapatoru.

In the case of this research, the sampling approach simply ‘is what it is’. Tapatoru is new to the sector and there are a limited number of people who know about it or have experience of it. As Sandelowski (2000, p. 338) notes in relation to sampling, “the ultimate goal ... is to obtain cases deemed information-rich for the study.” Convenience sampling is problematic if researchers wish to make generalisations based on the sample (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000; Diefenbach, 2009), which is not the intention in this case study. The intention is informational, to explore in-depth the introduction of Tapatoru to the foundation education sector, early adopters’ reactions to it, and the impact it has on their knowledge and practice, with a view to providing evidence on ways to proceed with Tapatoru. “What is needed is assurance that the site and unit of investigation are *suitable* for the type(s) of problem(s) that shall be investigated. ... It is the unit of investigation that counts, not the way how it was identified” (Diefenbach, 2009, p. 879).

However, in saying this, I need to emphasise that the sample of Tapatoru participants is not representative of the population of the foundation education teaching sector. As Smith (personal communication, April 19, 2021) comments,

... last year we got a funny selection bias, because here’s the thing, it’s a pilot, “put your hand up if you want to be part of it.” And I think with the online group ... they are in the Facebook group that Ako Aotearoa runs and then from that funnel you’ve got people that are already interested in Māori values and already interested in a PLD experience and already very experienced educators, and so they are the outliers.

Most of those who volunteered to be interviewed were well-qualified and had considerable adult education experience, which is not generally the case with the educators in the foundation sector. The backgrounds of the Tapatoru participant interviewees are in the findings in Chapter Six.

Importantly, the backgrounds provide transparency, so the reader knows whose stories are being told.

The least one can do (and has to do) is to describe clearly which persons were interviewed, their status, to limit the findings and conclusions to these particular worldviews, which are only a certain part of social reality, and put them into perspective, i.e., the wider picture (Diefenbach, 2009, p. 880).

Getting the Tapatoru participants

As mentioned earlier, the context – RoVE in 2019 and 2020 that brought uncertainty to the tertiary education sector and COVID-19 that brought uncertainty worldwide - meant getting participants for Tapatoru and subsequently this research project proved challenging. Getting a fully- representative sample of culture, gender, age, sector, or region was not possible.

While pilot projects did not get underway in 2019, Ako Aotearoa started a pilot project on Tapatoru with a PTE early in 2020. This would have been an ideal site to include in the research project. There was face-to-face PLD with vocational education tutors who did not have strong backgrounds in adult literacy and numeracy education. However, this pilot project went on hold when the first COVID-19 lockdown arrived, and no further work was undertaken with that organisation. In April 2020 Ako Aotearoa set up an online group with participants from the Adult Literacy and Numeracy and Cultural Capability (ALNACC) Community of Practice Facebook group. Following its establishment, Ako Aotearoa was also able to set up an agreement with Ara Poutama Aotearoa for two groups of participants. Thus, three groups were available for sampling purposes.

For privacy reasons I was not able to contact participants directly and needed to work through intermediaries to get the sample. Graeme Smith asked the online participants if they were interested in participating in the research and I followed up with a post on the Tapatoru Facebook page of 13 members asking if people would like to talk with me. Five of the sample came through this approach. Two managers at Ara Poutama Aotearoa also asked their groups and three of the sample came from this. The final participant came through a request to her from Ako Aotearoa after she had completed her Tapatoru portfolio submission.

Sample size

The sample is small, but the Tapatoru population was not large. There was one organisation – Ara Poutama Aotearoa and overall, while around 53 individuals expressed an interest in starting on the Tapatoru process only 16 of these submitted a portfolio, nine of whom are in the sample. Patton (1980, p. 184, in Cohen, Manion, & Morrison 2011, p. 227) says there are no rules for sample size with the sample depending on the purpose of the research and what it is looking to find out. As stated above, I had hoped to get 20 Tapatoru participants, working from Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) that data saturation – the point at which no new information or themes occur (Boddy, 2016; Marshall, Cardon, Poddar & Fontenot, 2015) – becomes evident at around six in-depth interviews and definitely evident at 12 when interviewees come from similar backgrounds or work in similar fields.

The purpose of taking data saturation into account is for generalisation purposes, but as stated above, this is not the intent of this research. And while not making excuses for the sample size,

Boddy (2016, p. 428) points out that even individual cases “can also provide a new, deep and nuanced understanding of previously unexplored phenomena.” However, the sample size proved problematic in the data analysis phase. Despite using an inductive analysis approach, conducting thematic analysis proved challenging given the small numbers and the differing experiences and backgrounds of the sample. In hindsight this challenge occurred as I am used to larger data sets in my work as a researcher.

Interview approach

The overall approach to interviews with the Tapatoru participants built from the traditional, semi-structured approach (Cohen et al., 2000; Roulston, 2010), focusing on four areas: the participants themselves and their experiences; the types of professional learning they usually undertake; their use of the Tapatoru Framework; and their views on it. While the four areas acted as a guide to the interviews, I also developed a set of prompts and probes to be used for each of these four questions. I sent the key areas for discussion to the Tapatoru participants prior to the interviews along with the participant consent form. The question frame is included in the Appendix.

The approach allowed for in-depth exploration of ‘why and how’ Tapatoru is being used. It also allowed for exploration of the participants’ experiences. “At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience” (Seidman, 2006, p. 9). The approach allowed for flexibility in the interviews and allowed participants to talk about issues, interests, beliefs, motives, experiences, and explanations that are of interest to them (Cohen et al., 2000).

I used a conversational interviewing approach to give participants permission to tell their stories and feel more in control of the storytelling process. After a couple of prompts interviewees usually set the direction for the conversation. As such, each conversation was allowed to “unfold in unique ways” (Roulston, 2010, p. 137), and as adult literacy practitioners they are not short of a word or three! This approach also aligns with the kaupapa Māori approach to whanaungatanga (Naepi, 2015) where the interviewee is the tuakana to the researcher’s teina. The interviewees are the experts in Tapatoru and I was there to garner their expertise, let them be in control of the interview and learn from their stories as shown in the vignette below. As Roulston notes,

... the interviewer’s role is to be a student of the interviewee, learning as much about the topic of inquiry as possible through sensitive questioning ... in this interview the interviewer must listen carefully, follow-up on participant’s responses without interrupting the story flow to gain specific details of the participant’s experience and generally exercise reservation in contributing to the talk (2010, p. 17).

Conversational interviewing vignette one

A: ... thank you. You’ve been a joy to chat with.

Interviewee 9: Ooooo- I can be a little bit crazy sometimes.

A: Well one of the nice things I've discovered about recording is that I don't have to constantly zero in on the questions I can just let it go.

Interviewee 9: And then pick them afterwards.

A: And I think that makes people feel more relaxed as well. They can chat more about, you know.

Interviewee 9: It's a more natural segue into different areas about it.

A: That's right. Because I've got a whole lot of prompts and probes in front of me here and I know I don't have to ask them because they are getting covered off as we chat.

Interviewee 9: I've got your questions on my screen, so I knew what you were coming in for and I appreciated that it gave me, not only an idea of what you were looking for, so I had my eye on the ball for you.

Interviews with key informants were also in the style of informal conversations, in that the questions emerged from their context (Cohen et al., 2000). The informal approach was chosen for exploratory reasons given I was interested in the 'what', 'why', 'why not' and 'how' of for example, professional standards, a literacy and numeracy qualification. The vignette below is an example of picking up what an interviewee has given and building on it.

Conversational interviewing vignette two

A: Yeah – no that's really good. So just to tease that out, I was really interested in your comment there around the currency of a qual. I mean. Do you want to talk a bit more about why that's an issue or not?

Interviewee 5: Well, I see lots of evidence in my role working with students in the institute, where embedded LN isn't in the material and very little in the materials is matching needs. And these are people with inverted commas, who have the qual. I was thinking, this doesn't make sense, you know, how do we throw this back here. That's the issue I think. I just see it repeating. ...

A: Yeah, Yeah. So how do you see then the Tapatoru making a difference to practice?

Interviewee 5: I see with our support staff who work with our vulnerable learners that any support and training we can give them, gives them motivation and more tools in their little kete of bits and pieces, you know.

A: So, did you see you as working with them to provide professional development, or Ako doing that? What was your kind of, what were you thinking?

Interviewee 5: In conjunction with Tapatoru I was sensing from [X], and I hope I'm not sounding a bit bloody big-headed here [laugh]

A: You won't, you don't.

Interviewee 5: I was working with [X] and he was saying well maybe you can be the person that we can work through to get that to happen. And I thought, yeah, that's fine, I'm happy to do that. ...

Running interviews as conversations is an art in social science research. Starting with whakawhanaungatanga it relies on putting interviewees at ease, so they are enabled to tell their stories. However, it is a principled art and herein lies some of the thinking related to Kaupapa Māori approaches that were possible to use in the COVID-19 environment where kanohi kitea, face-to-face, in person interviews were not possible, namely:

- aroha ki te tangata (a respect for people)
- titiro, whakarongo ... kōrero (look, listen, speak)
- kia tupato (be cautious)
- kua e takahia te mana o te tangata (do not trample over the people)
- kua e mahaki (do not flaunt your knowledge) (Smith, 1999, p. 20, in Pipi, Cram, Hawke, Hawke, Huriwai, Mataki, Milne, Morgan, Tuaka, & Tuuta, 2004, p. 3).

These researchers also note the need for manaaki ki te tangata (share and host people, be generous). As this was not possible, I worked with the notion of reciprocity and gave Tapatoru participants the transcripts of their interviews. This was appreciated and they were often fascinated by the way they had come across in the interviews. I also gave the Tapatoru participants a draft of Chapter Six for their feedback to ensure they were comfortable with what I said and their anonymity. The approaches described here also align with those of the Social Policy and Evaluation Research unit (2015, p. 18), of “care, respect, inclusion, protection, and reciprocity.”

During the data analysis process with the reading and re-reading of interview transcripts I believe that I upheld these principles reasonably well, with the exception of, kua e mahaki (do not flaunt your knowledge). Why in nearly every interview did I seem to find the need to include something about my own experience? Was I trying to prove some sort of expertise in the area? Was I trying to make a connection with interviewees that showed I was part of their world – a researching insider? (Moore, 2012). Was I trying to make it more of a participatory conversation? I just do not know. But what I do know, is that the act of transcription made me aware of my foibles as an interviewer and more mindful of these in my practice. In addition, exposing these foibles in this thesis allows for transparency and investigation by others.

Transcribing also made me more aware, as described above, of the extent to which subjectivity impacts on practice (Patnaik, 2013; Robinson, 2002; Walshaw, 2008). While the four areas to be explored in the semi-structured interviews can be seen as objective, subjectivity comes into play in follow-up questions where I latch on to something an interviewee says either because it resonates, or not, with my thinking. For example, in the vignette above I follow up on Interviewee Five’s statements about the currency of qualifications because I hold to the idea that a qualification does not on its own attest to current capability. This is in keeping with Diefenbach who notes,

... there is no such thing as the neutral, non-intervening and non-existent interviewer. The interview is an active part of the social interaction and he or she *has to intervene* in that sense that the interviewee makes statements he or she would not make otherwise (2009, p. 880).

The everyday work of a professional researcher has me looking for answers. I do not usually record interviews (unless I am unfamiliar with the content matter or conducting a focus group) and taking

verbatim notes means I capture interviewee data only, rather than my questions. Therefore, I had not been sufficiently mindful of how I ask long winded questions (at times) or intervene in an interview. The example below in conversation with Interviewee Five is an example of an array of interviewing foibles that transcription has surfaced.

Yeah, so, I don't want to put words in your mouth, but when I made the recommendation around professional standards was the notion that, from talking to a whole lot of people about what they did for PD in the LN space, they hopped everywhere. I called it stepping-stones. They went, "Oh, I'll go over here. Fractions today, that's what I need. Then I'll go over here, as actually I might need a bit on cultural competence." So, is it a bit, so you say it is driven by mistakes, is there any kind of trajectory or PD pathway that people have or, is that not possible? (May 8, 2020).

Within this snippet there is intervention/interruption – “I don’t want to put words in your mouth but”; a flaunting of knowledge – “when I made the recommendations for professional standards”; and the long windedness of the question is self-explanatory. Capturing data this way then analysing and writing it allows for the analysis of self, experience and conversations (Robinson, 2002). I like to think that the self-awareness of foibles has transferred to my practice as professional researcher when conducting interviews, but I am not entirely convinced it has, given what I’ve noticed about my interview practice from recent recordings of focus groups.

Observations

The impact of COVID-19 meant fewer opportunities for Ako Aotearoa to deliver face-to-face PLD. Subsequently this gave rise to an online group of educators who were given the opportunity to go through the Tapatoru process for free. This meant I was able to participate in an initial webinar and subsequent Zoom sessions with this group. Here my role was as a non-participant observer, “as an outsider of the group ... watching and taking field notes from a distance ... without direct involvement with the field” (Creswell, 2013, p. 167). Smith sought approval for my participation in the Zoom sessions from the group.

I have a list now with about 20 people on it that I'm planning on inviting to join 2 Tapatoru groups ... I'll use Zoom to meet with them online once the groups are set up ... Assuming it all goes ahead, if you wanted to join me with these two potential groups, you could take part in any Zoom meetings we have so the participants get to know you and then look for ways to follow up with them at appropriate times with interview questions (G. Smith, personal communication, April 8, 2020).

Expanding the data collection process to include observation turned out to be more valuable to the case of Tapatoru than I had anticipated. It increased the breadth of the data collection, given the number of participants, and allowed for the capture of data on the delivery of Tapatoru and the portfolio submission process. It also allowed for the capture of data [in note form] on participants’ reactions, queries, and concerns as they started on the process. In the Zoom environment ‘reading the virtual room’ of faces on the screen was more challenging than being in the real room. This resulted in focusing on the speaker and capturing what was said. It was also challenging in that I was not in a position to ask questions. However, it did mean I was free to simply capture what was happening in front of me.

Of note here is that Ako Aotearoa was developing their processes –i.e., the requirements for CVs and the templates for evidence portfolios and referees’ reports at the same time as the Tapatoru participants were starting on the process. Process information was what the early adopters of Tapatoru wanted in April 2020 as they started putting together their evidence for submission.

By July 2020 the Tapatoru participants’ conversations had shifted. They were starting to talk about their practice and how they were to get this into their portfolios. This was an interesting shift from the April Zoom session. Here they moved from being concerned about the process to talking about some of the focus areas for their portfolios. Writing their portfolio narratives had provided the space for them to be deliberately reflective practitioners. My notes from the July session (it was not possible to record these sessions) highlight this.

Observation notes

J: has eight stories typed up but wants to present orally – to challenge herself.

D: has been focussing on how she maintains the wairua of her learners - has been reflecting after every session [1 day a week with workplace learners] – writing in a diary is a weekly thing.

M: working with students to help them reclaim their mana if we can make them realise they have skills – a lot of trauma from school.

R collecting, recollecting, and reflecting – often don’t have time before moving on to the next thing – organising time to do this. Has been putting her CV together and realising she can connect the parts of her working life together (July 17, 2020).

Artefacts

To support online delivery, Ako Aotearoa set up a Tapatoru Facebook page and also emailed communications and information to Tapatoru participants, including links to videos that told them more about what the process involved. Data were captured from these and, as with the observations, had the added benefit of being able to capture early information as Tapatoru was launched. As with the observations, the artefacts proved more valuable than I originally anticipated and have made a considerable contribution to the story told in Chapter Five about the development and delivery of Tapatoru, which was a living and emergent process.

Sample email artefact from Ako Aotearoa to participants

Greetings once again from the Ako Aotearoa team wherever in the country you are. Recently, through our first series of emails, you should have:

- 1. Watched two short videos with Graeme introducing the Tapatoru framework.*
- 2. Taken part in an online survey we designed to help us get a better idea of what your strengths are as well as any challenges you might be facing.*
- 3. Downloaded the Tapatoru cards template and made up a set for yourself.*

4. *Started to think about questions you have about this process.*

Hopefully, too, you've started to think about the kinds of evidence that you might be able to bring together for your portfolio (June 17, 2020).

Reflections

Robinson (2002, p. 5, citing Coffey, 1999, p. 47) notes that as researchers, “we are part of what we study, a part of the data we collect”. As stated in Chapter Two, in my work as a professional researcher, I do not usually consider myself, my reflections and observations, as data, nor do I refer to myself “in relation to the production of knowledge about research topics” (Roulston, 2020, p. 116). However, in the DProfPrac this has been possible. This has been key to being a researching professional, informing my practice as a professional researcher and my overall thinking in the project. This has been somewhat of a surprise as at the outset of this DProfPrac I had not expected the reflection on practice to play as big a role as it has. Time, along with reflecting on reflections and growing reflexivity, have led to a deeper and richer understanding of both research practice and of the role Tapatoru plays in building the capability of foundation educators.

While reflexivity has contributed to the DProfPrac, it has also been important for feeding into Ako Aotearoa about Tapatoru, for ongoing conversations with the TEC as funders of Ako Aotearoa and the Tapatoru work, and for a paper to the Ministry of Education who expressed an interest in knowing more about it. This process also served as socially-constructed sense making, and allowed for testing some of my conscious and unconscious assumptions along the way. Socialising the research also gave meaning to it during its life course, rather than it merely being a product at the end of three years.

The research process itself constructs meaning through the recursive search for knowledge amongst co-researchers and participants. The process opens up multiple, emergent perspectives and propositions that are part of the ongoing process of coming to know, rather than expecting to find the answer, a model or generalisable conclusions (Malcolm, 2014, p. 49).

Data analysis

The first cut of data used an inductive approach (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Roulston, 2010), where the themes emerge from the data. This approach aligns with my constructivist, epistemological approach to learning as outlined in Chapter Two. It started with grouping data on similar topics within the case of Tapatoru, e.g., professional standards literature and interviewees; interviewees whose organisations had not progressed with Tapatoru; early adopters of Tapatoru and education managers of this group. Grouping data in this way allowed for an initial search of the data, as a way of starting to make sense of what was being said.

A descriptive coding approach (manifest, latent and axial), in which I put notes and labels on the transcripts, was used next. This was an “iterative and recursive process ... to reduce [the] data set to conceptual elements [to be] sorted into ‘categories’” (Roulston, 2010, p. 153). The codes grew out of the data rather than being predetermined. An example of the approach is shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Example of Coding

Transcript	Notes / labels
<p><i>Interviewee 12: So, I wanted to know, was I still functioning correctly, was I still on the right path, did I incorporate Māori values into my work? Ummm what was missing? And I like the reflective side because then it will give you a platform and then you say right, this was this in 2020 and now I need to develop this and then you can see where you can move forward.</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 10: Umm. Cos I think, the focus on obviously and the connection to Māori and te reo being used in the framework. Does actually draw you into that little zone. ... I think it is also important for me to zone in and stand back on it as well.</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 16: you know. I, I feel like I'm in a position now where I'm really critically aware and reflective of how tikanga Māori informs my practice and so I can make that really clear in what I do and in my work. Umm and now as a result I can do that with learners. So yeah, absolutely this is kind of my guiding principles.</i></p>	<p><i>Manifest coding</i></p> <p><i>Labels:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Practice / A way to talk about practice / a way to frame practice</i> • <i>Reflective practice</i> • <i>Reflection on practice in relation to Kaupapa Māori</i> <p><i>Latent coding</i></p> <p><i>Labels</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Connecting to Kaupapa Māori (Interviewees 12 and 10)</i> • <i>Living Māori values (Interviewee 16)</i>

Finally I followed with a re-search, looking for “patterns and commonalities” (Roulston, 2010, p. 150) within and across interviewees in order that these contribute to theory generation.

Research – literally – suggests that we search – again and again – and in this way discover what we did not know before. And the notion of searching (the quality of this word as opposed to – for example – looking) suggests that what we are searching for is of real interest to us; really matters to us; that it is a way of stretching ourselves, of taking our knowledge and understanding further, and into realms beyond where we are at any particular point. It is not merely a way of confirming what we already know (Davidoff, 2014, p. 1).

Patterns only emerge with going to the data multiple times (Fujii, 2017). This started with transcription and making notes at the time. The following re-readings and re-search meant looking across the data to identify commonalities and differences in participants’ thinking and experiences. Going to the data multiple times was important for assessing the strength of a finding, for establishing patterns, regularities, and outliers, and for identifying the importance the literature and interviewees placed on particular experiences and outcomes. Taking this approach allowed small ‘t’ theories (Béres et al., 2011) and themes to emerge. An example of recognising similarities and differences built from the coding example above is described in Chapter Six.

Coding, categorising, and building themes is not an objective process. I needed to be mindful and think about the data I selected to inform small 't' theory generation. Was I just selecting the data that helped the case I wanted to build? The theory I wanted to generate? What data was I overlooking? To a certain extent the reading and re-reading / re-searching the data helped. As did questions about, "What did the interviewee mean by this"? Coding and building to themes are not a straightforward, scientific processes. Schwandt points out the creative process involved, and this is what I refer to as artistry in qualitative research.

The process of coding and reorganising codes into categories is a creative one in which the analyst plays with the data, and tries out different ways of thinking about how the data might be understood. By reading and re-examining the interview data, codes and categories, researchers can develop their ideas about data into assertions that are supported by data excerpts (2001, in Roulston, 2010, p. 125).

An additional challenge for coding was the need to be aware of the extent to which other qualitative researchers would interpret the data in the same way. In the example of coding above, manifest coding is relatively straightforward, and from a positivist perspective likely to be reliable as the words are literally there. It is explicit in the interviewees' comments what they are talking about - practice, reflection, and Māori values.

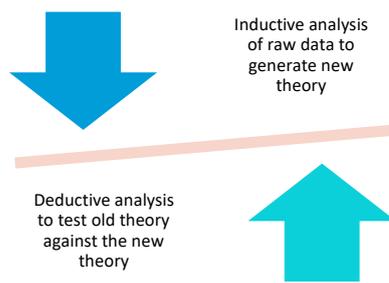
It is latent coding that is more challenging, less reliable, but more valid, and is informed by what I have picked up in the interviews about the interviewees. In the coding example above, the words look similar in relation to Māori values. The difference lies between the interviewees whereby, according to my analysis, the two Pākehā interviewees know about these values in much the same way as I do, and have these values as part of their practice. However, Interviewee 16 is Māori and lives these values. Her whole interview is imbued with this way of thinking.

Latent coding is also informed by the interview as a whole. I can make decisions about codes given what else I know about the interviewee. In the example above, I know from other comments made in interviews how the interviewees position themselves in relation to certain world views and their practice.

Axial coding helps bring the story together. This was about bringing the data together in new ways, restructuring it to look for connections in order to find out more about the context and connections (Creswell, 2013). This process allowed for a better understanding of, for example, the early adopters of Tapatoru and contexts that enabled the uptake of Tapatoru. This is further explained in Chapter Six where, based on their data, I have grouped the nine participants into three categories – grapplers, pragmatists, and ethnographers and have also placed them on a continuum for practices related to cultural competence and also on a continuum for reflective practice.

A point to make about my overall data analysis approach is that there are, as noted above, overtones of the phenomenological approach (Creswell, 2013; Roulston, 2010). With this approach findings emerge from the perceptions and lived experiences of those involved with Tapatoru and as such allowed for the capture of cultural values and perspectives. It also allowed for rich descriptions of the participants' views about what they are experiencing (Sandelowski, 2000).

Figure 3.1: Data Analysis Approach



(Source: Researcher created figure.)

Following the inductive analysis and building from Yin (2014), I used a deductive approach to test the proposition (that professional standards support and guide capability building) against the theories generated from this analysis in order to develop a new “substantive theory” (Merriam, 1998) about how Tapatoru was used by the sample in this research project. I use the term ‘proposition’ rather than hypothesis based on the idea that qualitative research is not about hypothesis testing, rather it is more concerned with testing theories (with a small ‘t’) as shown in Figure 3.1 (Miles & Huberman, 2014, in Cohen et al., 2011, p. 226).

While the inductive approach allowed for an in-depth exploration of the data to be used to inform new theory development, it was important in this study to use a deductive approach and go back and test the extent to which the original theory stood, given that this was the basis on which the TEC made the decision to fund the development of the professional standards framework. Using both approaches is not unusual in qualitative research. Schwandt argues accordingly, “researchers generate findings through close examination of data in combination with applications of substantive theories from prior research to inform and develop their analysis” (2001, p. 125 in Roulston, 2010, p. 50).

It was challenging as I recognised during the inductive and deductive analysis process that given the context, RoVE and COVID-19, Tapatoru was not working in the way I had anticipated. However, what I did uncover during the analysis process was the far more interesting theory, that Tapatoru guides and informs both cultural and reflective practice. And therein, lies its strength. I am not saying it causes cultural and reflective practice, rather the process of putting together a portfolio of evidence enabled the articulation of this. As Chapter Six shows, the early adopters of Tapatoru were, in most cases already reflective practitioners. Chapter Five discusses in more detail how this reflective process was enabled as the nomenclature ‘portfolio of evidence’ moved to being called a ‘reflective commentary’.

Analysing qualitative data then is a creative process, which, “for better or worse, is a result of the skills and courage of the researcher” (Diefenbach, 2009, p. 885). It was not an easy task to build from manifest, to latent, to axial coding, but it has made for a more trustworthy story about Tapatoru. As such, the case of Tapatoru is not the “fairytale” noted by Diefenbach (2009). Nor has it emerged as if “by immaculate conception” (Burawoy, 2005, p. 43).

As noted above the process has been harder than in my ‘day-job’ where I am driven by the need to answer specific questions for clients. In thinking about why it was such a struggle to tell the seemingly simple stories in Chapters Five and Six, I conclude that the challenge comes from really letting the stories fall out of the data – a more fully inductive approach than what I usually practise.

To say I was flummoxed on my first few readings of the data, and how I would bring it all together is an understatement. But the reading and re-reading allowed the patterns to emerge, allowed me to identify the links within and across the data (Fujii, 2018, p. 78), and to interpret and make meaning from the data (Wolcott, 1994, in Roulston, 2010, p. 154).

Validity/Validation

In terms of validity Cohen et al. (2000) talk about the importance, in qualitative research, of having honest and rich data, the appropriate participants, and being able to triangulate the data. These researchers further say, “Validity, then, should be seen as a matter of degree rather than an absolute state” (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 105, citing Gronlund, 1981). Creswell (2013) talks about how as qualitative researchers we have often found the need to use this language borrowed from the quantitative world. This has indeed been the case in my day job as a professional researcher when, in reporting findings, I use the term ‘validity’ to give a sense of rigour and objectivity.

As noted in the previous chapter, my positioning is based on undertaking a considerable amount of work for government agencies who, possibly driven off the positivist paradigm, have come to expect that research be as objective, or be seen as objective as possible. Here, from the world of quantitative research, they want findings with validity, reliability, and generalisability. Many in government agencies, who are unfamiliar with research methods, are not yet placed to understand and accept constructivist frameworks related to trustworthiness that is established through criteria such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (King & Horrocks, 2010; Patnaik, 2013).

As qualitative researchers we must take some responsibility to change this thinking and build trustworthiness through the ways in which we conduct and talk about our research approaches. I hold that this trustworthiness comes from transparency about what we do – the questions, the data, the analysis, and conclusions. It is about “the quality, authenticity, and truthfulness of findings ... It relates to the degree of trust, or confidence, readers have in results” (Cypress, 2017, p. 254).

In this DProfPrac I am not writing for a government agency and am freer to talk about wider notions of validation. This is in line with Guba and Lincoln (1985, 1989, in Creswell, 2013; Cypress, 2017; Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017; Poortman & Schildkamp, 2012) who argue for wider ways of describing how to validate findings.

Their idea was that the criteria they propose are more appropriate for and better applicable to the nature of qualitative research. In their terms, the criteria of internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity are replaced by credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, respectively (Poortman & Schildkamp, 2012, p.1728, citing Lincoln and Guba 1985).

For this study, the focus is on descriptive and interpretive validation. In terms of the former, it relates to the factual accuracy of the account that is given of what the research participants say. For the latter, it is about interpreting the data and giving it the meaning that the participants themselves have (Sandelowski, 2000). In the process, I needed to be mindful of my subjectivity and recognise that, as the coding (manifest and latent) built to themes, the extent to which this is what the interviewees meant, and the extent to which my inferences and interpretation of what they say is

accurate. It calls on the need for reflexivity in relation to examining assumptions and how these impact on interpretation (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003). It is about investigating, questioning, and theorising (Cypress, 2017, p. 257). For example, with the coding above, was I interpreting Interviewee 16's world view correctly, or was I thinking or assuming this because of her whakapapa?

The previous chapter on positionality has described the ways in which subjectivity comes from my knowledge, experience, values, and beliefs – there is no escaping the self. To ensure I go beyond myself, the validation process has included sharing findings and getting feedback from participants, and also through discussion of the high-level findings with professional development staff at Ako Aotearoa.

Triangulation

Triangulation is a way of validating findings. Cohen et al. (2000) note triangulation is enabled by studying phenomena with different persons, at different times and places. It is important for the contribution it makes to the confidence readers and reviewers can have in the findings. The approach taken, and in keeping with the case study approach, is methodological triangulation. This is about the use of different methods within the study (Cohen et al., 2000) such as context review, observations, and interviews.

Contributions are also made by other forms of triangulation. Here interviews with educators and their managers from different sites allowed for space triangulation. In addition, what might be termed a 'light' investigator triangulation approach happened through sharing findings with research participants. This allowed them to make sense of it, and feedback on how they see themselves or Tapatoru represented. It was also a way of moderating the extent to which I had interpreted the data in a balanced way.

They will offer us perspectives that we might not have arrived at on our own. They are able to triangulate our own observations, to validate or to offer something other in terms of what actually happened, or what their experience of the situation was, in addition to ours. And, on reflection with them, they can take us to places of understanding (in terms of our 'search'), offer insights that are not merely confirming ours, but broadening the scope of our own understanding (Davidoff, 2014, p. 3).

The term triangulation, like that of validity, is borrowed from the quantitative world and seems quite harsh in the qualitative world. Richardson and St Pierre (2005, pp. 1416-1417) have softened this and talk about "crystallization" within the qualitative paradigm. They prefer the image of a crystal to a triangle given its multidimensionality and different angles and thus the ability to see things differently when viewed from different angles. While it might be a case of semantics, it does inspire a different way of thinking and supports the importance of feeding back findings to participants to garner their views and as a way of increasing the trustworthiness of findings (Nowell et al., 2017). The process of collecting data, interpreting data, and a shared re-interpreting of the data help determine the overall conclusions. Not only is this about the transparency of the research process, it also aligns with the social constructivist approach to my practice as a researcher.

Strengths and points about which to be mindful in the research approach

Considering the strengths and the points about which to be mindful requires epistemological reflexivity (Palaganas et al., 2017). Hence, I have reviewed the research from the beginning to the end. The questions – Were they the right ones? Did they limit the findings? I examined, also, the approach – was the exploratory case study the best approach to use? Considered, too, was the analysis – has the data been put together in a way that allows the conclusions to be drawn? Using this process, I have determined the research approach has the following strengths and points about which to be mindful.

Strengths

- The case study approach using multiple methods of data collection.
- Qualitative interviews provided in-depth, ‘grounded’ data about participants’ experiences and perceptions. They allowed for probing and clarifying of responses.
- Capturing data over a nearly three-year time period from multiple sources allowed for an understanding of the challenges of introducing something new to the sector and the extent to which context intervenes.
- Sense checking interpretation of the data with participants.

Points about which to be mindful

- The case study approach and the exploration of a bounded system constrained what and how data were collected.
- Interpretation of the data by me as an individual researcher limits the thinking to my view of the data. However, sense checking with participants has also helped test my thinking and kept me in check.
- My position as an advocate of professional standards may limit my ability to be open to alternative views on the extent to which they work for foundation educators. However, the constant call for ‘criticality’ from my mentors has helped mitigate this.

Ethical process

As a professional researcher I choose to follow a code of ethics for all the work I do. Here, I build from the work of the Social Policy Evaluation and Research Unit which describes the practices and behaviours for researchers/evaluators including, “care, respect, inclusion, protection, and reciprocity” (2015, p. 18).

Power dynamics are at play in any research process. As such, I used a caring and respectful approach, as described above, with all interviewees. I was aware that I knew some interviewees and not others. Tapatoru participants were in the latter group so were given time and opportunity for whakawhanaungatanga, to talk about their background, experiences, and roles in the adult education sector.

In my time as a researcher, I have engaged with a range of research participants, from a wide range of ages, ethnicities, and socio-economic groups. My focus has been on asking questions that

resonate with those being interviewed, using language they are familiar with, and interviewing techniques that make them feel comfortable. I am experienced in building effective research relationships in a range of organisational contexts and with people from a diverse range of cultural and socio-economic backgrounds.

I know that cultural awareness is important for understanding different cultural attitudes and beliefs toward an issue; the way in which cultural practices shape behavioural responses; the interface between factors such as gender, inequality and cultural belief systems; and other broader experiences of system support, opportunity to access appropriate support, and self-determination. These are factors I look to consider in an interview to ensure opportunity is provided for enabling an interviewee to present from their world view.

At a practice level, and outlined in the ethics application, was the need to ensure that participation in the research is voluntary and on the basis of informed consent. Participant information sheets and consent forms show the protocols for ensuring the anonymity and confidentiality aspects of this work. This means interviewees are not identifiable in this research, except for the developers of Tapatoru who are known to the sector and have agreed to be named.

For this research, as with other research I conduct, participants were provided an explanation of the research, its purpose, how their information is used and stored, who will have access to it and that any reports will protect their privacy and anonymity. Participants provided verbal acceptance to participate in phone and Zoom interviews. They were informed that their data would be used for the DProfPrac thesis and other outputs such as conference presentations and journal articles.

Throughout the research process I needed to be mindful of the fact that I am a researcher as 'outsider' for all the participants and especially for those participants who have a different cultural background to my own. I am also aware, as already discussed, that research is influenced by subjectivity (Goldblatt & Winterstein, 2016; Malterud, 2001) and thus "not a neutral activity" (Mutch, 2006, p. 26) and that there can be power relationships at play. I looked to conduct the interviews in an enabling way, so that participants saw the process as one of reflection and learning. At all times throughout the research, I was mindful that they are the experts.

Concluding reflections on the research approach

It has been a difficult chapter to write. I had expected it to be relatively straight forward given research is my 'day job'. However, in writing for this DProfPrac there is a need to describe the research approach in greater depth than I am used to in my professional researcher role. Here, commissioners of research are more interested in the answers and research approaches are not something to which they give more than a cursory glance. At the high level they just want to know what you did, how much you did, and why you did it. Many research commissioners are not familiar with the technical terms of research.

The DProfPrac has allowed for more methodological freedom than I am used to in my professional life but, at the same time it also requires that as a doctoral candidate I have robust processes in place. I am not yet convinced that DProfPrac studies are sufficiently mature that they allow for an

expansion on traditional methods or provide the opportunity for new ones. Hence the use of traditional methods and the description of them.

While the whole research project has required epistemological reflexivity (Halliwell, 2010; Palaganas et al., 2017) the research approach is one that seems to have required it more so. I have grappled with thinking about: the research questions and how these might have limited what could be found; the extent to which I conducted effective interviews (with basic and occasional deep levels of meaning) or great interviews (richly detailed) (Hermanowicz, 2002, p. 481, in Fujii, 2018, p. 54); how the ways in which I analysed and interpreted the data impacted on the findings; how I could have used different data collection methods, spoken to different people, and the extent to which this might have changed the findings. And ultimately, should I have waited another year to see if there was greater uptake and likely more generalisable findings from the research? Ultimately,

... epistemology in research enables space to illustrate that the “selves behind project” work has been considered by the researcher, reflected upon and articulated, not all of their life experiences, but critical connections between research positioning and the research project (Hook, 2015, p. 984).

In essence in this chapter, I have needed to have courage to say: this is what I did and why; this is how I have gathered what people said; this is how I interpret what they mean; and this is how I validate the overall approach and bring credibility to the story of Tapatoru. It is about having the courage to be honest about the shadows that fell between the vision and reality, and how I had to deal with this in a real-world, pragmatic way.

Chapter Four: Context Review - Other People's Stories

Introduction

Over the last 13 years a considerable amount of my work has been in the adult literacy and numeracy sector in Aotearoa New Zealand. In the main this has been as a researcher and in turn providing policy advice based on research and evaluation findings. Much of the context described in this chapter is my lived history and the retelling of it is a reminder of what has gone before and how this has informed where the foundation education sector is in 2021. It helps to explain that Tapatoru did not arrive in an unexpected way, rather it arrived off the back of considerable work and thinking since the early 2000s.

Continuing with the theme of storytelling established in the previous chapters, this chapter tells the stories of what others think through a retelling of what the literature and key informants say about raising the capability of the foundation education workforce. The caveat to this chapter is that each part lends itself to being a thesis in its own right.

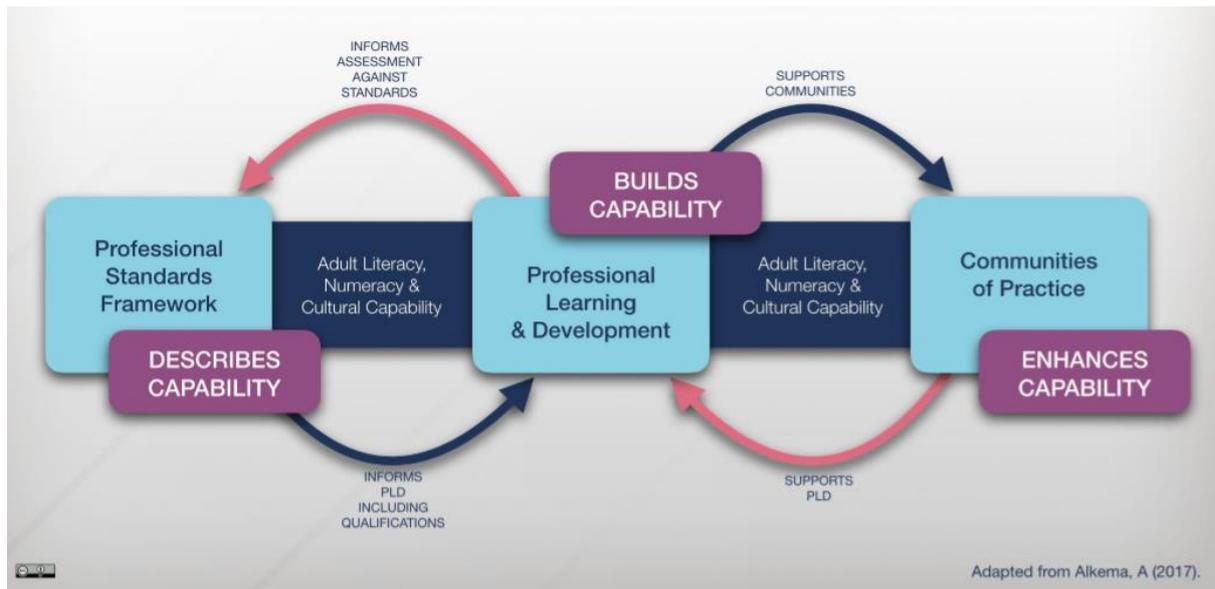
This chapter starts with a short description of the importance of capable educators and outlines what effective teaching looks like in the foundation education sector. Built from research, the model shows how educators need to: know the learners; know the demands of learning programmes; and know what to do about both these factors.

This is followed by an overview of capability-building in the foundation education sector in Aotearoa New Zealand since 2007 when responsibility shifted from the Ministry of Education to the TEC. Here I draw from research and my personal knowledge of working as a researcher in this sector and informing policy. This part of the chapter considers the strategic direction set by government and the translation of it into both formal (qualifications) and non-formal learning (PLD) for educators. It also describes the most recent model that informs and supports building the capability of foundation-level educators.

The chapter concludes with a discussion on the role professional standards play in describing capability and how they can be used by educators. It also describes how the professional standards framework, Tapatoru, underpins the integrated capability-building model we now have in Aotearoa New Zealand. This chapter has been shared, along with some of the findings in Chapter Five, with Ako Aotearoa who used this as one of their contractual outputs to the TEC. It has also been shared with Ako Aotearoa's online adult literacy and numeracy community of practice.

Overall, this chapter works from the premise that there are three broad factors contributing to educators' capability: professional standards describe capability; PLD builds capability; and professional learning communities enhance and sustain capability. Figure 4.1 below shows how these aspects connect in an iterative way

Figure 4.1: A Coherent Capability Pathway



(Source: Smith & Te Rito, 2018, p. 4. Ako Aotearoa. [Creative Commons CC BY-SA 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/))

Review approach

This context review draws on: national and international literature in adult literacy and numeracy; policy documentation; key informants; personal communications with others working in the field; interviewees in this research project; and my professional knowledge of this field as my workplace. The literature includes evaluation and research reports, journal articles, policy papers, government strategy statements, opinion pieces, and books that could be sourced electronically. It is limited to material written since 2000.

To start with, keyword searches were used. The key words included: adult literacy and numeracy; and foundation teaching, tertiary teaching, professional standards. Searches also included:

- Ako Aotearoa's body of work on adult education
- the names of researchers well known in the field of adult literacy and numeracy and PLD (and whose work I have been informed by), including: Benseman; Coben; Mallows; Litster; Reder; Timperley; Vorhaus; Whitten
- international adult literacy and numeracy organisations, including: National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA); National Research and Development Centre (NRDC); the European Literacy Policy Network (ELINET).
- government agency websites in Ireland, Scotland, Australia, and Canada.

Once sourced, each piece of literature was keyword searched for information related to each aspect to be covered in this review. Following this, the snowball method was used whereby the reference lists of publications were checked for additional sources.

Background

In Aotearoa New Zealand, the foundation education space, as it is internationally, has a diverse range of learners (Gal, Grotlüschen, Tout, & Kaiser, 2020; Windsich, 2015). It includes learners studying in non-formal, pre-qualification levels, through to those studying at levels 1-3 on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF).³ These learners are in a number of education settings, noted in Chapter One, including community education, workplaces, and formal tertiary education settings. With the exception of ACE, whose funding is derived from a range of sources (Chauvel, 2019), the organisations are mainly funded by the TEC. For the most part, teaching occurs in face-to-face settings. However, the advent of COVID-19 saw some education providers shift to online provision and while most have fully returned to face-to-face, online provision remains an option for some (Alkema, 2020b).

Within these settings there are heterogenous groups of learners who range in age and ethnicities, who have generally been underserved by education systems, are less likely than other groups to seek out learning opportunities, and are often struggling to make their way in the world (Kerehoma et al., 2019; OECD, 2019; Potter, Taupo, Hutchings, & McDowall, 2011; Reid & Schroder, 2019; Windisch, 2015). Foundation-level learners are often referred to as 'low-skilled', but as the OECD (2019) points out, while these learners may have low literacy and numeracy levels, they have a range of other skills that are valuable in workplaces and communities.

Foundation level learners are an important group to reach and teach given their vulnerability and the poor outcomes (social, economic, and wellbeing) that accrue to those with lower skill levels (Alkema & McDonald, 2018; Bynner & Parsons, 2006; Erwin, Meehan, Pacheco & Turcu, 2020; Gal et al., 2020; Ministry of Education, & Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment, 2016; OECD, 2019). They are also key to reach given the difference that foundation level learning makes, particularly to social and wellbeing outcomes (Alkema & McDonald, 2018; Kerehoma et al., 2019; Vorhaus, Litster, Frearson, & Johnson 2011; Windisch, 2015). Finally, foundation learning is important for the contribution it makes towards developing a habit of learning that enables people to build skills and adapt to changing circumstances (OECD, 2021).

While the New Zealand Productivity Commission (2017) discussed in a general way the types of provision each of the foundation education sectors delivers, to date no work has been done in Aotearoa New Zealand to understand the foundation teaching workforce – for example, who they are, where they work, their qualifications. Coben, Kane, and Whitten (2017, in Winter, 2019) found this was the case for numeracy educators and Benseman (2014) notes this is the case generally for adult literacy and numeracy educators. This is in spite of an understanding of this workforce being called for by Benseman, Sutton, and Lander (2003).

³ The definition of foundation learners varies. Benseman, Sutton and Lander (2003) included those studying at levels 1-4 on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF). Ako Aotearoa (2014) included those at Level 1-2 on the same framework. Alkema and McDonald (2018) worked from Ako Aotearoa's approach and included those at pre-qualification and Levels 1-2 on the framework. van Lamoen (2018) included those at pre-qualification and Levels 1-3 on the framework.

One of the challenges for the foundation education sector, particularly those working in non-formal education, is that it is seen to sit outside the mainstream and is generally not known about as a career option. Chapter Six makes this point by highlighting that all but one of the early adopters of Tapatoru had come to adult education as a second or third career.

So, people just don't know about it as a career I don't think. They might think of maybe tertiary teaching, maybe in that kind of context, but ... not probably in terms of foundational. Yeah, maybe some people in terms of English language, but I think it is something people come to normally as adults (Interviewee 18).

Adult education also suffers from an image problem. Elfert and Walker call it a 'poor cousin' and note in relation to the adult literacy and numeracy sector that educators,

... have been associated with volunteer do-gooder grannies in cardigans, rather than professional teachers, and adult literacy has, by and large, existed outside the mainstream of education and its learners outside what is generally understood as the mainstream of society (2020, p. 111).

Educator workforce: values, skills, and capabilities

The diversity of settings with the range of diverse learners, highlights the complexity of determining, not only what the foundation education workforce looks like, but also the capabilities such a workforce should hold. This is not the case in the compulsory sector.

The compulsory education sector

The compulsory education sector in Aotearoa New Zealand has a history of investigating what contributes to outcomes for learners and building educator capability (Alton-Lee, 2003; Hattie, 2003; Timperley et al., 2007). Hattie's (2003) meta-analysis of what contributes to students' achievement in the compulsory education sector shows there are six influences/influencers that impact to varying degrees: students; homes; schools; principals; peers; and teachers. Hattie found the biggest school influencers are teachers who can account for about 30 percent of the variance in student achievement.

The answer lies ... in the person who gently closes the classroom door and performs the teaching act – the person who puts into place the end effects of so many policies, who interprets these policies, and who is alone with students during their 15,000 hours of schooling (2003, pp. 2-3).

While Hattie's research shows a 30 percent variance, Alton-Lee (2003) cites up to a 59 percent variance in student achievement being able to be attributed to the differences between teachers and classes. On the back of this she makes recommendations for 10 quality teaching practices that contribute to student achievement. While teaching practice/pedagogy⁴ is one of these, Alton-Lee goes beyond this to look at aspects such as teacher expectations and inclusive teaching environments.

⁴ The term 'pedagogy' is used throughout this review as the overarching term for teaching practice. As such it is inclusive of 'andragogy'.

The capability of the school teaching workforce is underpinned by the requirement for teachers to have at least an undergraduate degree. However, there is no such requirement for tertiary teachers. As Suddaby notes,

... unlike the compulsory education sector, tertiary education providers haven't in the past been required to insist on pre-service training and attainment of a relevant qualification as a teacher prior to employment. In reality they have largely been unable to given that tertiary teachers' discipline knowledge base has generally been built up over years of focused practical experience or study and is usually the basis for their employment (2019, p. 42).

The compulsory sector is also guided by underpinning values - whakamana, manaakitanga, pono, and whanaungatanga, a code of professional responsibility and six standards for teaching (The Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, n.d).⁵ These standards, amongst other things, describe the knowledge and practice required for effective teaching, set the standard for certification, guide professional learning and development, and increase the confidence the public has in teaching as a profession (Education Council, 2017, p. 16).

The tertiary education sector

While the tertiary education sector in Aotearoa New Zealand does not require educators to hold teaching qualifications, individual organisations may set their own standards or qualification requirements. In addition, and as noted later in this chapter, the TEC has required (for funding purposes) educators working in the foundation sector to hold or be working towards adult teaching qualifications. Neither does the tertiary education sector, as Suddaby (2019, citing James, 2015) notes, have registration requirements, a code of ethics, professional standards, or requirements for professional learning and development.

The Adult and Community Education (ACE) sector is the only part of the foundation education sector to recognise the issues associated with this lack of capability markers. In 2011, ACE Aotearoa thought professional standards (in the form of teaching standards) were “*the way to go*”, and developed a set of these for their practitioners. They are not compulsory and are used,

... as an assessment tool (of potential or current teaching staff) to inform recruitment, job descriptions, supporting teaching, identifying professional development needs ... [they] have been used to inform our ACE Annual Awards educator criteria ... and most importantly, we want everyone to be intentional about demonstrating if they are teaching, how do they know they are any good? And we hope the standards, particularly the indicators, offer guidance and language to help with this (Interviewee 2).

ACE Aotearoa has refined the standards over time. They are built around the standards of commitment, knowledge, and practice and underpinned by the values of manaakitanga, whanaungatanga, and rangatiratanga (ACE Aotearoa, n.d.). There are similarities between these ACE standards, those of the compulsory sector, and Tapatoru.

Over time, the capability of the foundation teaching sector and what contributes to it has been documented in several research reports. In the adult literacy and numeracy sector a body of

⁵ The Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand was previously known as the Education Council.

research by John Benseman (Benseman, Sutton, & Lander, 2003, 2005; Benseman, 2006; Benseman, Lander, & Sutton, 2005, 2008; Sutton & Benseman, 2012) shows that in this sector, as with the school sector, skilled teachers make an important contribution to learner achievement. Benseman et al. (2005) cite a range of factors that influence learning, including: teachers being able to diagnose learners' strengths and weaknesses and being able to adopt deliberate teaching strategies that build on what learners need to be able to do in order to achieve.

In addition to Benseman's work in Aotearoa New Zealand, there is also work from international researchers (Casey, Cara, Eldred, Grief, Hodge, Ivani, Jupp, Lopez, & McNeil, 2006; Coben, Brown, Rhodes, Swain, Ananiadou, Brown, Ashton, Holder, Lowe, Magee, Nieduszynska, & Storey, 2007; Faraday, Overton, & Cooper, 2011; Gal et al., 2020; Vorhaus, et al., 2011) showing that capable and qualified teachers do improve outcomes for foundation level learners. Vorhaus et al. (2011) found it was important for teachers to have both generic teaching skills and subject specific teaching skills. They also found, "Learner progress in literacy is greater where teachers have qualified teacher status, and in numeracy where teachers are qualified in maths to Level 3 or above (irrespective of qualified teacher status)" (2011, p. 12).

The international literature cited above seemingly, either consciously or unconsciously, takes a technical, eurocentric approach to educator capability. However, in Aotearoa New Zealand, the literature (Brice, 2020; Chu, Samala Abella, & Paruini, 2013; Chu-Fuluifaga & Ikiua-Pasi, 2021; Furness & Hunter, 2019; Luafutu-Simpson, Noa, Uta'I, & Petelo, 2018; Kerehoma et al., 2019; Prebble, n.d.; Sciascia, 2017) shows that in relation to teaching Māori and Pacific adults, pedagogical capability involves more than the technical aspects. It involves understanding and practising a values-based approach with learners.

In her review of 45 research projects on teaching adult Māori learners, Sciascia found teaching and learning is about a holistic approach. "This is what *Māori* refer to as 'ako'. Ako is a holistic concept that incorporates ways of knowing, knowledge systems, beliefs, values and practices that are strongly connected and related to concepts such as whanaungatanga, wairuatanga, manaakitanga, kaitiakitanga" (2017, p. 11).

Similarly, Kerehoma et al., report on the need for culturally appropriate pedagogies that acknowledge workplace learners' ways of thinking and their values. These researchers report successful teaching happens when, "Space is provided for employees to bring their culture into the training room and allows for recognition that learning is about the cognitive, affective, and emotional domains - ako, manaakitanga, and wairuatanga" (2019, p. 5).

These findings echo those of Bishop (2012, p. 40) in the compulsory education sector when he talks about "a Culturally Responsive Pedagogy of Relations". Central to this way of thinking is the value of self-determination that sees learning as "reciprocal and interactive ... learners are to be connected to each other and to learn with and from each other" (Bishop, 2012, p. 41). Bishop goes on to say that when teachers create appropriate socio-cultural spaces, learners feel comfortable, safe, and actively learn rather than being passive recipients of the teachers' knowledge. This finding is echoed by Kerehoma et al. (2019).

In a review of 11 Pacific research projects commissioned by Ako Aotearoa the key theme is also a holistic teaching approach. “The research does not identify what could be termed ‘Pasifika pedagogy’. Rather, ... what has been described in this body of research is culturally inclusive pedagogy” (Alkema, 2014, p. 3). Research by Southwick, Scott, Mitaera, Nimarota, and Falepau, (2017, p. 36) supports this thinking and reports, “There is no recipe or codified manual that could possibly represent what is meant by a “pedagogy of success” as examined in this project.” However, their research does talk about the elements that contribute to success for Pacific learners including: safe learning environments; the centrality of the values of relationship and culture, and recognition that the latter is an asset. Chu-Fuluifaga and Ikiua-Pasi (2021, p. 22) reinforce the importance of relationships, which is “unquestionable and undeniable [with educators needing to] foster quality, intentional relationships with students.”

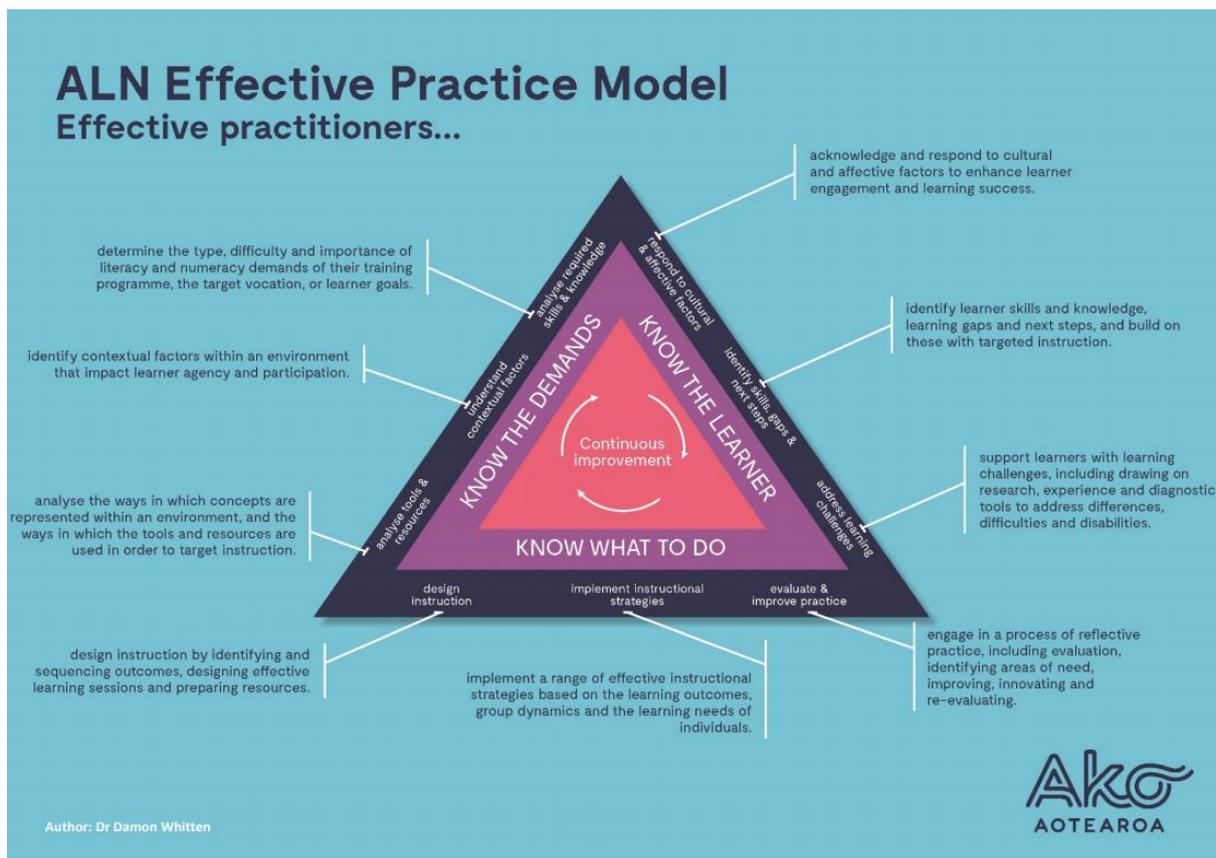
The findings of these researchers are further affirmed by the Ministry of Education (2018, p. 26) in the school sector where examples of four “Pacific-based pedagogical models and frameworks” are presented. These models include the importance of acknowledging cultural identities, understanding diversity, and the importance of connecting Pacific world views with those of the mainstream education system. An important point to note for understanding the Pacific world are the differing values of Pacific nations (Saylene Ulberg & Pale Sauni, personal communication, March 31, 2021).

Defining capability

So where does this leave educators in Aotearoa New Zealand in terms of understanding the practice of capable foundation education practitioners? In 2018 Ako Aotearoa looked at a substantial body of research and developed a model of pedagogical practice that underpins educator capability in the tertiary foundation teaching sector. The ALN Effective Practice Model encapsulates and brings together the cognitive, affective and cultural domains that have been outlined above and can be seen as a summary of the dimensions of capable educator practice (Whitten, 2018c, p. 9).

The model outlines what effective foundation level educators do as they get to know their learners, know the demands of the learning programme, or workplaces when learning is happening there, and know what to do to support learners in their learning and development. It is a deceptively simple framework when viewed in this way, but the knowledge and skills required to work with learners in foundation education is far from simple, as educators seek to engage them with learning and with learning materials. Each of the fine print indicators in Figure 4.2 warrant intensive study in their own right, but as noted in the introduction to this chapter, the content serves as a backdrop to the wider research project.

Figure 4.2: ALN Effective Practice Model



(Source: Whitten, 2018c, p. 9. Ako Aotearoa. [Creative Commons CC BY-SA 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/))

The short summary of research above highlights that a capable and effective foundation educator workforce is one that knows the learners, the ‘how’ of teaching and learning, and the ‘what’, as shown in the triangle in Figure 4.2. In Aotearoa New Zealand it is essential that this workforce not only uses a technical approach, but does this along with culturally-responsive approaches to meet the needs of all learners, particularly those who identify as Māori and Pacific Peoples given their high numbers in foundation education.⁶

Setting the direction for capability building in foundation education

The literature shows that a capable educator workforce does not develop without direction and support. In the case of foundation teaching the direction started with the Ministry of Education in 2001 with the first adult literacy strategy (Walker, Udy, Pole, May, Chamberlain, & Sturrock, 2001). Somewhat ironically this first strategy was called “*More than Words*” but it was nothing more than words. It took two to three years for the Ministry of Education to set up a programme of work that focussed on professionalising the educator workforce and the initial work on what was to become the Adult Learning Progressions (Tertiary Education Commission, 2008a) – a six step framework of

⁶ Māori account for 18 percent of learners in workplace literacy and numeracy programmes and Pacific Peoples, 23 percent. In non-formal learning programmes funded through the Intensive Literacy and Numeracy (ILN) Fund in provider settings 41 percent are Māori, and 18 percent are Pacific Peoples (Alkema, 2021, p. 7).

indicators that describe adult learners' skills and behaviours in adult literacy and numeracy (Alkema & Rean, 2013).

In 2007, the TEC took responsibility for operational policy in the adult literacy and numeracy sector and incorporated capability building into their programme of work. This has been articulated in documents including:

- *LITERACY AND NUMERACY ACTION PLAN 2008-12: Raising the literacy, language and numeracy skills of the workforce*. Building the capability of the workforce was one of three work streams in this action plan and included building capability through qualifications and professional development (Tertiary Education Commission, 2008b, p. 13).
- *Adult Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2012* (in Alkema & Rean, 2013).⁷
- *Literacy and Numeracy Implementation Strategy 2015-2019*. The themes of previous strategies continue with one of four workstreams being devoted to building educator capability through qualifications, professional development and supporting ways to share good practice (Tertiary Education Commission, 2015, p. 16).

Over time this work has been nested within iterations of the TES. Priority Four of the 2014-2019 strategy (Ministry of Education & the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, 2014) was about improving adult literacy and numeracy, but the strategy did not talk about how to deliver high quality teaching in order for this to happen. The importance of a capable educator workforce is highlighted in the most recent TES where one of the five objectives is, "Quality teaching and leadership" with one of the priorities being to, "Develop staff to strengthen teaching, leadership and learner support capability across the education workforce" (Ministry of Education, 2020). Here, lies the strategic mandate for capability building that is further supported by the statement that the TEC is required to "give effect" to the TES.

Building the capability of the foundation educator workforce

Giving effect to various iterations of the action plans and strategies has happened in two ways. Firstly, through making adult literacy and numeracy qualifications compulsory for those working in the foundation sector. Secondly through the development of PLD programmes to support educators in an ongoing way. Both are described below.

Formal Learning: qualifications

From a formal credentialling perspective, foundation level educators can upskill themselves through a range of qualifications, the most common of which are the Level 5 New Zealand Certificates in Adult Literacy and Numeracy Education (NZCALNE) (Vocational and Educator).⁸ Up until 2017 the TEC made it a requirement for organisations receiving foundation-level funding that educators either hold or be working towards these qualifications if they did not hold higher level qualifications in the adult literacy and numeracy field.

⁷ The strategy document is no longer available on the TEC's website.

⁸ Before the Targeted Review of Qualifications (TRoQ) qualifications these were known as National Certificates with the acronym NCALNE.

To support educators through a qualification the TEC provides the Adult Literacy Educator Fund (ALEF). This fund previously sat with two education providers. It is now with one provider and the processes related to the selection of this provider have not been made clear by the TEC. Educators can apply for funding of \$2500 to complete their NZCALNE qualification with this provider. This is possibly not the wisest of TEC spends, given there are organisations who offer the qualifications fees free, for example, the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand, and others who charge lower fees than \$2500 (Skills Highway, 2020).

In 2017 the qualification requirement expanded and now includes:

- New Zealand Certificate in Adult Literacy and Numeracy Education (Vocational/Workplace; Level 5) (NZCALNE)
- New Zealand Certificate in Adult and Tertiary Teaching (Level 5) (NZCATT)
- New Zealand Certificate in Adult Literacy and Numeracy Education (Educator; Level 5)
- New Zealand Diploma in Adult Literacy and Numeracy (Level 6) (Tertiary Education Commission, 2017).

In 2021 it is not known how many people hold these qualifications. However, recent figures from the 2020 review of NZCALNE show very low completion rates (Keesing-Styles & Smith, 2020a).

Table 4.1: NZCALNE Enrolments and Completions

Qualification	Enrolled			Completed		
	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019
NZCALNE (Voc)	433	892	540	61 (14%)	188 (21%)	63 (12%)

These completion numbers are considerably lower than those reported 2009-2012 where the data show 2,570 educators graduated with one or other of the four certificates listed above (Coolbear, 2014). Keesing-Styles and Smith (2020b) provide a number of reasons for low completion rates including: some educators needing to enroll in the qualification as a funding requirement, and having no real incentive to complete; qualifications being at too high a level for some educators; and some programmes being too theoretical for the educators who were undertaking them. Each of these factors calls into question the capability of the foundation educator workforce and the extent to which they might have the skills required to educate learners with high and diverse learning needs.

The use of qualifications as a mechanism to build capability mirrors that of the compulsory sector. While making it mandatory to have, or be working towards, adult education qualifications brought some pushback from the sector, the TEC took this approach in the context of looking to upskill and professionalise an unregulated workforce. In terms of its contribution to capability building, Benseman (2014) found in his survey of 217 people enrolled in NZCALNE (then called the National Certificate in Adult Literacy and Numeracy Education (NCALNE)) in 2013, that approximately a third of them thought studying for the qualification had been ‘highly influential’ on their practice and half

thought it had been 'influential'. However, those who responded to the survey did not say how their knowledge or practice had changed. Overall, Benseman concluded the certificates were appreciated by the survey respondents. "Most have found it a positive experience and report that it has also influenced their practice. These findings indicate that NCALNE has made a positive contribution towards developing a more knowledgeable and skilled workforce for this emerging educational sector" (2014, p. 122).

Benseman's findings align with those of Hazlewood and Alkema (2013) who found the qualification was described by some of their interviewees as the best professional development they had ever done. However, Alkema et al. (2017) reported more mixed views from some of those working in the sector. They report the qualification was seen as a 'one-size-fits-all approach' for expert and novice educators, and educators who work in a range of settings – community, workplaces, and tertiary organisations; it was too theoretical; and it did not have sufficient cultural context. These findings align with Smith (personal communication, March 7, 2019) who, as a deliverer of the qualification, reinforced the idea of its lack of suitability for all those working in the sector, given the differing roles they have. This thinking is further confirmed in the ACE sector where the process of going through NZCALNE was said to negatively affect educators, particularly Māori educators (Interviewee 2).

Further evidence of one-size-not-fitting-all comes from Interviewee 11 who talked about compliance and subsequent resistance at her wānanga, the length of time it took for educators to complete the qualification, and the extent to which educators required additional support to complete it. Interviewee 11 also talked about how the content of NZCALNE did not meet her organisation's needs given an insufficient focus on teaching adults with literacy difficulties. The solution for this was the development of a level 5, 20 credit, micro-credential which has "*real meaning and will allow [educators] to support students better ... it is customised and the Māori elements are woven in and evident.*"

Issues with tertiary teaching qualifications

In 2019, I was a contracted assessor (for four months) for the Level 5 Certificate of Adult Tertiary Teaching (CATT). While a painful experience, it was also excellent professional learning and gave me insight into the tertiary teaching workforce, and confirmed for me that it is mixed and diverse. At the end of the contract, I commented in an email to the organisation delivering the qualification,

As a one size fits all it has to cater for those in full-time teaching roles through to those who are in "stand and deliver" roles for a few hours or over 1-2 day courses. Many of those involved with the latter are not even involved with the design of their programmes and are trainers using materials developed by instructional designers. In light of that, is there space for some thinking about micro-credentials or some badging as per the Tapatoru Framework? (Personal communication to [X], December 17, 2019).

I was also concerned about the course content in relation to the teaching of cultural competence. While those going through the qualification were introduced to Māori and Pacific frameworks, there was an absence of how these frameworks translated into teaching practice. I also queried the extent to which much of the learning was premised on 'old white men's theories', in particular, Malcolm

Knowles' ideas of andragogy, and the need to move to thinking about heutagogy that emphasises self-determination and learner agency. This would be in keeping with the newer thinking that had been coming out of research either commissioned or conducted by Ako Aotearoa (van Lamoen, 2018; Whitten, 2018c, 2020).

My final concern related to the fact that in the process of writing about teaching practice the artistry and joy that comes from developing relationships with learners and helping them to learn gets lost. While this happens in the writing process, it also happened because of being asked to answer questions in relation to specific theories. There was no allowance for the exploration of wider theoretical frameworks that might have applied in the educators' contexts.

An additional issue with qualifications generally, is they do not attest to current capability. One of the key informants was keen to stress this point in relation to the educators he works with in his organisation. He openly acknowledges the issue having found *"a whole lot of people with qualifications and very little knowledge of embedded literacy and numeracy that are working on the front line with vulnerable learners"* (Interviewee 5) and finds the need to keep upskilling people so they know about how to teach these adult learners. Interviewee Five was of the view that there needed to be a mechanism for attesting to current competence. This finding was echoed by Interviewee 15. *"A formal qualification is the initial script, the idea for a movie – the basics of the plot line. This [Tapatoru] is the living dynamic of it – it makes the technical work with the emotion."*

While qualifications attest to achievement, they are insufficient on their own for confirming teacher capability. While they may be a marker of theoretical knowledge, they do not attest to effective practice given the ways in which they are generally assessed. In 2020 Ako Aotearoa reviewed the 14 tertiary teaching qualifications, including NZCALNE. In a letter to the TEC the reviewers noted, "... that teacher capability is more complex than qualifications alone. While they are a critical component, they do not automatically lead to the development of a critical mass of capability and expertise amongst tertiary teachers" (Keesing-Styles & Smith, 2020b, p.2).

In addition to the findings above, Alkema et al. (2017) also found that the compulsory nature of the qualification got in the way of other professional learning because of the time and cost for individuals and organisations. However, these researchers also concluded the foundation education workforce was more qualified and better prepared to teach than it would have been without the qualification. So, in essence, while a somewhat clunky policy lever, the sector has been left more qualified than it would have been had the TEC not imposed the requirement on organisations. In addition, I need to be mindful that we are ahead of some of our overseas counterparts who introduced qualifications for foundation educators later than Aotearoa New Zealand (Windisch, 2015).

Non-formal professional learning and development for foundation educators

As outlined above, building educator capability through professional development has been a focus area for the TEC. From 2007-2009, the TEC invested in the capability building of ITPs and ITOs by looking to upskill educators to embed literacy and numeracy into their foundation level programmes. Embedding was seen as the way to increase the number of learning opportunities that

include literacy and numeracy. The approach drew on the work of Casey et al. (2006) whose research concluded that outcomes for learners were better when embedded (integrated) approaches were used rather than when literacy and numeracy were taught separately to other curriculum areas.

It is not possible to determine the overall impact of the TEC's investment in sector capability building in relation to embedded literacy and numeracy as there was no evaluation of its impact in the ITP sector. However, a formative evaluation of embedding in ITOs (Ryan, McDonald, Sutton, & Doyle, 2012) concluded that, while there had been significant investment, there was still considerable work to be done to ensure that literacy and numeracy were business as usual in the ITOs. A follow-up study by McDonald, Alkema, and Benseman (2014) found the capability of organisations had improved since 2012 and embedded approaches were integrated into both strategic and operational levels of organisations. Recent work by Alkema and Murray (2021) shows embedded literacy and numeracy approaches remain a key part of the foundation teaching sector, especially in the subsidiaries of Te Pūkenga. But, despite having a qualification in adult literacy and numeracy teaching, educators still require considerable support to embed literacy and numeracy into their vocational programmes.

Between 2009 and 2017 the National Centre of Literacy and Numeracy for Adults (NCLANA) at the University of Waikato delivered PLD programmes and online resources to support teaching and learning. This work was transferred to Ako Aotearoa in 2018. Between 2015-2017 additional PLD for organisations and educators with high numbers of Māori and Pacific learners was delivered through the He Taunga Waka (HTW) programme run by Ako Aotearoa. This programme has been discontinued and cultural capability programmes are now delivered through an online programme using the Pathways Awarua platform⁹ or embedded into wider PLD programmes run by the ALNACC team at Ako Aotearoa.

Getting uptake of PLD

Having PLD opportunities on offer is not sufficient to attract educators. Education organisations need to have a culture of professional learning (Misko, Guthrie & Waters, 2021), and educators need to be afforded the opportunities to attend and want to attend. Research (Alkema et al., 2017) found that both NCLANA and Ako Aotearoa said it was challenging to get people to attend PLD workshops. This is also a finding of Chauvel (2019) who notes that in the ACE sector, upskilling and developing tutors is a key challenge, contributed to by the lack of budget for professional development. In Interviewee 11's organisation cost also gets in the way. *"We've not used the Ako stuff much as it is expensive."* The solution in this organisation has been to run PLD internally.

⁹ Further information about this can be found at: <https://ako.ac.nz/assets/Services/Capability-pathways/5a88bda63c/Maori-Cultural-Capability-Pathway-Flyer.pdf>; and <https://ako.ac.nz/assets/Services/Capability-pathways/2dc48d1831/Pacific-Cultural-Centeredness-Pathway-Flyer.pdf>

It appears this is an ongoing issue. Haigh (2006) reports that in the wider tertiary teaching sector, there was low uptake of PLD opportunities. His thinking is that teachers do not undervalue PLD, rather that the formats on offer did not meet their needs. Tofaeono confirms this thinking when she talks about the need for “culturally appropriate accessible PD ... to equip educators to support and progress taurira and to enable the opportunity for sustainable employment and further study opportunities” (2020, p. 87). The latter point by Tofaeono is relevant as it considers the career development aspect of PLD that is often overlooked with the focus of PLD being about how to do current jobs better.

Haigh’s and Tofaeono’s thinking aligns with Hazlewood and Alkema (2013) who found that non-users of NCLANA workshops said the PLD on offer was too theoretical or academic and was not what they were interested in. In addition, Chalmers (2011, p. 30) notes in the higher education sector that while PLD is useful for upskilling staff it does not reward them and is “a hurdle to be undertaken on top of other competing demands on their time.” The increasing use of digital badges as a public ‘notifier’ of what has been undertaken may alleviate this lack of reward, but as is shown in the following chapter, digital badges are not yet highly valued by those in the sector.

The idea that it is too theoretical and academic for educators aligns with McHardy and Chapman’s (2016) findings that tutors working with foundation learners often have minimal training, use varied practices and are likely to bring their own beliefs to the way they think about reading, learning to read, and the learners. Beeli-Zimmerman (2015) found the same in relation to numeracy tutors and concluded that beliefs are hard to change and as such workshops and courses are unlikely to change the way numeracy is taught. Benseman (2013) confirms these findings and reports tutors rely on their own knowledge and experience rather than use research-based, theory-informed approaches to teaching.

The low uptake of Tapatoru also shows that even when there are professional learning options that are available free of charge, they can be a hard sell. Throughout 2019 Ako Aotearoa worked with five organisations to get them to sign up to the Tapatoru pilot, with only one of them agreeing to do so. Those who did not take up the offer had varying reasons for doing so. Firstly, RoVE, secondly restructures within organisations, and thirdly the time completing Tapatoru was likely to take within the busy working lives of educators.

I started to do the application. Went back and forwards with Graeme. He left me some resources and I started to do all that and basically I was just left on an island, so I thought just taiho here sunshine until we can get some more support around the place, you know ... [and] I think again, timing, it just got lost in all, amongst all the issues ... I mean lots of things got in the way (Interviewee 5).

... what got in the way, So - we’re such a big org ... So when I tried to push that up, there were several people who were really keen, but then you have to get it past other people, so it was really the mechanics of a large organisation and now I have umm verbal sign off, but trying to get the physical sign off [laughter]. You know I had verbal sign off and now that we have a new manager overall for the wider team because umm we’ve kind of restructured. And then you have to go through that all again ... (Interviewee 6).

Changing practice takes time

While not explicitly articulated by key informants in this research project, I am wondering if the time to work through the Tapatoru process was also an issue. Changing educator practice by getting them to deeply reflect on their values and beliefs is difficult when educators show they essentially want 'quick fixes'. *"If I'm going to PD I want to come away with some tool today that will help me. That's what I'm looking for. ... Give me the spade that I can use to dig the hole with today"* (Interviewee 5). These quick fixes come through webinars, seminars, workshops, and networking events.

Educators expect to be kept up-to-date with what is happening, get practical strategies they can use in their classrooms, share and exchange ideas with others, and find out more about specialist subject areas (Hazlewood & Alkema, 2013; SOLAS, 2017; Wignall, 2015; Windisch, 2015). These findings suggest educators may not always be best placed to determine the type of capability building they need, or about the type of professional learning that will lead to changes in practice that are culturally and pedagogically sound.

Alkema et al. (2017) found professional development provided through the HTW programme provided a starting point for shifting educators' attitudes and beliefs about their Māori and Pacific learners by giving them strategies for developing meaningful and positive relationships with learners. This thinking aligns with research conducted in the compulsory sector (Timperley et al., 2007). It also aligns with other work on inclusive pedagogies in the tertiary sector with Māori and Pacific learners, (Chu et al., 2013; Chu-Fuluifaga & Ikiua-Pasi, 2021; Fiso & Huthnance, 2012; Fraser, 2016; Honeyfield, Petersen, Bidois, Fitchett, Van Toor, Nicholls, & Crossan, 2016; Kerehoma et al., 2013; Tomoana 2012; Southwick et al., 2017).

Research and personal experience in the compulsory and tertiary sectors show changing practice takes sustained PLD and practice, given it requires getting to the heart of both the cognitive and affective domains of educators. The models of traditional capability building such as one-off workshops are not likely to do this and are therefore only likely to bring about surface rather than deep learning. Such surface learning leads to first order rather than second order change. First order change tends to deal with aspects such as systems or learning materials, while "second order change goes beyond this to challenge the assumptions, beliefs and values that are generally held by practitioners about learners and learning. It gets them to change their practice in light of this" (Alkema, 2012b, p. 3).

Second order change is an ongoing process as educators, programme managers and organisations, either after professional development or through discussion in their own organisations, start a process of reflection to test their assumptions, socialise new ideas, let go of old ideas and practices, implement new ones and revisit and re-practise their new thinking (Faraday et al., 2011; Timperley et al., 2007). Ako Aotearoa's revised model of PLD is allowing for this with space for new knowledge, practice and reflection, and a portfolio of evidence to be developed.

Confounding the change process of building capable foundation educators, is a lack of stability in this workforce. This has been driven by contestable funding for level 1 and 2 programmes (which stopped in 2018) and two-year investment plans for Tertiary Education Organisations (TEOs). No surety of funding for organisations means no surety of employment for educators. This in turn has possibly led to reduced

incentives for organisations to build the capability of their workforces and the lack of time for deep change to educators' beliefs and their teaching practice. This situation is similar to Australia's where an aging and casualised, contracted workforce is impacting on the capability of the foundation teaching sector to properly teach and support adult learners (V. Iles, Manager Reading and Writing Hotline, personal communication, August 18, 2018).

This summary of the operational context and research shows what has been done to build the capability of the foundation education workforce and the challenges associated with it. Here it has involved qualifications and PLD. But, without a coherent programme of review and evaluation it is impossible to determine the extent to which the approach has built sector capability. But it was the launching pad for work undertaken by Ako Aotearoa in 2018 which now underpins capability building in the foundation education sector.

Approaches to capability building through PLD

Prior to 2018, the capability building approach in the foundation education sector was not as fully informed as that of the compulsory sector where the seminal work on best practice in PLD in schools comes from Timperley et al. (2007). This Best Evidence Synthesis (BES) provides theories and approaches that work to change teacher practice and in turn improve student outcomes.

... [there is a need] for a systemic response to the development of expertise, for the integration of theory and practice ... [and] leadership practices that involve promoting and participating in effective professional learning [as these] are the practices most likely to distinguish otherwise similar schools in terms of student achievement (pp. xxi).

Timperley, Kasar, and Halbert (2014, p. 5) developed this thinking further and described a process for capability building that works on "a spiral of inquiry". This thinking is incorporated into models of PLD for the compulsory sector that consider teaching from a holistic standpoint. This means practitioners,

... are aware of the assumptions underpinning their practice, including their cultural positioning, and know when these assumptions are helpful for their students and when to question them, and if necessary, to let them go. They actively seek deep knowledge about both the content of what is taught and how to teach it effectively for their students in particular contexts (Professional Development Advisory Group, 2014, p. 4).

While the compulsory sector led the way, there was a growing body of literature on building the capability of the foundation teaching workforce through PLD. Australia and Ireland, like New Zealand, are two countries that have taken a consistent and continuing approach by providing resources and support for practitioners. In Ireland, the Further Education and Skills Service, *An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna (SOLAS)* (2017) highlights the importance of ongoing professional development for those working in the further education sector because of:

- the diverse student groups they work with
- changing role requirements
- the need to be able to respond to social and economic environments, and

- the need to upskill with technology and modern learning approaches.

Nearly 10 years ago in Australia, The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Standing Council on Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment (SCOTESE) recognised the importance of a qualified workforce in its foundation skills strategy for adults.

Australian governments recognise that practitioner quality is an important determinant in improving learning outcomes. The workforce responsible for the delivery of foundation skills content across the adult community and VET system is not a homogeneous group of practitioners. ... Quality purpose-built credentials and opportunities for professional development are critical for this group (2012, pp. 19-20).

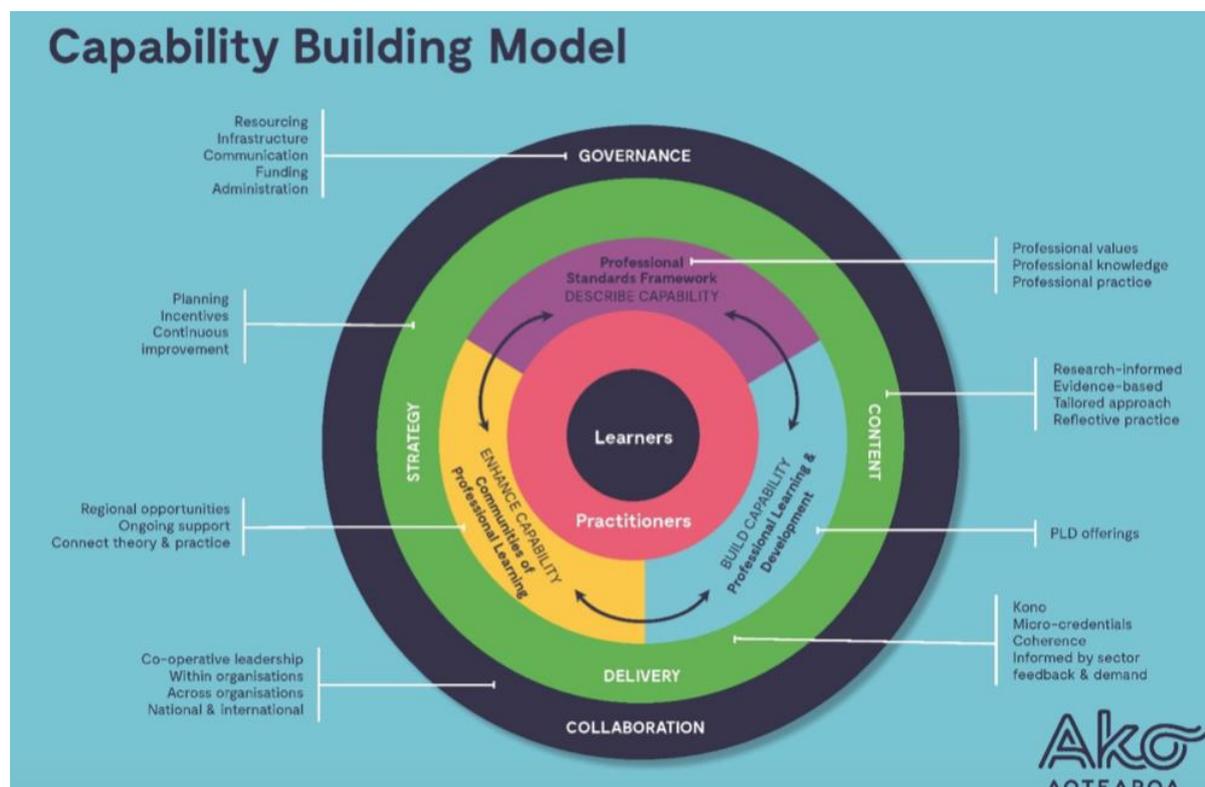
Literature in the school and tertiary sectors (Benseman, 2013; Department of State Development, South Australian Government, 2017; SOLAS, 2014, 2017; Honeyfield et al., 2016; Leach, Zepke, Haworth, Isaacs, & Nepia, 2009; NALA, 2015; Professional Development Advisory Group, 2014; Timperley et al., 2014; Wignall, 2015) shows PLD needs to be strategy- and theory-driven and based on what practitioners need to improve outcomes for learners. It also needs to be delivered in a range of flexible ways to meet practitioner needs.

In 2018 Ako Aotearoa undertook a literature review of PLD models and approaches that lead to the development of capable educator workforces. The review (van Lamoen, 2018, p. 22) concluded PLD has three key factors linked to system-level thinking shown in Chapter One.

1. It needs to be practitioner-centred and as such be driven by the educator's needs. What is learnt/taught must be research-informed and built around the 'what' – subject areas and the 'how' pedagogies. It needs to develop educators to be reflective and culturally competent practitioners.
2. PLD is about more than a one-off, content-driven event. It requires educators to think and reflect on their own beliefs, practices and cultural competencies; make inquiries into their own practice; and then share ideas in communities of practice.
3. PLD requires organisational support so that "systemic and systematic" approaches are taken to grow the capability of all staff.

On the back of this work Ako Aotearoa developed a framework for capability development that considers where PLD fits into the wider context of capability building. This framework is shown in Figure 4.3 below. It is built from the three broad factors shown in Figure 4.1, professional standards (describe), professional learning (builds), and professional learning communities (enhance and sustain).

Figure 4.3: Capability Building Model



(Source: van Lamoen, 2018, p. 6. Ako Aotearoa. [Creative Commons CC BY-SA 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/))

In relation to PLD two aspects are important. Firstly, having a range of PLD offerings so educators can personalise and customise their learning based on their needs (Gamrat, Zimmerman, Dudek, & Peck, 2014). While these offerings can be viewed as a menu, they can also be seen in the light of heutagogy, whereby self-determined, agentic, self-regulated educators make decisions about their learning needs (Agonács, & Matos, 2019; Hase & Kenyon, 2007). Secondly, having PLD over a longer time period is an adaptation that Ako Aotearoa has made in light of the research. This allows for new knowledge, practice and reflection, and a portfolio of evidence to be developed. Digital badges are awarded for the achievement of each of these stages (Ako Aotearoa, 2018). To date it is not known the extent to which this form of informal credentialling is understood or appreciated by the sector. This is further discussed in the following chapter, along with a fuller description of digital badging.

Drivers for capability building

However, having a sound theoretical approach to inform PLD models is insufficient on its own for building a capability and career pathway in the foundation education sector. Educators and organisations need to see a reason for or be motivated to undertake capability building activities. These reasons / motivators / drivers can be intrinsic or extrinsic. Alkema et al. (2017) proposed three possible drivers – compliance, investment, and quality and I build on these ideas here.

From a compliance perspective, organisations and individuals undertake capability building because they are required to. In his draft capability framework for the tertiary education sector, Marshall

(2018, p. 3) comments that the TEC does not want to “‘require’ compliance through funding conditions”, rather the TEC wants to see organisations caring about their capability to meet the needs of their communities and their learners.

However, the compliance approach has been the case with NZCALNE where organisations are required to have staff with this qualification (or since 2017 other qualifications) to receive funding to deliver foundation level qualifications. Professional development is also a compliance component for NZQA’s External Evaluation and Review, (EER) process where reviewers need to sight records of professional development undertaken by educators.¹⁰ The latter has been the case for one organisation (who did not participate in this research) who started Tapatoru through a PLD process in order to prepare for their EER.

Secondly, organisations and individuals undertake capability building because they are funded to do this. As reported earlier in this chapter, this was the case from 2008-2010 when ITPs and ITOs received considerable funding to learn how to embed literacy and numeracy into their vocational education programmes. This has also been the case for individual educators, where grants have been available to undertake NZCALNE. In addition, when NCLANA was first established, professional development workshops were available at no cost. However, ‘free’ is not enough on its own to ensure the uptake of professional learning as the low uptake of Tapatoru in 2019 and 2020 has shown.

Thirdly, there is the quality driver. Organisations and individuals undertake capability building because they are committed to high-quality delivery. This is about, “*doing our jobs better, improving job satisfaction and having the skills that make teachers’ jobs easier*” (Interviewee 4). It is also about wanting to recognise and professionalise staff, and in turn improving outcomes for their learners. “*We need prison educators who are strong you know. And seriously professional and that they know that they are in the prison delivery profession*” (Interviewee 14).

These three drivers are not mutually exclusive, but to date the capability-building drivers have been very much compliance based. Incentivising the sector to either take up what is on offer or invest in their own capability building and move beyond compliance (Coben & McCartney, 2016) requires some changes in thinking by individuals and education organisations. The quality incentive works from the basis that providers are intrinsically motivated to deliver quality programmes and will invest in their own capability building to do this. However, it is unlikely that all education providers, particularly the small PTEs, have the capacity/funding and expertise to do this. It is also challenging in the current RoVE context with ITPs and ITOs, as educators move, restructure, and reshape.

We’d just got a new CEO and people were dancing for their own jobs and nobody want to commit to a bloody thing, Anne. That was the major problem. No one wanted to say, “Yeah let’s do this.” They were all just sitting there looking over their shoulders you know and that was the problem for us eh – in a nutshell that was the problem. I think linking it to the career progressions was a nuts-and-bolts thing. We could have done that I reckon (Interviewee 5).

¹⁰ As a contracted reviewer for NZQA, I have found the evidence supplied to be, in the main, in the nature of one-off workshops.

Chapter six further explores the drivers and incentives for the Tapatoru participants and their organisations and some of this thinking may well be useful for feeding into the wider context of capability building.

Professional standards

Professional standards are a way to “professionalize the work of educators and as a lever for system-wide improvements in teaching and learning. They can be voluntarily developed and applied or they can be compulsory and regulated by an external agency” (Chalmers, 2017, p. 3). They are a way of ensuring educators have the skills to practise and have the potential to “improve the professional status of teachers” (Misko et al., 2021, p. 18). Along with this, professional standards can be used for accountability purposes and as a way of informing professional development needs.

The most commonly referred to professional standards (in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand) are the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) which uses the term, “‘standards’ to refer to nationally agreed statements of expectations for practice that encompass the wide variety of roles and responsibilities that contribute to and inform the learning experience of students” (Chalmers, 2017, p. 4).

Professional standards in Aotearoa New Zealand

It is unclear why so little has been done in relation to defining teaching standards in the tertiary sector widely and the foundation education sector specifically, given the work that has been done in the compulsory sector. A possible reason is the extent to which teaching in the foundation sector can be described as or is seen as a profession. It also comes back to Elfert and Walker’s (2020) idea of the “poor cousin” in the tertiary sector behind the universities and polytechnics.

Descriptors of tertiary educator capability are articulated in few places in Aotearoa New Zealand, apart from in adult teaching qualifications and more recently in Tapatoru. At a national level Ako Aotearoa has criteria for its Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards for the tertiary education sector as a whole (Ako Aotearoa, 2021). These are high level and are used to guide the evidence that goes into portfolios for entry into the awards. ACE Aotearoa, as noted earlier, has a teaching standards framework with standards for commitment, knowledge, and practice.

In the higher education sector, the Auckland University of Technology (AUT) has a professional standards framework, Ako Aronui.¹¹ Based on the UKPSF and “contextualised with Māori philosophies, world views and values” (Buissink, Diamond, Hallas, Swann, & Sciascia, 2017; Auckland University of Technology, 2019) Ako Aronui leads to a Higher Education Academy (HEA) fellowship. Piloted from 2015-2017, it is a teaching standards framework with three focus areas, activities (hei mahi), knowledge (māramatanga), and values (ngā uara). Like Tapatoru, Ako Aronui incorporates Māori language and values, and while it is a framework it is also seen as a professional learning programme (Auckland University of Technology, 2019).

¹¹ Ako Aronui Framework Poster. Accessed 3 May 2021 at https://altlab.aut.ac.nz/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Ako-Aronui-3-Framework-Poster_Nov14.pdf

When looking across other professions that have professional standards, for example, medicine and engineering, Révai (2018) determined they had three criteria: initial education takes place in a university; the standards regulate admission and continuing career development; and the standards contain information about the knowledge base required for practitioners. Lester (2014) adds to this by saying professions have a governing body who sign people off as being fit to practise and have responsibility for attesting to the maintenance of competence.

Suddaby complements this thinking and talks about professional standards in education as incorporating teaching standards.

Included within professional standards are teaching standards. These can either be formal (regulatory) or informal (voluntary), or a combination of both. Teaching standards can include requirements for relevant qualifications and training, identified responsibilities and accountabilities, involvement in on-going professional learning, and adherence to an ethical framework ... the interest and focus of professional standards are on continuing to enhance the quality of student learning through the enhancement of teacher quality and support (2019, p. 15).

Professional standards frameworks have been around for several years in international jurisdictions, with seemingly no appetite to embrace them in Aotearoa New Zealand in the tertiary education sector, apart from, as previously mentioned, the ACE sector and AUT. However, attempts have been made over the years with Ako Aotearoa having had professionalising tertiary teachers on their agenda for over 10 years. Holmes (2011, in Suddaby, 2019, p. 23) explored the principles that could be included in professional standards, including “ethical standards, attainment of specialised knowledge and skills derived from research, education and training and the commitment to apply their expertise to the interests of others.”

Coolbear, the first director of Ako Aotearoa, was a strong advocate for professional standards. As Suddaby, (2019, p. 23) notes, Coolbear promoted the idea of professionalising the tertiary education workforce through qualifications, ongoing professional development, and performance standards. Coolbear saw educator capability as “an important drive of quality tertiary education”. In 2012 Ako Aotearoa and the Metro ITP working group developed draft standards for vocational educators (Teacher Education Review Governance Group, 2014). These appear to have achieved no more than draft status.

Professional standards for foundation educators internationally

In England, professional standards for foundation educators were developed in 2014. These standards have three domains, professional knowledge, professional skills, and professional values (Education and Training Foundation, 2014). The professional standards use a self-assessment framework whereby practitioners reflect on their own practice, and discuss this with managers and peers. A survey on the standards (Pye Tait Consulting, 2014) found that while the survey respondents thought the purpose was not clear, those in the sector appreciated having their own set of standards as opposed to more generic ones. Those surveyed also thought the standards were reflective of the diverse sector, but wanted more guidance on how to use them in the subsectors.

Case studies posted in April 2020 (Education and Training Foundation, April 29, 2020) show how these standards are being used to inform and attest to teaching practice. The standards are used to inform continuous professional learning, as reflective tools, and in some cases form the basis for conversations in performance appraisals. These are aspects that are considered later in this report for wider uses of Tapatoru.

Scotland also has a professional development framework with detailed descriptions of the competencies required for teaching adult literacy (Education Scotland, n.d.) However, Galloway (2018) points out the difficulties in Scotland in terms of meeting these competencies given the range of diverse communities that foundation educators are working with and the lack of professional learning opportunities and opportunities for collaboration available to educators.

Australia also undertook a considerable body of work on professional standards for foundation educators as part of the work on the foundation skills strategy (Australian Government, 2012). Research by Wignall (2015) determined that a professional standards framework should describe the knowledge and skills practitioners need. In February 2017 the Australian government released a draft framework for consultation (Department of State Development, South Australian Government, 2017). This work was not progressed and the consultation process ceased (Workshop attendees, personal communication, ACAL Conference, September 14, 2018).

In 2021 it seems there is still some resistance to mandatory registration requirements in the vocational education sector in Australia. However, there is some agreement about the need for vocational educators to have both subject matter expertise and knowledge about education theory and practice. There is also support for “using teacher capability frameworks and/or professional standards as diagnostic tools and guidelines for teacher self-evaluation and reflection, including for the planning of objectives for personal and professional development” (Misko et al., 2021, p. 3). Here, given the diversity of the sector, the preferred option is for a core set of capabilities that could be adapted for sectors.

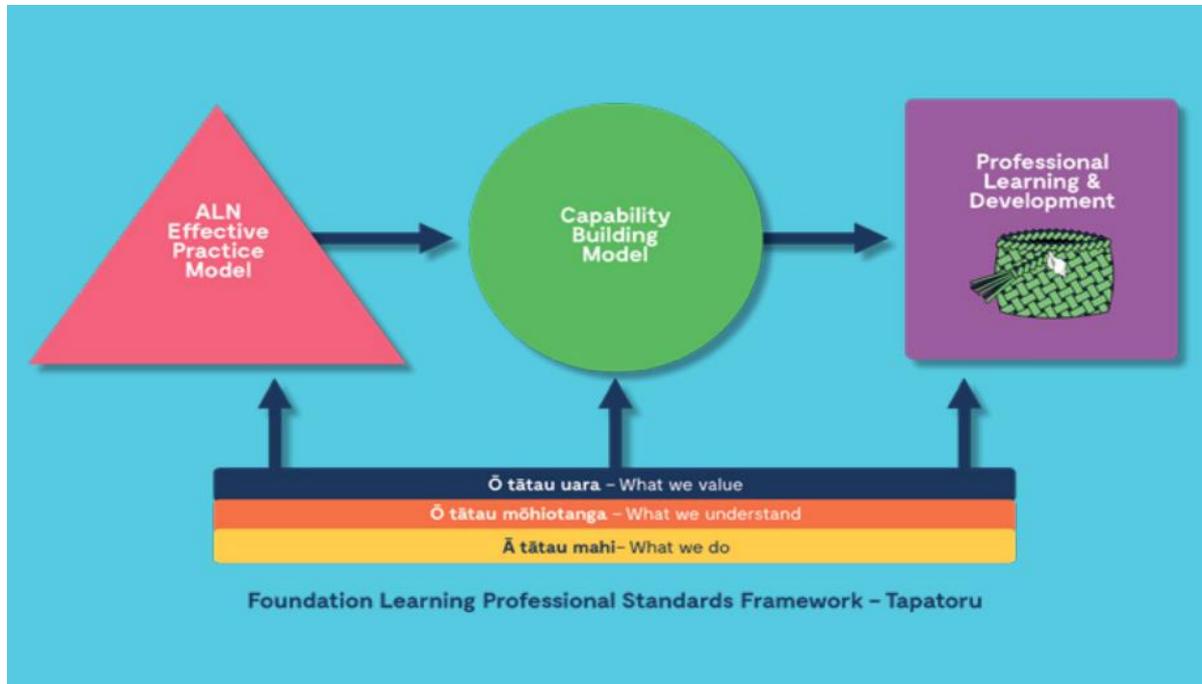
Concluding reflections on capability building

Overall, what the literature and key informants show, is that building the capability of a diverse foundation teaching workforce can be challenging for several reasons including:

- the current vocational education reform environment
- the diversity of the workforce and the sectors within which they work
- the possible lack of background qualifications of this workforce
- the desire of the workforce to have ‘quick-fixes’ through brief interactions with PLD opportunities such as workshops
- the time it takes to get to deep change to educators’ beliefs and practices that in the Aotearoa New Zealand context includes cultural capability
- the thinking that qualifications are a determinant of capability and the extent to which micro-credentialling or badging are valued.

Nevertheless, as described in this chapter, there is an effective teaching model and a model for how to build capable educators through PLD. Professional standards are the foundation of this model given their descriptors of capability.

Figure 4.4: Integrated Framework for Capability Building



(Source: Ako Aotearoa, 2018, p. 8. Ako Aotearoa. [Creative Commons CC BY-SA 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/))

Through dedicated and persistent processes Aotearoa New Zealand has arrived in this place in the capability-building journey. It has taken: investment from government; compliance requirements which have not always been positively received; and evidenced-based, theoretical approaches to practice. It has also taken a commitment from organisations and educators who have been prepared to work with what has come their way; trial new thinking and build it into their practice; and feedback about the extent to which there are impacts on their learners.

What can be seen over time is a maturation of the sector. In Aotearoa New Zealand we used to look overseas for models of practice and borrow and adapt them. Over the last 10-15 years we have built an evidence base of what works in the South Pacific and as such feel more secure in our own thinking and practice. This is not to say we should not continue to look at what is happening overseas. Rather, in the words of the New Zealand poet Brian Turner in his poem, *Walking In* (Sydney, Turner, & Marshall, 1995).

Let's go on reaching.
 We carry all we need,
 We think we know where we are heading
 and why, and two words dwarf all others: living,
 here.

Chapter Five: The Story of Tapatoru – From Development to Delivery

The previous chapter described the context which led to the development of Tapatoru and the intended place and role of a professional standards framework in the foundation education sector. This chapter builds from that and tells the story of the development of Tapatoru. This story is informed by data gathered from late 2018 through to early 2021. Using these data, I describe the challenges of the development of the framework and the way it moved from an essentially English model to being indigenised for Aotearoa New Zealand. I also describe Tapatoru in more detail along with the processes of early adoption. A subtitle for this chapter might well be, “You can lead a horse to water but ...”, given what happened between development and delivery.

The rationale for devoting a chapter to development and delivery is that it documents the introduction of Tapatoru and, as such, is likely to be the only place in Aotearoa New Zealand where this is documented. Capturing the process allows for: an explanation of ‘what’ was done and ‘how’; exploration of ‘why’ it was so challenging; reflection on what happened and how this impacted on uptake. All of this can then be used to inform how such frameworks or change projects might be introduced in the future.

Capturing the development phase makes an important contribution to the research project overall given the explanation it provides for the indigenous approach that has been taken. It is an approach that has been enabled by the maturing of a foundation education sector that was captured in the previous chapter.

As the story in this chapter unfolds it shows that developing Tapatoru, even with its challenges, proved to be easier than getting the foundation education sector to understand what it is and to get uptake of it. While this has been mentioned in previous chapters, more detail is provided here, along with information from staff in Ara Poutama Aotearoa who did decide to participate in the trial during the time of this doctoral study and staff from two organisations who did not.

Along with getting uptake, another aspect of the introduction has been setting up the processes associated with going through Tapatoru and getting the award. These processes were being developed at the same time as Tapatoru went live to the sector. While the processes are similar to those used in other professional standards frameworks, in terms of an evidence portfolio and referee confirmation, the format of these and the extent to which they were challenging for the early adopters is explored, along with the changes that have been made to the processes based on the experience of the early adopters. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the recognition of achievement for Tapatoru which is in the form of the award of a digital badge. Digital badges are described along with the role they play in recognising achievement and in attesting to capability.

This chapter is essentially the story of Graeme Smith’s work. He has granted permission to be named throughout this thesis. When I sought his permission for this, “*because you do feature as one of the leading characters in my story?*” His response, “*Hopefully that’s a good thing. I’m super stoked that it is interesting enough for you to write about in this work ...*” (G. Smith, personal communication, April 19, 2021). Subsequent to writing this chapter it has been reviewed by Smith and he has granted permission to use the images in this chapter that were used in the Tapatoru trial – the cards and the reflective practice template in Figures 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6.

Data in this chapter come from several sources. These include: Smith's report to the TEC on the draft framework (Smith, 2018); ongoing conversations with Graeme Smith; an interview with Deputy-Director/Kaihautū Mātauranga Māori at Ako Aotearoa; interviews with representatives from two of the five organisations who were interested in getting Tapatoru underway in 2019 and did not; interviews with representatives from Ara Poutama Aotearoa who had education staff undertake Tapatoru; artefacts (Tapatoru resources) including emails, video clips, templates; observations of Zoom sessions with the online Facebook Tapatoru candidates as they started their Tapatoru journey; data from interviews with nine early adopters of Tapatoru; and my feedback to Ako Aotearoa at various stages of the delivery process and reflections on the process overall.

A point to note at the start of this chapter is that at the time of introducing Tapatoru the TEC was going through a restructure and the Literacy and Numeracy team was dismantled. This meant there was no one to support the introduction to the sector. Smith recognised what this would mean.

... but whole thing is fragile – it's fragile already ... now there will be people making those decisions who don't know the background of the development, the whakapapa like you do or [X] and others do – I'm not sure where it leaves us, but a pretty uncertain place (G. Smith, personal communication, December 10, 2018).

The development of Tapatoru

Getting started

In September 2017, following the recommendation of Alkema et al. (2017), the TEC via their contract with Ako Aotearoa, contracted Graeme Smith to develop a professional standards framework. Smith has considerable expertise in adult literacy and numeracy given his involvement in the writing of resources and the delivery of NZCALNE. He is also well connected to the adult education sector which gave him connections and access for consultation purposes.

On the surface it was a somewhat unusual contracting arrangement, but followed standard government contracting processes to which the TEC is required to adhere. The TEC contracted Ako Aotearoa who then subcontracted Smith for six months (G. Smith, personal communication, April 19, 2021). But as it transpired, and is discussed further below, Ako Aotearoa staff had little direct involvement with Smith who continued to work directly with the TEC. However, at the same time Ako Aotearoa staff were having conversations with the TEC about the direction of the work, which would then filter through to Smith.

You know I had [TEC staff member] ringing me at six o'clock on a Friday afternoon telling me this and that. That I could or couldn't do something and that [Ako Aotearoa staff member] said this and that I needed to take that into account (G. Smith, personal communication, April 19, 2021).

The documentation supplied by Ako Aotearoa shows the contract had them developing a professional standards framework while working to a remit of developing a coherent capability pathway and system that could:

- Allow the sector to lead the development signalling a collaborative approach to capability building.

- Guide the learning and development of foundation learning tutors and others from novice to expert.
- Outline the capabilities and competencies tutors and others need to teach and/or support foundation learners.
- Drive learning opportunities that develop foundation learning practitioners to be reflective, collaborative and adaptive experts.
- Provide direction and professional development structure to support induction and development of the foundation skills workforce.
- Provide the basis on which to build coherent professional learning and development opportunities.
- Allow practitioners and others to plot capabilities gained through the combination of credentials, professional development and work experience.
- Shift the focus away from compliance towards better learner outcomes.
- Foster inquiry into foundation tutor practices based on learners' engagement, achievement and learning strengths and needs.
- Assist in the development of professional learning in communities of practice that are supported by experts.
- Increase coherence across the foundation teaching sector including where this intersects with the school sector, the ACE sector and other higher levels of tertiary.
- Build on or complement other frameworks both locally (e.g., ACE) and internationally (e.g., HEA in the UK) (Smith, 2018, pp. 20-21).

It is a challenging remit and written in a way that does not aid clarity about what was to be developed. It would have been better to fold this list into headings around: purpose; process; and content. And it would have been better to omit items that could not be achieved from the development of a framework, such as "shift the focus away from compliance towards better learning outcomes". Reading this list, I can see how it is built from Alkema et al's. (2017) work, but what I also see is a lack of understanding of exactly what a professional standards framework is and would be able to do.

Developing Tapatoru

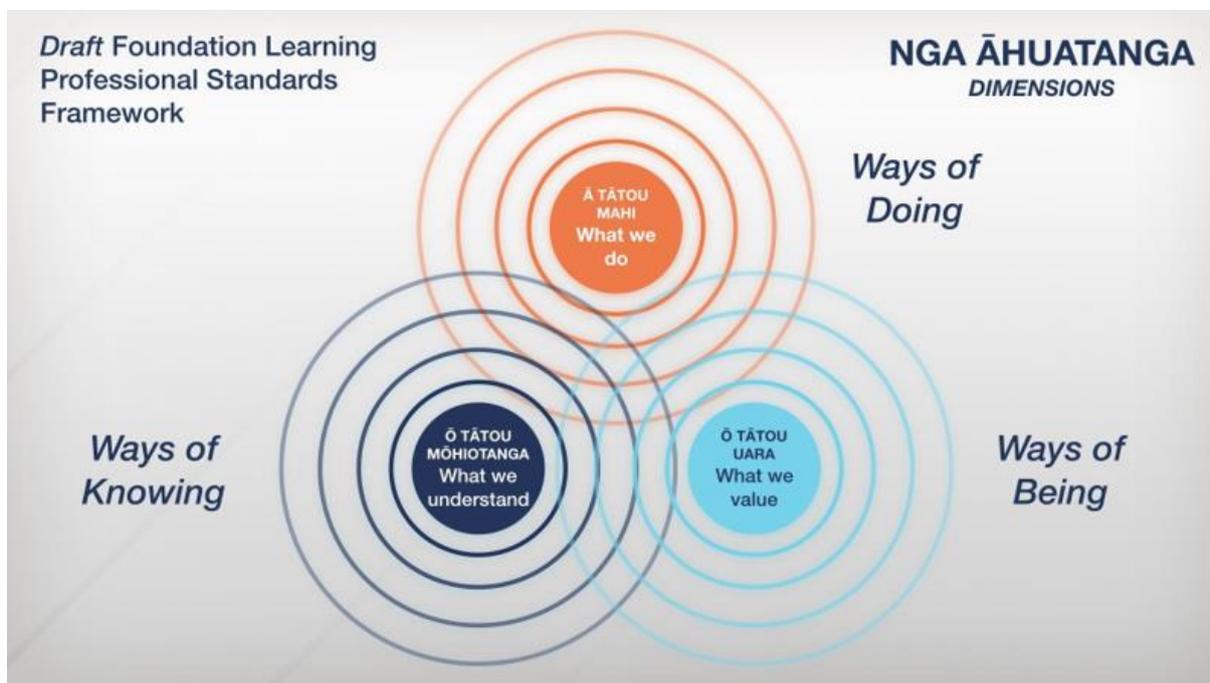
Smith took three months to develop the first iteration of the framework. It was based on the four-level UKPSF (Advance HE, 2011) for teaching in the higher education sector and its three dimensions – activity, knowledge, and values. It was also informed by AUT's Ako Aronui framework (Auckland University of Technology, 2019; Buissink et al., 2017) and the professional standards used in the ACE sector. While these latter two frameworks had been operating in Aotearoa New Zealand, professional standards were not widely known about. *"I worked pretty hard on it through October, November [2017] and by time I got to December, late November I'd kind of built it, pulled it apart several times myself ..."* (G. Smith, personal communication, December 10, 2018).

However, Smith's initial version was not well received. The feedback from the TEC was that it was not going in the right direction and *"wasn't the right thing"*. Smith started again, and by the end of February 2018 had reshaped it into what he thought the TEC, Ako Aotearoa, and the sector might

want. A key point to note is that Smith was working alone on this project with relatively limited sector consultation – unlike the process used by ACE Aotearoa. Other countries have also used sector-wide and consultative approaches to the development of their foundation level professional standards. For example, Australia had nationwide, online consultation on their draft professional standards framework described in Chapter Four (Department of State Development, South Australian Government, 2017). However, as the Australian case shows, wide consultation does not necessarily guarantee success, with their professional standards being withdrawn during the consultation phase.

The problem in the Tapatoru development stage was that, despite requesting cultural input from Ako Aotearoa, Smith did not receive any and his contract for the development was finished. Smith is unsure why this lack of cultural input or lack of connection with Ako Aotearoa happened. Figure 5.1 shows the original version submitted by Smith to the TEC.

Figure 5.1: Draft Tapatoru Framework Version One



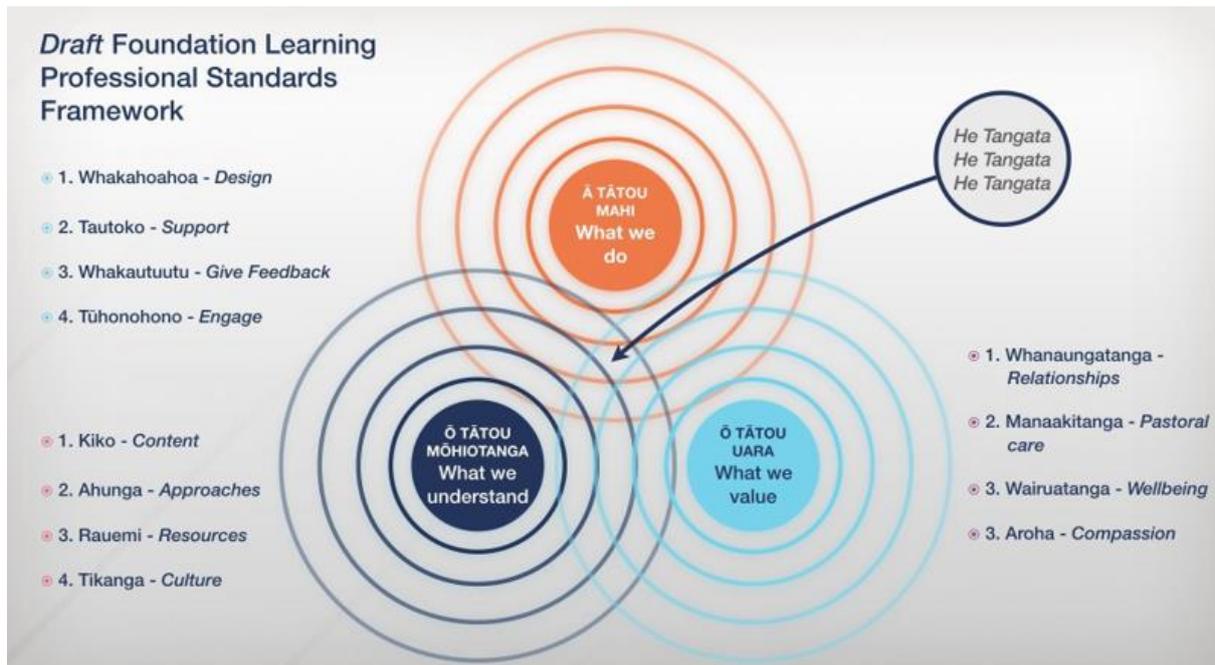
(Source: Smith 2018, p. 4. Ako Aotearoa. [Creative Commons CC BY-SA 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/))

However, by March/April 2018, after Smith’s contract was finished, staff from Ako Aotearoa became engaged and interested and requested a meeting that became a “robust discussion” around how to incorporate the missing cultural elements.

So, we had a big long hui about it and you know, had a robust discussion which was code for, we fought about it for a couple of days. But that process, as kind of tedious and filled with tension as it was, was pretty good (G. Smith, personal communication, December 10, 2018).

This discussion resulted in determining to put the learner at the centre, along with the need to develop a framework that would suit the diverse roles in the foundation sector including staff in support roles. As Figure 5.2 shows, the cultural descriptors emerged as had the learner at the centre.

Figure 5.2: Draft Tapatoru Framework Version Two



(Source: Smith 2018, p. 6. Ako Aotearoa. [Creative Commons CC BY-SA 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/))

Indigenising Tapatoru

Following this Smith started working and sharing ideas with Dr Joseph Te Rito, Deputy-Director/Kaihautū Mātauranga Māori, at Ako Aotearoa. Te Rito’s role was to work on Māori terminology. In the process of emailing, ideas and photos, “...I sent him something upside down by mistake and that’s when he realised, “Oh actually we could use a triangle” and then the connection to the proverb that he used about the apex of the harakeke ... (G. Smith, personal communication, December 10, 2018).

So began, what Te Rito calls the indigenisation of the three circles model that Smith had transferred from the UKPSF. “It didn’t grow indigenous, it was indigenised.” The triangle, Tapatoru, was born. (See Figure 1.1.) This indigenisation is similar to AUT’s approach to their development of the Ako Aronui framework described in the previous chapter (Buissink et al., 2017).

Originally there were three circles. I was thinking, how can we indigenise this to the New Zealand landscape? I looked at it visually and tried with koru. But I couldn’t find a proverb / metaphor about ferns. So, I dumped that and then found a metaphor around flax ...

It dawned in my mind that the rito is the growing tip – the top of the plant and if it is pulled out where would the bellbird sing. I visualised the concept of a triangle because you could see this, see the flax tip. ... The pointed tip at the top of the flax blade forms a triangle. There are four parts – and central is the student in the middle. At the top is the values, the apex and the others are the practical and the knowledge. Essential is that at the heart is the students. TEC loved it. It is indigenising the model. The triangle is three sides, hence the Tapatoru ... it is amazing how it morphed and the metaphor still works (Te Rito, Interview, July 30, 2019).

Smith appreciated the “poetry” of the image and the way in which the learner is portrayed as being supported by the pillars of what teachers know and do and who are in turn, governed by the values they bring to the work they do. The governing by values is a significant point of difference Tapatoru has in comparison to other professional standards frameworks. The Māori values of whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, wairuatanga, and aroha make this framework uniquely indigenous and set a guiding pedagogy for Aotearoa New Zealand.

There’s a whole story around how these hang together and when you look at the diagram it just clicked at that point. And that is also when Joe kind of realised that what we had created was something kind of special (G. Smith, personal communication, December 10, 2018).

Tapatoru dimensions

Tapatoru is built around three dimensions: Ō tātou uara; (what we value); Ō tātou mōhiotanga, (what we understand) and Ā tātou mahi (what we do) and consists of four papa - skills levels with descriptors (Smith & Te Rito, 2018, p. 6). The words ‘Pūkenga’ and ‘Papa’ were deliberately chosen to keep away from the notion of the ‘steps’ in the Adult Learning Progressions and ‘levels’ on the NZQF (Smith, 2018, p. 12). The four papa have increasing complexity in relation to capability and cater to the differing roles educators have in the foundation sector, from those who support learners and/or are new to the sector, through to those in leadership roles. This approach is in keeping with international frameworks described by Misko et al. (2021).

Figure 5.3: Ngā Āhukatanga

The foundation learning professional standards awards cover four different skill levels reflecting a variety of contexts, including:

1. Pastoral care or learning support staff with no or limited teaching responsibilities or new practitioners.
2. Teaching and learning support practitioners seeking to expand their understanding and practice.
3. More experienced practitioners seeking to extend or verify their understanding and practice as well as a relevant specialisation.
4. Highly experienced practitioners with a demonstrated record of effective leadership in the field of foundation-level education.



(Source: Smith & Te Rito, 2018, p. 6. Ako Aotearoa. [Creative Commons CC BY-SA 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/))

Building from the theory of change articulated at the start of Chapter Four, at the high level Tapatoru:

- describes the capability of practitioners who work with foundation level learners

- uses broad descriptors of capability that cover the range of practitioner roles in the tertiary education foundation sector
- is informed and informs what it takes to build capability such as PLD and communities of practice (Smith & Te Rito, 2018, p. 8).

The descriptors in the four papa are high-level. This avoids the criticism of professional standards as leading to “reductionism that destroys professional autonomy and reflection” (Sinnema, Meyer, & Aitken et al., 2016, in Chalmers, 2017, p. 7). At the same time, the descriptors still provide the scope for attesting to the professional practice of educators. Attestation comes in the form of an award where the four-level papa provides the opportunity for all of those working in the sector to be recognised. This was something that appealed to interviewees from organisations who showed initial interest but did not sign up, and to Ara Poutama Aotearoa who participated in the pilot.

Assessment for the Tapatoru award is by way of an evidence portfolio. This can be either written or through kōrero. What is being looked for in the portfolio is evidence of practitioners’ knowledge and practice and the extent to which these are “underpinned by and integrated with professional values”. The award also requires professional references that attest to practice and PLD activities where they are undertaken (Smith & Te Rito, 2018, p. 9).

Introducing Tapatoru to the sector

At its launch in November 2018 Tapatoru was an image and words on a page. The next stage was to integrate it into Ako Aotearoa’s wider body of PLD, pilot it, and have it taken up by the sector. Again, this proved challenging as Smith, contracted part-time to work on this, talked of the time it takes to introduce new thinking and integrate it into ways of working. He also recognised the need to develop cross-cultural and inclusive ways of working, and the importance of connections with Māori to promote the uptake of the professional standards.

While acknowledging that it would take time for people to adopt the approach being promoted through Tapatoru, Te Rito believed the timing was right for the introduction of the framework. He sees Aotearoa New Zealand as being ready to accept the values of whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, wairuatanga, and aroha that are part of Tapatoru. *“These words are more part of the spoken landscape than they were before. I think people are making an effort to apply them. ... Nomenclature being Māori will get people into the zone”* (Te Rito, Interview, 30 July 2019).

At the start of this research project it was not clear how the Tapatoru framework would be used. Early information provided on the Ako Aotearoa (2018) website stated,

Tapatoru was developed as a resource for providing practitioners with professional recognition of their experience and expertise. Practitioners can measure themselves against the standards. In 2019 we will trial a process of practitioners submitting a portfolio of evidence which can lead to them receiving an award at one of four skill levels.¹²

¹² Professional development information. Retrieved April 1, 2019 at <https://ako.ac.nz/about-us/alnacc/foundation-learning-professional-standards-framework/>

Further information about what was required for the portfolio of evidence was provided in the Tapatoru Frequently Asked questions (FAQs) (Ako Aotearoa, 2019).¹³

As a practitioner, you will be invited to submit an evidence portfolio. One component of this is likely to be a narrative that demonstrates what you know and what you do, as underpinned by your professional values. This will be supported by other forms of portfolio evidence, including professional references and successful engagement with ongoing professional learning and development. Assessment is set against descriptors for each of the four skill levels.

In early 2019 the ALNACC team from Ako Aotearoa ran a series of workshops to introduce their PLD offerings and Tapatoru to the foundation education sector. At one of these workshops in Auckland (March 7, 2019) I noted the reactions of participants where there were two schools of thought. Those who said, *“Bring it on - we’d like to be part of it,”* and others who said, *“This is one more thing for us to do.”* Those in the latter group thought that having NZCALNE was enough to attest to competence and were concerned that Tapatoru could perhaps be made compulsory - hence the *“one more thing to do”*.

Following the workshops, Ako Aotearoa started conversations with five organisations (a wānanga, a PTE, two ITOs, and an ITP) about the possibility of having staff participate in the pilot. This was to be free of charge given that it was funded by the TEC through their contract with Ako Aotearoa. The wānanga agreed to have two candidates go through the process and these two presented their evidence portfolio through a kōrero process in early 2020. They were the first in Aotearoa New Zealand to achieve the award. By October 2019 Smith was describing the process of getting organisations to commit as,

“A long slow grind ... Here’s the biggest realisation so far, the approach and the process of getting buy-in and contract negotiations with partner organisations are as much a part of the Tapatoru as the actual work of applicants collating evidence portfolios (G. Smith, personal communication, October 15, 2019).

By October 2019 it was almost a year since Tapatoru had been launched in November 2018 and I was still hopeful that in 2020 Tapatoru would get underway more quickly and easily than it had in 2019. In response to Smith’s point above, I noted, *“I wonder if this will just be a case of something that happens in the ‘early days’ and then as people come to know what it is and what is expected it will get easier”* (Learning Log, October 15, 2019). It did not. But, given the limited use of professional standards frameworks in the tertiary education sector in Aotearoa New Zealand, the lack of uptake is not surprising. There is little knowledge about what a professional standards framework is, why one is needed, how it might be used, and the purpose and value of one. These factors, combined with RoVE that hit the sector in 2019, COVID-19’s arrival in 2020, and the lack of a champion in the TEC, meant Tapatoru had little chance of uptake or wide-spread adoption.

¹³ Tapatoru FAQ. Retrieved March 29, 2019 at <https://ako.ac.nz/assets/ALNACC/7e7d8edec6/Tapatoru-FAQ.pdf>

Getting the evidence collection processes sorted

While it was clear that a CV, referee reports, and portfolios of evidence were required (Smith & Te Rito, 2018), what this portfolio would look like needed to be developed, as was a template or framework for presenting the evidence. In June 2019, Smith drafted the first evidence template. It was straightforward in nature, asking for reflective commentary around the four areas of Ā Tātou Mahi – what we do, namely, *Whakahoahoa - Design*: Design and plan learning that strengthens learners' foundation learning skills; *Tautoko - Support*: Facilitate foundation learning and/or support foundation learners; *Whakautuutu - Give Feedback*: Use assessment as a learning tool and give feedback to foundation learners; *Tūhonohono - Engage*: Engage with stakeholders and own professional learning and development.

Of note in this first iteration is the focus on the mahi without explicitly articulating that Ō Tātou Mōhiotanga – what we understand, or Ō Tātou Uara – what we value, were to be part of it. In July 2019 Ako Aotearoa were having further discussions based on the template Smith had developed, along with discussions on the submission process (written or kōrero), the amount of evidence to be provided, and the level or quality of this evidence.

In relation to the latter, one of the challenges was how to provide evidence of the high-level descriptors in the framework. While these high-level descriptors were seen as useful at the framework level, they became a challenge from an evidence and assessment perspective given the lack of indicators or criteria against which to make judgements. The descriptors operate as capabilities and as such are much harder to assess than competencies given the holistic nature of capabilities (Lester, 2014). It is worth noting they were also an issue for one of the early adopters who had come from the compulsory education sector where there is more specificity in relation to indicators of practice.

One of the objectives of the pilot was to generate examples of evidence that could then be used to inform both the standards and how the values were integrated with knowledge and practice.

There are currently no standards for each of the four levels ... [and] we want to avoid a tick-box exercise ... but the applicant will need to have a good awareness of what good practice looks like, what level of knowledge practitioners at each of the four papa are expected to have, and how they incorporate the values into their practice (G. Smith, personal communication, July 8, 2019).

Discussions around the evidence also included reference to the amount required. Here Ako Aotearoa looked to the HEA framework which required 700 words for each of the two sections in the first level in their system. Ako Aotearoa settled on 500-800 words for each of four sections in Tapatoru. Smith was very keen to keep the evidence descriptive, albeit within a reflective paradigm.

But I also want to approach it from more of a descriptive rather than prescriptive point of view. What I want to avoid, ... [are] very long lists of things that read like job descriptions or criteria for NZCALNE (Voc) learning outcomes and evidence etc. (G. Smith, personal communication, July 8, 2019).

Researcher contribution to the Tapatoru process

In my role as researcher, I was involved in early discussions with Smith on how evidence should be gathered and the format it would take. It was a privileged place to be – given I was looking at

Tapatoru from the outside, but also able to work on the inside and contribute to the direction that Tapatoru was taking. On July 8, 2019 I provided the following reflection to Smith on the proposed evidence collection process.

Tapatoru – Early Reflections to Graeme Smith

Great stuff so far! And will be very useful for the pilot. Some stream of consciousness / processing as I go thoughts below.

On reading through the material and doing a bit of thinking, I'm wondering what the drivers for use of the Tapatoru will be – Credentialing? Recognition? Reflective practice? And these are not mutually exclusive – but they might change how people present their portfolios of evidence.

Having read the materials for Pūkenga Papa Rua – I understand how the evidence will be presented for the award and how the award will work.

This is heading into ground-breaking territory in the foundation education space and as such there are a few dilemmas along the way. And these dilemmas are good things!

- *How much evidence?*
- *What sort of evidence?*
- *How to present the evidence?*
- *How to level the evidence?*
- *How to assess the sufficiency of evidence?*
- *How to guide reflective thinking?*

The first three have been pretty much determined and are a great start for the pilot and early adopters. I like the idea that the way is open to kōrero in the future. Just a note though, there are a lot of questions to be covered in a 500-800 word answer for each of the four areas. But I am not suggesting people submit more than this.

Levelling the evidence

Those submitting portfolios are likely to want some guidance on evidence expectations – and this is in keeping with making assessment fair and transparent. But the issue at this stage of the project is, I don't think we know what this looks like, short of saying that it might be around level 4 on the NZQF.

Is it worth thinking about some sort of outcome statement for each papa?

Therefore, given Tapatoru's newness, getting the 'level' of what can be expected at each papa will be an iterative process and I think it is worth being upfront about this and generating conversations / kōrero about this with those in PLD.

In terms of a process for levelling

There are probably three ways to do this (or it might be combination of ways):

- *Pre-evidence submission: Professional conversations with experts – who say what might be expected as a guide to early thinking for PLD deliverers (A useful ideas generator – could act as a draft assessment rubric).*

- *Pre-evidence submission: A set of indicators (while it might help those preparing portfolios – its risks prescription and shutting down the creative, thoughtful and reflective approaches. It also runs the risk of a check-list unit standard approach etc); or some exemplars of what might be expected.*
- *Allow the levels to fall out of the evidence that comes in during the pilot. Determining of levels would be made through professional conversations amongst assessors and based on the high-level rubric that has been developed. Examples from the pilot can then inform the rubric – see this as iterative over the first couple of years.*

Sufficiency of evidence

The word limit does not necessarily equate to 'sufficiency'. Rather I think sufficiency is about the quality of what is done and how often this can be done. Therefore, evidence should be about repeated competence / good practice. Maybe the sufficiency aspect can be covered by referees?

Guiding reflective thinking

I wonder if some thought needs to go into the expectations around this? The words 'reflective practitioner' abound! But what does this really mean? How would I know if I was one? How would I deliver evidence in a way that would show this? To a certain extent the questions you have set get to this through the 'why' aspect. But I don't think they get to the nub of how the practitioners feel, the insights they gain into their practice, what helps and hinders, what they might do the same/ differently next time. However, I could be being unfair here.

The challenge is to get them to be critically reflective without bombarding them with the reflective practitioner literature which might be off putting for some of those starting out for Papa Rua. Maybe the 'why' is enough for them and reflection is explored further for the higher papa. 'Why' can lead them gently.

I'm keen on the reflection aspect because this is what will change practice – it will allow people to get a real understanding of the why – and greater potential do get to the cultural competence aspects. It aligns with Claxton's layers of learning and Moon's idea about why reflection is important.

A frequent report is that it is difficult to get learners in a formal context to reflect at other than superficial and descriptive levels. The learning that results from superficial reflection is also likely to be superficial. (See attached article from Moon, 2007.)

Another thought is to beef up the reflective aspect in the continuing professional development part. This has potential to get them to the where-to-next and away from the idea that Papa Rua is done and dusted / boxes ticked (Personal Communication to G. Smith, July 8, 2019).

While I think I recognised it at the time, looking back on these comments as I put this chapter of the Tapatoru story together, I realise the extent to which going through the DProfPrac and engaging with reflexive practices meant not only had I learnt more about reflective practice, but I was recognising it as key to developing as a professional practitioner. Hence I was putting forward my thoughts about this to generate thinking about and promote reflection as part of the Tapatoru process. My reasoning was this would enable practitioners to really get to what they were doing in their practice and the impact this was having on their learners.

Starting delivery: setting up the online Facebook groups

As 2019 moved into 2020, only one of the five organisations Smith had been working with had been prepared to commit to the pilot and this was in a minor way with two participants. This was despite visits from Smith and other Ako Aotearoa staff who held meetings with senior leadership teams and operational staff in four organisations. In early 2020 a PTE, who had not been part of these discussions, approached Ako Aotearoa to be part of the pilot. They were interested in upskilling staff in preparation for an upcoming EER. Smith visited, ran a face-to-face workshop, and had agreement to the PTE's participation in the pilot. By April 2020, the arrival of COVID-19 meant face-to-face workshops were no longer possible and the work with this organisation stopped. *"It was too hard in the current environment"* (G. Smith, personal communication, April 8, 2020).

Despite these setbacks and in the COVID-19 environment, Smith was determined to continue with promoting Tapatoru. While he thought face-to-face was important for an introductory session, he was left with no option but to promote it online via webinars. On April 15, 2020, using the ALNACC Facebook group, Smith ran a webinar, attended by 23 people, to introduce Tapatoru and *"as a bit of a sales pitch"* for individuals to join the trial.¹⁴ He followed this with emails that included a set of FAQs, which provided further information about Tapatoru and the processes for working towards the award, along with a form for individuals to complete if they were interested in being part of an online trial group.

One of the clear distinctions made in this communication was the dual pathway approach, through recognition of prior learning (RPL) for experienced practitioners and the PLD pathway which would better suit new educators who would have access to PLD as part of the Tapatoru process. This distinction had not previously been made and was one that suited the online group. Most of them, as will be seen in the next chapter, were already experienced practitioners who were engaged in learning as members of the ALNACC Facebook community of practice.

Following this webinar, Smith moved quickly to communicate with those who expressed an interest in participating. By April 24, 2020, he had sent email communications outlining what would be expected of participants, what people would get, and how long the process was expected to take.

This is a new process for us as much as it is for you. This makes it hard to come up with an accurate estimate of how much time is involved. Also, more experienced educators with a lot of existing evidence may take less time than others who are newer to this work.

That said, we estimate that you may need to spend between 20 to 40 hours working on this over the next 6 months. That means you may need to spend 1 or 2 hours per week thinking about or working on your portfolio, or engaging with us on related PLD or other matters. There is also the opportunity to fast-track if appropriate (G. Smith, personal communication to potential participants, April 24, 2020).

In May 2020, the Online Facebook Group for Tapatoru was established. The following chapter has the stories of some of this group, who on request from Smith volunteered to be interviewed for this

¹⁴ See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xWQUiajJfpE>

research project. Once the group was up and running and had met, Smith asked their permission for me to attend. Attending Zoom sessions as an observer was a privilege. From a DProfPrac perspective it allowed me to garner peoples’ initial reactions; gather data about the processes and participants’ initial reactions; and meet dedicated foundation-level educators who placed learners at the centre of their work – as per the Tapatoru framework. From a professional practice perspective, it was an interesting position – I was the researcher, but at the same time as observing and making observations, I was also a participant by feeding into the process.

Along with the Zoom sessions the early adopters were supported by a series of emails that incorporated video clips (on the CV, the portfolio, now referred to as a reflective commentary, and referee support), and the cards (which are described below). All of these aimed to step people through the process and grow them as reflective practitioners. This was important given the questions and concerns participants had about the process in the early Zoom sessions.

Right...! You need to take some action regarding your CV. Choose one of the following below and go and do it:

1. *If you already have a CV, dust it off and update it. Make sure that it is current and reflects your relevant qualifications, skills, experience, training and achievements.*
2. *If you don't have a CV, then get started making one. This can be a big job if you've not done it before. Have a look at some examples, talk to colleagues and ask to see what they have done; and ask for some help from someone who knows your work background and skills (G. Smith, personal communication to Tapatoru participants, June 17, 2020).*

A framework for reflecting on practice

Getting to the reflection process was enabled by the set of cards that Smith devised around the Tapatoru framework. Using a card of each colour participants build their own questions and then use these for their reflective commentary.

Figure 5.4: Tapatoru Cards

How have you encouraged	How have you promoted	How have you maintained	How have you protected	meaningful and positive relationships	meaningful and positive support systems	wairua or spirituality / wellbeing	mana or self-esteem
How have you fostered	How have you strengthened	FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION Could you unpack that a bit more for me?	FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION Could you take me through that journey?	when you designed and planned learning and/or support?	when you facilitated learning and/or support?	when you assessed and gave feedback?	when you engaged with whānau, hapu and/or communities?

(Source: Smith, n.d.)

Interviews with participants showed the approach encouraged most of them to reflect in ways they had not done previously.

I also like the cards. I like the cards because they get you reflecting and thinking about, "Oh, what does that actually look like." You know when you get a question that says, 'how have you maintained spirituality when planning?' – Yeah that is a bit of a doozy question [laughter] And you really have to dig deep and I like that. I like that. Cos quite often I do stuff intuitively ... So, for me it makes me dig deeper and justify my reasoning for doing some things (interviewee 9).

[hesitant] well they were helpful in that you certainly had to think about what you were doing and how you went about it and I think I'm finding it more difficult in that I'm so much practically orientated ... You know what I mean, so I'm really having to stop and think long and hard, just what I'm doing that I've been doing for years just quietly (Interviewee 8).

I like the cards they were really cool. They are a neat idea. ... I just looked at them, I like the colours, they looked really cool and I wrote the stuff down and oh, "I'll have that question and I'll do this question" So it doesn't matter. ... I like the visual, I thought they were a really cool thing and it gives you buy-in to the questions and you're not going, "Oh I've got to answer this question. You've chosen. You've got your choices, You've got buy in so you're already half way on the reflective pathway because you've had to think about the questions you want to choose (Interviewee 12).

But there were also participants who found them a bit frustrating to use given the similarity of the language (on the blue cards) and the relevance to their context.

... and I know Graeme was saying you need to use one card and I'm like, technically you can use any one because they all mean very similar things and I found that a little bit frustrating as they weren't specific as in, to me they, did we need so many cards when the words were technically the same? ... And I suppose if I'm going to pull Graeme's beautiful work to bits, which I don't like doing, but the bit about engaging with whānau or communities, it's not always relevant. ... But no, I think essentially in essence the cards are really easy to use and it did get you thinking ... about examples like from my own practices ... (Interviewee 10).

Some participants spent time considering the combination of cards to generate their reflections, while others went through this process in a straight-forward, and pragmatic way.

I don't think that are the absolutely fabulous, be all and end all that they are actually being promoted to be. [pause], but I think potentially they are a really good start. And they did allow me to create questions that I would not necessarily have created for myself. And I think for people who are playful, like one of our gorgeous ladies who was online the last time we met together... And she played with them, this way and that way and inside and outside and upside and back to front. Whereas me, I just put them down and thought, "That one can go there, and that one can go there. Oh, actually, I'll just change that one to there and that one to there, 'facilitate change' to 'promote'" for example. But I guess in some ways it was good because I felt like I had a little bit of power over my questions (Interviewee 7).

The cards provided guidance for the portfolios by allowing participants to build their own narratives based around the questions they set for themselves. While they were not viewed as the perfect solution by all the early adopters, they acted as the starting point for reflection and storytelling. The cards provided participants the opportunity to engage with and reflect on their practice and this process took them a little deeper than they otherwise might have gone into examining their own practice. Use of the cards was further supported on June 22, 2020 with an email where examples of

questions to support the reflective commentary were provided. These questions then set the context to be told in each of four narratives. As Interviewee 15 comments, they provide “*a thinking path, a triggered focus for thought. They are a living thing.*”

Figure 5.5: Use of Cards to Set Questions



(Source: Smith, n.d.)

Along with the cards, the template for the reflective commentary provided additional guidance for the approach to take, whether the commentary was going to be provided in written or kōrero form. This information focused on getting participants to consider how their values and knowledge inform what they do, along with reminding them to write examples that describe ‘how’ and ‘why’ they do things, rather than ‘what’ they do (Smith, personal communication to participants, June 22, 2020).

Figure 5.6: Reflective Commentary Template

SECTION 1: DESIGN		SECTION 2: FACILITATE	
<i>How have you fostered meaningful and positive relationships when you engaged with whanau, hapu and/or communities</i>		<i>How have you encouraged mana or self-esteem when you designed and planned learning and/or support?</i>	
SCENARIO 1.1	SCENARIO 1.2	SCENARIO 2.1	SCENARIO 2.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe • Reflect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe • Reflect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe • Reflect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe • Reflect
SECTION 3: GIVE FEEDBACK		SECTION 4: ENGAGE	
<i>How have you protected wairua or spirituality/wellbeing when you facilitated learning and/or support</i>		<i>How have you strengthened meaningful and positive support systems when you assessed and gave feedback?</i>	
SCENARIO 3.1	SCENARIO 3.2	SCENARIO 4.1	SCENARIO 4.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe • Reflect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe • Reflect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe • Reflect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe • Reflect

(Source: Smith, n.d.)

This approach to the reflective commentary shows Smith had moved considerably from June 2019, as noted previously in this chapter, in terms of the guidance he was providing to participants. As part of the ongoing communication in my role as observer, participant, researcher I provided the following feedback to Smith on the process he was using and the communication he was having with participants.

Tapatoru: Feedback to Graeme Smith

Kia ora Graeme - love the email, video and templates you have just sent out. A number of reasons for this.

The info is clear and concise - and I think this is important off the back of the webinar the other week when people were very caught up with process and the 'how' do we do this?

You've directly related it to practice. They don't have to get all tied up with theory / be theory driven - but can openly and honestly reflect on what they have done. The process of writing, really helps with reflection- and I like the idea of 10 minutes free writing - it's really hard to capture this stuff in writing and free writing is a way in.

Above all I like the idea of those going through the process being in the driver's seat - they determine what they write about based on the questions and how they connect the cards together. I'm keen on this driver's seat idea at the moment and have been trying to write an article about workplace learning using this metaphor! (Personal communication to G. Smith, June 22, 2020).

By July 2020 the acts of reflection were coming through with some of those participating in the Online Facebook Group. In an observation of the July Zoom session, I wrote the following about one of the participants, “[X] has been focusing on how she maintains the wairua of her learners. She has

been reflecting after every session – one day a week with workplace learners – and writing in her diary has become a weekly thing ... she is realising the change in her practice and says Tapatoru allows for reflection and she is recognising her own learning journey.”

A second trial group arrives

Prior to the online group starting, Ara Poutama Aotearoa had approached Smith about the possibility of getting work underway with their educators who were working with paihere. These educators included those who have the 1:1 discussions with paihere about their learning pathways and custodial officers who are also industry tutors teaching vocational qualifications in work environments (kitchens, laundries, construction sites, nurseries) in the prisons.

An education practice manager, who had been at the launch of Tapatoru and thought it sounded appropriate for educators in her organisation, started the conversation with Smith. The driver for Ara Poutama Aotearoa was professionalising their workforce. This is an additional driver to those described in the previous chapter and which I had not previously considered.

... it seemed to land. Umm, something that our tutors, our people, our educators could engage with and see that they were ummm, lining up comparable with their colleagues on the outside ... We need prison educators who are strong ... and seriously professional ... (Interviewee 14).

... and where I thought Tapatoru would come in, is that I wanted to make Correctional education a thing. I wanted to make it a profession. I wanted people to say, “Well this is a Correctional educator and this person will have this knowledge”. ... I want it to be seen as a profession in its own right ... So I saw Tapatoru as a way of recognising the amazing skills set that those people have ... And it’s a way of showing what they’ve done and where they’ve been and what skills they’ve learnt and I think we owe it to them to be able to showcase what they’ve done (Interviewee 13).

But in an organisation as large as Ara Poutama Aotearoa it requires more than one or two people having a good idea. One of the education managers recognised the need to work at a national level – with her fellow regional colleagues and with national office staff to get the trial underway. Staff from Ako Aotearoa were invited to talk about Tapatoru to a national manager. This was followed by regional hui where Tapatoru was introduced alongside workshops on working with Māori and Pacific learners.

So, we had this sort of package ... so it wasn’t just Tapatoru, but let’s slide it in there ... we were raising people’s awareness. Some of our tutors knew quite a bit about Ako [Aotearoa] ... so it was not [a hard sell]. So, when the pilot was offered at no cost, well we were going to be in to see if it worked (Interviewee 14).

Herein lies a key point to uptake. Ako Aotearoa were able to ‘sell’ Tapatoru within a wider package of PLD. For staff at Ara Poutama Aotearoa whose paihere are made up of 52 percent Māori (Ara Poutama Aotearoa, 2019) Tapatoru’s Māori values resonated. This also aligned with *Hōkai Rangi* the organisation’s strategy (Ara Poutama Aotearoa, 2019) which focuses on developing the health and wellbeing of paihere and learning programmes are part of this.

... so another one of our outcomes from Hōkai Rangi is foundations for participation and to me our tutors and instructors can’t participate if we can’t keep them educated and up to date. So, for me it

comes down to actually living our strategy as well. So, I think that's a big organisational imperative (Interviewee 13).

Here too, is a previously unconsidered driver for uptake – the extent to which Tapatoru connects to organisational values and strategic direction. This is about what will help deliver and achieve the outcomes for the strategy and in this case, one of the contributors is having staff with the skills to deliver training and having public recognition of this through the Tapatoru award.

... And going in there [Corrections facilities] day after day you have to be a very special and a very skilled person. So, I saw Tapatoru as a way of recognising the amazing skills set that those people have ... it's a way of showing what they've done and where they've been and what skills they've learnt and I think we owe it to them to be able to showcase what they've done ... and show them that it [being an educator] is a viable career option (Interviewee 13).

Around 40 educators from Ara Poutama Aotearoa started in the Tapatoru trial and given these numbers, the spread across the country and delivery of the programme via Zoom, Smith split the group in two. It is not clear from the data the extent to which these Zoom sessions worked. Correction's educators were working at the time of sessions and have limited access to technology at their workplaces.

I think in one me and one other person came in, and two other people might of ... So, they weren't like very well attended. So, I wasn't sure if there were only the two, cos they thought this isn't working or, ummm ... I mean it is tricky with Corrections because we can't access things like this inside (Interviewee 18).

In addition, this trial with Ara Poutama Aotearoa was challenging with educators at varying levels of competence, varying levels of comfort with the Tapatoru framework and the ways in which to provide their reflective commentaries, and with the levels of support they received from their direct managers. This is described further in the next chapter.

Digital badges

Tapatoru provides the framework for educators to describe their practice and recognition of this comes from the award of a digital badge. Described as relatively new, digital badges emerged around 2010, (Ghasia, Machumu, & DeSmet, 2019). They are symbols or indicators of achievement and a way of credentialing non-formal learning. They are an alternative way of recognising achievement as opposed to formal qualifications (Clements, West, & Hunsaker, 2020; Dyjur & Lindstrom, 2017; Ghaisa et al., 2019; Gibson, Ostashewski, Flintoff, Grant, & Knight, 2015; Hunt, Carter, Zhang & Yang, 2020; Wolfenden, Adinolfi, & Cross, 2020). "Open digital badges are symbolic representations of skills, accomplishments, status, activities or identities that are commonly awarded by an issuer and embedded with a link to evidence that supports the learner's claim to the badge" (Wolfenden et al., 2020, p. 109).

Internationally digital badges are also referred to as micro-credentials (Carey & Stefaniak, 2018; Ghasia et al., 2019; Young, West, & Nylin, 2019). However, in Aotearoa New Zealand there is a difference between digital badges and micro-credentials with the latter being formal recognition of 'bite-size' pieces of learning that are attached to credits on the NZQF (New Zealand Qualifications

Authority, n.d.). Ako Aotearoa's communication with the sector about digital badges aligns with the purpose of them outlined above. In their FAQs, Ako Aotearoa (n.d.-a) talk about badges as "signifying achievement", a "way of validating and sharing indicators of accomplishment" and as a means of showing ongoing PLD.

Key to the information digital badges provide is the metadata embedded within the badges that describe and explain what has been done and achieved. Here the data can include the issuer, what's been done, and the standards and details of the skills and knowledge that have been achieved (Ghasia et al., 2019; Gibson et al., 2015; Clements et al., 2020).

Open badges are valuable because of the included metadata, which typically include the badge name, description, criteria, issuer, evidence, date issued, standards, and tags (Bowen, n.d.). This metadata connects evidence and criteria to the credential, better communicating what the learner accomplished (Clements et al., 2020, p. 106).

The meta data are a way of showing skills, achievements, and competencies attained by badge earners and are a way of capturing detailed information on a larger number of learning achievements than is possible through the more traditional and formal certification processes (Brauer & Siklander, 2017; Dyjur & Lindstrom, 2017; Gashia et al., 2019).

For example, in a communication skills course, learners upon fulfilling established criteria can earn a "public speaking" micro-credit in the form of a digital badge. Therefore, a badge is the image or symbol associated with micro-credits issued by the specific issuers in recognition of the efforts and accomplishment on successful completion of associated criteria (Ghasia et al., 2019, p. 221).

However, it is worth noting the challenges that come with too much information and the extent to which employers will be willing and able to examine the metadata. The review of the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) found the Record of Achievement was too difficult for parents and employers to understand and it is hence being redesigned to include a summary page of key achievements (New Zealand Council for Education Research, 2018).

Advantages of digital badges

Digital badges have the advantage of capturing non-formal learning that might otherwise go unnoticed or unrecognised, as tends to happen with professional learning in the tertiary education sector. They allow a wider range of achievements to be seen than can traditionally be displayed in the macro-credential of a qualification (or in Aotearoa, New Zealand's case, also the micro-credential). In addition, as part of the documenting process, digital badges capture data that can be tracked and allow for a pathway of learning to be envisaged and developed (Ako Aotearoa, n.d.-b) They also have the potential to shape and inform lifelong learning and give coherence to this learning (Dyjur & Lindstrom, 2017; Gibson et al., 2015; Wolfenden et al., 2020).

Collectively a series of digital badges operates as signposts that direct learners to professional development and new learning opportunities (Gibson et al., 2015). They are also portable and shareable through social media and professional networking sites (Clements et al., 2020; Dyjur & Lindstrom, 2017; Wolfenden et al., 2020). Displaying badges is a way of showing personal achievements and enhancing one's reputation (Gibson et al., 2015). Where there is a menu of

offerings, educators undertaking professional learning can personalise and customise their learning based on their needs (Gamrat et al., 2014). This is the approach that Ako Aotearoa is building towards with its professional development opportunities.

Perceptions of digital badges

The literature suggests there are mixed views on digital badges. In higher education settings those who are positive about them see them as “authentic and innovative”, and those who are less positive see them as “less prestigious than a certificate”, or “viewed them as juvenile” (Dyjur et al., 2017, pp. 389-390). In relation to professional development for teacher education, Wolfenden et al. (2020) found those in their study to be enthusiastic about the use and awarding of badges. These researchers drew their conclusions based on the idea that badges allow for the recognition of both theory and practice and have the ability to capture reflection and practice based on the submission of evidence, for example, student work and classroom practice.

An issue for the perception of digital badges and their credibility, is their newness. This impacts on people’s understanding of them generally and the extent to which, for example, employers see them as being valid forms of credentials. However, as Young et al. (2019) report, when employers know about digital badges, they see their potential they want to know more about them.

The early adopters of Tapatoru have mixed views on digital badges. These views range from those who appreciated them and saw the value of them in terms of being something they could use on, for example, their LinkedIn page, through to those for whom they were a little meaningless. Their thinking confirms the caution Smith had provided to the TEC in 2018 in relation to the mental models of what represents achievement. This point is picked up further in Chapter Seven.

... apparently they are quite the thing, ... Apparently they are sought after and if you don't have a badge you're so like not 2020. So, personally I don't know how to use them. But I did get a badge[s] [for a number of other PLD activities], and I was quite pleased ..., but I don't actually know what to do with it. But I know for the under 50s they are terribly sought after (Interviewee 12).

*A digital badge. See when I did it, in my head, I was like we're gonna get this certificate and it's gonna be like this **“here it is”** [emphasis by interviewee] and then people will pick it up and go, “Oh yeah, I know what you're talking about. Tapatoru, I know that framework”. Umm but I guess the reality is, because it is a pilot it's not well, widely well-known at the moment. Umm, so a digital [laughter] badge to me is like I think of a badge on my top (Interviewee 16).*

I'm not interested in a badge. I mean it would be very nice to have a little ticket, but at the moment it means nothing to anybody really as it is not a standardised practice across New Zealand (Interviewee 7).

Value of digital badges

Despite some views that digital badges are less prestigious than a formal qualification, as shown by the quotes above, the literature shows there is value in them. They can act as extrinsic and intrinsic motivators, with the latter being more effective in relation to learning gains (Carey & Stefaniak, 2018). In relation to extrinsic motivation people persist with their learning with one of the reasons being to achieve a badge (Dyjur et al., 2017; Gibson et al., 2015). Digital badges also provide

recipients with “status recognition in online communities” (Ferdig & Pytash, 2014; Gibson et al., 2015). Young et al. (2019, p. 117) found 93 percent of badge earners accepted them in 2018 with 67 percent of them adding badges to their social media accounts (LinkedIn or Facebook) and 47 percent of them saying they planned to “use the badge for professional recognition of some kind.”

From an intrinsic perspective, digital badges help with goal setting and provide the tools for reflecting on practice (Wolfenden et al., 2020). They also impact on peoples’ behaviours, act as a way of promoting lifelong learning (Ghasia et al., 2019) and capture a range of personalised and customised learning experiences (Gamrat, Zimmerman, Dudek, & Peck, 2014). This is exactly what is being done in Tapatoru.

As the badging system evolves and grows there is the potential for digital badges to be used and more widely accepted as a form of validation and accreditation. The potential lies in the flexibility they offer in terms of the skills that can be recognised.

A digital badge can thus represent a new type of measure and method to display both achievements and status, as it is digitally linked to further representations of the skill, knowledge, or activity that it signifies. In education, digital badges can thus be used to provide both direct and indirect evidence of knowledge, knowledge-in-use, skill mastery and levels of attainment (Gibson et al., 2015, p. 408).

Digital badges reinforce the idea of current competence when they have an expiry date and “provide an effective, transparent, and often user-centric manner in which to display evidence of learning while directly linking to information that is needed to understand, authenticate and validate the badge and the learning that it claims to represent” (Gibson et al., 2015, p. 409). Ako Aotearoa’s digital badges have an expiry date of three years.

A third trial group arrives

After nearly two years of work through 2019 and 2020 one of the organisations, a PTE, with whom Smith had had original conversations signed to participate in the trial. While the organisation had maintained its interest, COVID-19 and a restructure had kept it out of the mix. In keeping with Ara Poutama Aotearoa, Smith sees the importance of linking to the organisation's wider strategic plan and the need individual educators have for professional development.

It is being run as a professional development programme via Zoom for a cohort of 30 educators. The cohort has been split into two groups – a group of six experienced educators who are going through an RPL track and will act as champions supporting the others through the process.

So that was the idea of the advanced guard. There is six of them. They are half-way through. I have had separate zooms with them. ... [these are] quite small, quite intimate. We talk about stuff and they get an email from me with content and the zooms are more of a chance to discuss. So, the streamlined way I talk about it now, is CV, reflection and references. So, all six have handed in CVs. I’ve done interviews with three of the six, with three more still to go, and people are in the process of pulling together their referees.

... so again, lesson learned from last year, how can we speed this process up. The talanoa or kōrero style one is that we are looking at as part of this experiment and just as a way of moving things along quickly. I still think we’re getting robust and pretty deep data, but it kind of looks and feels different to

what we got in some of the written submissions last year (G. Smith, personal communication, April 19, 2021).

By April 2021, there had been four Zoom sessions with the larger group at this organisation, along with supporting material in the form of short video clips that engage educators and reading material to support this. Smith sees it as a package of material which has been streamlined based on the learning from the earlier iterations of the work with the Online and Ara Poutama Aotearoa groups. There is the sense that Tapatoru is on its way.

Concluding reflections on development and delivery

Taking a framework from overseas and indigenising it so it reflects the expected values, knowledge and practices of educators in Aotearoa New Zealand was challenging. To be fair, the TEC was commissioning a professional standards framework about which little was known in our context. In hindsight it would have been better to use a three-stage process. Firstly, work with an expert advisory group who could have determined what a framework might include. This group could also have provided feedback throughout the development process. Secondly, use an expert such as Smith to develop the framework and facilitate the process. And thirdly use a wider consultation process with the sector to test the framework. Such a process of socialisation would have meant sector champions were in place, along with wider knowledge and ownership of Tapatoru before it was launched. The likely result would have been greater understanding that might have led to increased uptake.

While development of Tapatoru was difficult, introducing it to the sector and getting uptake of it proved even more challenging. The introduction coincided with factors outside of Ako Aotearoa's control – RoVE and COVID-19. It also occurred at the time the TEC was restructuring and the literacy and numeracy team was dismantled leaving no leadership within the organisation to support and promote Tapatoru to the sector. What would have happened without these coincidences is not known, but it limited opportunities for communication and promotion to the sector.

Alongside the coincidences there has been a lack of communication. Limited consultation in the development phase meant low socialisation, with few people garnering an understanding of what Tapatoru is and its value to foundation education professionals. While it was promoted in workshops in early 2019, limited numbers of people attended these. In the end Smith was left communicating via a webinar then emails to Tapatoru participants, *“not because it is the best, but because it is ubiquitous”* (G. Smith, personal communication, September 11, 2020).

However, as this and the following chapter show, the time it has taken has allowed for refinements to be made. There is now a coherent package of resources and PLD to support individuals and organisations who are looking to go through the Tapatoru process. It also means there are now small pockets of champions across Aotearoa New Zealand who can promote Tapatoru within their organisations.

The offer of free PLD and support for the development of a reflective portfolio of practice was the 'leading the horse to water' but getting the numbers to drink (metaphorically) has proved impossible. That Tapatoru has had the uptake it has, albeit small, is down to the perseverance of

Smith and the ability to be innovative in relation to delivery when COVID-19 arrived. The introduction of the online groups provided the opportunity to develop and refine the processes for evidence gathering, along with the opportunity to socialise it with the sector. Given this chapter is Smith's story, the final words are his.

I guess there is probably some contradictory feelings. I'm super proud of the work that we did to develop it. I think the Tapatoru is awesome, I love it. I love the work that I did around the consulting period. I loved the work I did with Joe Te Rito just to kind of fine tune it and to get the graphics that we've got. I mean some of that was his inspirations. And when I hear the stories, I mean especially second hand, like from you talking about how enthusiastic people like [X] and [X] are, then that makes me kind of proud of the work we have done up until now ... and when I listened to [the professional kōrero] ... it was really heartening to hear how they work with their people and those are the good stories - the heart-warming stories that you look back on and think, that's why we do this stupid job - it's that. So, all of that stuff makes me feel happy and proud of the work that we've done (G. Smith, personal communication, April 19, 2021).

Chapter Six: The Story of Tapatoru Participants

This chapter picks up from the story of the development and delivery of Tapatoru and describes the experiences of the early adopters. It is the story of three managers from Ara Poutama Aotearoa and nine early adopters of Tapatoru. They are the 12 characters in this chapter and, as it is their stories, I make considerable use of their words as they open up with their rationale for participating in the trial, with their views on Tapatoru and provide commentary on their Tapatoru experience. This approach follows Seidman (2006, p. 120) whereby, “telling stories is a compelling way to make sense of interview data.”

Data for these stories were collected between July 2020 and April 2021. One of the nine Tapatoru participants was interviewed twice: once when she was going through Tapatoru and again afterwards as she wanted to share her reflections on the process. Three participants also offered their portfolios of evidence so I might better understand their practice. Data also came from three managers in Ara Poutama Aotearoa who championed and supported the introduction of Tapatoru into their organisation and from two staff in two organisations which did not take up Tapatoru. The final data came from a small survey of five participants from the Ara Poutama Aotearoa trial groups.

The chapter starts with vignettes of four participants. These four have been selected as a way of showing the diversity of Tapatoru participants in the sample in terms of experience, places of work and the roles people have. This is followed by an overview of the drivers for participation in the trial by Ara Poutama Aotearoa and the participants.

Central to this chapter is the description of the experience of going through Tapatoru and putting together portfolios of evidence. The participants are among the first in Aotearoa New Zealand to do this. What they say contributes new knowledge about how to articulate the practice of foundation educators. This description is then extended to further explanation of the role of values and reflection in relation to capability building and foundation education generally. The chapter concludes with the overall value of Tapatoru to these early adopters.

In knitting this chapter together I needed to ensure I did justice to what the participants said and the time they took to talk with me. It was a privilege to be allowed into their lives (Fujii, 2018; Seidman, 2006) and to have what for me was both a conversation and an exploration of their thinking.

I am mindful that three of the 12 interviews were by phone with notes taken, rather than being recorded and transcribed. This means I have less data to work with from these participants and their views are perhaps not so well represented. Throughout the telling of participants' stories, I have been conscious of, and have had to reflect on, why I might be inclined to privilege some evidence and quotes over others. Here, while subjectivity is possibly at play, I have determined that from the reading and re-reading and building to themes, the evidence and quotes used best exemplify and give life to these themes.

For ease of reading, I have removed fillers from participants' quotes and I have also named them by number, rather than putting in the full “Interviewee X.” This chapter has been shared with the interviewees who were invited to provide feedback and make changes to any quotes they thought made them identifiable.

The participants

As noted in Chapter Three, the early adopters in the sample for this research are not typical of those who have been through Tapatoru, or of those in the foundation education sector. Pūkenga Papa Rua was the skill level on offer in the pilot. This level is for “Teaching and learning support practitioners seeking to expand their understanding and practice. These practitioners may be working towards or already have an adult teaching qualification” (Smith & Te Rito, 2018, p. 6). The sample whose story is told here are experienced practitioners who hold qualifications ranging from Level 5 Certificates in adult teaching through to Master’s degrees. They work in a range of roles including: education support, vocational and workplace tutoring, adult and community education, and adult qualification assessment. Five worked at Ara Poutama Aotearoa, two are independent education contractors, one works in a community setting, and one in a subsidiary of Te Pūkenga. They come from the ALNACC Facebook group and from Ara Poutama Aotearoa.

While they have varied roles, they share a range of common attributes, two of which are key to their uptake of Tapatoru: lifelong learning (as attested to by their qualifications, professional learning they have undertaken, and their uptake of Tapatoru); and an exceptionally strong commitment to social justice, equity and delivering quality learning experiences for their adult learners. As I:18 comments, *“I’ve always been, what’s the right word here, passionate, passionate about justice issues and human rights”*. Of note too, is that adult education for all but one of them, is something they have come to as second or third careers.

Participant vignettes

Four vignettes are provided as a way of introducing the Tapatoru participants. They have been selected as a way of showing the diversity of the sample – their roles and backgrounds, and the ways in which they approach their roles as educators. The vignettes also foreground the categorisation discussed later in this chapter of the participants as grapplers, pragmatists, and autoethnographers.

Interviewee 8

I:8 was part of the online group and also works at Ara Poutama Aotearoa. She is a full-time vocational educator working with 18 paihere in a practical, workplace-based setting. *“So we do on the job training. But it’s not easy – you don’t go into a classroom and it’s peace and quiet ... we have to work around business as usual ...”* I:8 works on a large site with trainees spread across it. *“There are four different areas. You’ve got three of four in [X area] and another three of four in the [X shed] and another three in [X shed] and the rest are down the back ...”*

I:8 has a diploma in the industry in which she is teaching. Before taking on her current role, her teaching experience was limited to training an individual apprentice in a workplace. In moving to a full-time education role, I:8 says she has learnt on the job and has also undertaken a level 4 certificate in adult teaching, along with two Level 5 NZCALNE certificates, which she did in her own time. *“So, it’s only through me wanting to, I suppose, upskill to try and do the best job I can.”*

Interviewee 9

I:9 was part of the Tapatoru online group and at the time was working as a self-employed contractor. I:9 left school early, went to university in her late 30s and completed a Bachelor of Education. She followed this with some further study but gave this up when she was employed as a secondary school teacher. This was short lived as she quickly realised the teaching approaches did not meet the needs of the learners. *“But in that time, I thought, what am I doing? I’m bashing my head against a brick wall in a system I do not like ... so [I moved to] teaching in foundation education.”*

I:9’s arrival in foundation education came as a surprise after her school teaching experiences. *“And I loved it. I thrived on it. It was just, it was just, oh my god amazing this whole new world opened up. And it was interesting and no day was the same. And I just loved it ... It still sets me on fire. Still ... the biggest thing for me is that you can change communities. It is not just about changing one individual. If that individual can take away the skills you taught them and teach their family and they can go on and teach their community is the biggest win.”*

Along with teaching literacy and numeracy within vocational programmes I:9 started teaching the programme for educators working towards NZCALNE, joined the adult literacy and numeracy practitioners’ association, and moved into workplace training where she works with employees and also mentors workplace trainers. *“It’s my life journey, it’s been my life journey. I’m one of those. I left school at 15 with nothing. ... and you know, a lot of adults come to the class and they don’t want to know someone that hasn’t had failure. They want to know that the person who is standing up there is real and that’s what shaped me I think, it’s like I’ve been on a journey with some of these people. I know what it’s like to feel dumb, to have all those labels thrown at you, to fight your way back ...”* Since completing Tapatoru, I:9 has moved to a teaching role in a subsidiary of Te Pūkenga and is looking to start her Master’s degree.

Interviewee 12

I:12 was part of the Tapatoru online group. She works in an advisory role in a subsidiary of Te Pūkenga. I:12 is a lifelong learner whose working life started in administration while she studied towards her undergraduate degree. Her passion and interest in adult literacy and numeracy started when she moved into a teaching role and realised she, *“Ended up gravitating to the ones that no one wanted to teach, ...”* I:12 has worked and volunteered in a number of adult literacy and numeracy roles over the years, has completed her NZCALNE and a Master of Education degree, and is about to embark on her PhD.

Along with the formal learning path I:12 has also immersed herself in non-formal learning through PLD and professional reading. In terms of PLD she says, *“And then in my spare time I just tick over by doing the Te Wānanga o Aotearoa courses, just to give me I just feel more of an affinity with Māori values than I have with anything Pākehā ... I just find the values are very similar to my own.”* I:12 supports this form of learning by immersing herself in marae-based activities which she sees as more important than the formal qualifications she has.

The final point to note about I:12 is the extent to which the process of ako resonates with her. *“... I preferred listening to the narratives of my students which is probably where I’ve heard, where I’ve picked up my skill. I can’t look at literacy and numeracy assessments and know what they mean unless I’ve actually worked with a student who has had issues with them.”*

Interviewee 16

I:16 was part of the group from Ara Poutama Aotearoa. At the time she went through Tapatoru she was working with paihere helping them to set up their learning pathways, by understanding their learning needs and then networking with providers and volunteer support to place them on learning programmes. *“There’s a real care and holistic kind of attention that goes into the conversations. There’s lots of following up. ... I realise that with the [paihere] they need to be buying into what they’re learning and they need to know why they are learning it and they need to have some autonomy and decision making around what they are learning.”*

I:16 has a Bachelor’s degree in early childhood education and after working in that field decided she wanted to work as an educator of those working in this field. I:16 then completed the NZCALNE, followed by a Graduate Diploma of Tertiary Education. *“And that kind of took me on this whole journey of understanding what adult learners are, how they differ from child development. It helped me to understand my own practices as a practitioner. It helped me to really refine who I am and what my framework for learning and teaching is ... my final piece for my GDTE was around creating a framework for teaching and learning and it was all around tino rangatiratanga as a practice and as a way to inform the work. So, the Treaty of Waitangi for me is like, it should be reflected in everything that we do.”* Since completing Tapatoru, I:16 has moved to a role in a subsidiary of Te Pūkenga.

Drivers for uptake

Chapter Four describes the organisational drivers of capability building as being for compliance reasons; because organisations are funded to; and/or because they want to be a quality provider with capable staff delivering quality programmes. Therefore, it was interesting to test the extent to which these hold for Ara Poutama Aotearoa given it was the first organisation to embrace Tapatoru. Previous chapters have noted the challenges of getting organisational buy-in and agreement to have staff going through the process, so what was it that made Tapatoru worthwhile for this organisation?

Drivers for Ara Poutama Aotearoa

The key driver Ara Poutama Aotearoa was the professionalisation of their educator workforce in keeping with Chalmers (2017), Misko et al. (2021), and Suddaby (2019). Regional education managers also wanted the educators to recognise they were as capable as others in the wider adult education sector. *“... generally, correctional educators, in the wider world are not well regarded I don’t think, and we don’t help because we don’t help them keep up with accreditation ... We give them very little professional development”* (I:13). While staff have a range of education qualifications including level 5 adult teaching certificates, primary and secondary teaching qualifications, and in some cases, Master’s degrees and work in a range of education roles, managers thought not all of their education staff see themselves as professionals.

One of the regional managers also recognised the value of Tapatoru as an education practice framework which could be introduced as a standard across the organisation. This is similar to the thinking behind the Adult Community Education Teaching Standards described in Chapter Four. Tapatoru would help educators to know how to articulate their practice and to move their practice from being a social service one, to an educative one. I:17 comments, *“I think this is the level of practice that Corrections should be aspiring to. If we can’t answer the questions, should we be a practitioner?”*

In addition to the opportunity for professionalisation and standardised practice was the fit of Tapatoru with the organisational strategy, *Hōkai Rangī* (Ara Poutama Aotearoa, 2019). While this is a strategy that directs how paihere are to be cared for, I:13 sees it as also applying to staff who work in the organisation. For example, one of the six key strategic areas for change is, foundations for participation, and I:13 believes, educators can’t participate if they are not continually professionally developed and kept up to date.

Hōkai Rangī ... it is very much about moving people along. It’s not just the people in our care. It’s about us as an organisation as well ... and so it means looking after everyone. And that’s looking after everyone who works for us. So, for me, in terms of Hōkai Rangī, we are whānau so I need to be looking after these people ... making sure that have all the opportunities for progression that they can get (I:13).

Finally, participation in the Tapatoru trial was free. Cost has been a barrier to professional development in the organisation, and ultimately the uptake did come down to the no cost factor. As I:14 comments, *“National office ... could see that [participating] was going to be a no brainer. ... Once again it would all come down to cost ... So, when this pilot was offered at no cost, well we were going to be in to see if it worked.”*

However, drivers on their own are insufficient for introduction and uptake of an intervention. The organisations who did not participate in the trial had similar thinking to Ara Poutama Aotearoa in terms of how it would benefit their organisation. Interviews with staff in two of the non-participating organisations show they were interested in building the capability of their staff and wanted to be able to offer staff in different roles the opportunity to gain the Tapatoru award.

I’m talking about [X who works with our learners with disabilities] but there are also other staff such as our librarians that are asked a lot of these questions but have very little knowledge about what all this jargon of LN is and what it means. Administrators are as well a key piece of the puzzle (I:5).

I thought that it would provide opportunity ...[for] some of our people internally who do all sorts of things, you know, our account managers, our call centre people who talk to our trainees a lot, different people who offer support in different ways, ... for example our schools’ transition team ... And I thought wouldn’t it be great to pull in people like that who are doing really good work out in the community, some with our apprentices (I:6).

So, what did it take to move Tapatoru across the line in Ara Poutama Aotearoa? In short, a champion who convinced the organisation at a national level, across four regions, to allow it to happen. As I:14 comments, *“I see my job as a bit of knitting ... knitting things together ... picking up the odd slipped stitch. ... [however] ... I did need to sell it to my prisons ... as the guys that are doing it are all free*

agents.” I:14 recognised the value of Tapatoru for staff who are often not networked into educational communities of practice in the way they might or should be. She also wanted to build the confidence of the educators. She introduced staff in the organisation to Tapatoru by engaging Ako Aotearoa to run regional workshops on educating Māori and Pacific Peoples and at the same time introduce Tapatoru. In turn this led to her counterparts acting as internal champions and promoting and supporting it in their regions.

While funding was one of the organisational drivers previously discussed, three additional drivers can be seen here: professionalisation of an educator workforce: standardising practice across a workforce; and ties to organisational strategy. Interestingly the first two sit at the heart of the overall rationale for Tapatoru so having this confirmed, albeit by one organisation is an important finding.

Drivers for individuals

While organisational drivers are important to consider in terms of what brings organisations to Tapatoru and/or how it might be sold to them, it is also useful in this research project to explore whether these drivers hold for individuals. I:13 has described educators in Ara Poutama Aotearoa’s workforce as “*free agents*” and to a certain extent this is true of all educators, particularly those who work in contracted roles. So, what motivated or drove these early adopters to Tapatoru?

The key finding is that, while there are overlaps with organisational drivers in that the participants had the opportunity for free professional learning, there is a mix of other drivers: the desire to build their capability; to be able to articulate their practice; to reflect on their practice; to be part of a community of practice; to gain some standing in terms of being part of a professional body; and for how it might contribute to future career pathways or employment.

While there is usually more than one driver for individuals, the early adopters are categorised below into what I see, from their comments, as their primary driver. The five survey participants had different reasons for undertaking Tapatoru but their rationale is in keeping with that of those interviewed: professional accreditation and recognition, career purposes, and capability building.

Building capability

I:8 gets little opportunity for PLD in her organisation, apart from going through qualifications. She had attended a training workshop and heard about Tapatoru, and had forgotten about it until a fellow educator mentioned she had enrolled. *“I want to be as good as an instructor as I can be and want to be as effective as I can be ... And I really do like learning new things ... so I thought ... they did talk about looking at you as an individual and perhaps being able to help or advise or suggest maybe where I go from here.”*

I:15 heard from a manager that it was being offered and thought it sounded useful. As I:15 was on a contract she thought it was an opportunity to get some professional development, to consolidate what she knows and would make her a better prepared educator.

Like the other participants, I:19 has adult teaching qualifications and heard about Tapatoru through work. She has struggled to find PLD that would suit her and is offered little at her workplace. When

the opportunity to go through Tapatoru came along she grabbed it. *“I thought people would be fighting to do it to be honest.”* I:19 was somewhat surprised to find that others she worked with were not as interested as she was.

Reflection

I:7 saw it as an opportunity to undertake some professional development during the COVID-19 lock down. She was really interested in Tapatoru as a reflective framework. I:7 has previously worked in the compulsory education sector where there is a framework for self-reflection and, *“Knowing that we didn’t have one in the tertiary sector, I thought it was an absolutely grand idea.”* While I:7 saw the value of Tapatoru as a tool for self-reflection she also wanted to explore how it might be used within her organisation. Her manager was keen to know more about how Tapatoru could be used with staff who were not educators *“to try and figure out how well they are doing what they are doing.”*

I:10 is an independent contractor and an avid professional developer who says she always has some form of professional learning on the go, usually a MOOC. While she has a number of qualifications, she saw the opportunity for Tapatoru to add to what she has. It provided *“the opportunity to reflect on my own practice and my knowledge and skills in those areas. But I don’t see it as stand alone, I see it as something on top of or alongside my qualifications.”* In addition to individual reflection I:10 saw it as a chance to network, be involved with other practitioners, and be part of a wider community of practice.

I:12 heard about Tapatoru on the ALNACC Facebook page and thought it sounded interesting because of the reflection that was being encouraged in the process. *“Was I still functioning correctly, was I still on the right path, did I incorporate Māori values into my work? What was missing? And I like the reflective side because then it will give you a platform and then you say right, this was this in 2020 and now I need to develop this and then you can see where you can move forward”* I:12 also liked the holistic approach that is part of Tapatoru and the role values play in relation to working with adult learners.

Part of a professional community

I:16 heard about Tapatoru at Ako Aotearoa workshops. Its key appeal for her was the connection to the idea of teacher registration. *“That holds a whole lot of validity and credibility, therefore Tapatoru sounds like it’s going to do the same thing ... and I wanted to be part of a professional body.”* Along with this, I:16 thought it would complement the formal study she had been doing and *“If it helps me advance my, I guess, professional practice, yeah, my career, then I’ll do it.”*

First and foremost, I was initially really attracted to it because of that feeling I can belong to a professional body. I can belong to a group of practitioners. I feel like this is the first opportunity and time that I’ve ever experienced a framework for foundational adult learning, and that’s huge and knowing that it’s going to be rolled out and knowing that I’m kind of part of that initial pilot is really cool, because I can then pass on my knowledge. And add it to my tool kit really ... (I:16).

Career pathways

I:9 is an independent contractor currently working in an organisation. Tapatoru was free and as such an opportunity for 'no cost' learning. I:9 has done a lot of PLD over the years and there is never anything to show for it. Going through Tapatoru provided the opportunity to show what she has done along with possibly opening doors for future roles.

An outlier

One participant was an outlier and did not fit into any of the categories outlined above. I:18 was not sure she was the right candidate given the range of qualifications she has along with further learning she has undertaken in level 2 and 3 programmes in tikanga Māori. *"I was actually asked to do it. Like, I said, "Am I the target market for it?" Like I read the level 2 descriptor and I didn't quite feel it fitted, because I've already got like, [a number of qualifications] ... And they said, "No, you are the perfect candidate for it". So, I just went through it."*

The mix of drivers or motivators are worthy of consideration in terms of how Tapatoru might be promoted in the future. As Ako Aotearoa moves from the trial phase to further promotion and roll out of it, describing it in these ways may be of use. As noted in the previous chapter, there have been challenges in getting the sector to understand what Tapatoru is and what it means for educators to receive the award. Working from the drivers or motivators angle provides the opportunity to better describe the rationale for the uptake of Tapatoru

Achieving the Tapatoru award

While Tapatoru was sold as a PLD opportunity, in reality the groups involved in the trial and the sample in this research project were going through a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process. In part this was driven by COVID-19 which necessitated an online environment. However, while there was no traditional external PLD, going through RPL was not a tick box process. As the comments from participants show, what happened was an internalised professional learning process as they reflected on the values that underpin their work and their ways of working with their foundation-level learners.

Tapatoru award requirements

The Tapatoru award requires three pieces of evidence: a CV, which was not problematic, with most just getting on with it by sending in a current CV or customising what they had; a portfolio containing eight practice stories which proved to be a thought-provoking and reflective exercise; and referee attestations which proved more challenging to get than might have been anticipated.

Participants were working towards Papa Rua – the second of the four papa of the Tapatoru Framework, where they need to provide evidence of:

- a commitment to all the professional values
- appropriate base-level knowledge across all four areas of professional knowledge
- successful engagement in appropriate teaching and/or learner support practices across all four areas of professional practice

- successful engagement in continuing professional learning and development in relation to foundation education. This encompasses teaching, learning, assessment, learning support, pastoral care, and other areas as appropriate (Smith & Te Rito, 2018, p. 11).

The reflective commentary

The centrepiece of the attestation process is the portfolio with eight scenarios based around the process of designing, facilitating, giving feedback, and engaging learners. While there is a suggested word limit of around 250 words for each scenario, this was adhered to in varying degrees by the participants. To be fair, describing a scenario and reflecting on it in 200-250 words is a challenge, and the extent to which this works is discussed further in Chapter Seven.

Putting the reflective portfolios together provided participants with the opportunity for reflection in action and reflection on-action along with allowing them to articulate their practice within the framework of Tapatoru. While reflection is something they tend to do, going through the process allowed them the 'stop and think' moment that is often not afforded to professionals in their busy working lives and as I:16 says, it is a challenge *"to explain who you are and what you do."*

Putting reflective commentaries together was more difficult for some than others. There was a continuum of ease and approaches with the process. Multiple readings of the transcripts allowed me to categorise the participants into three groups - the grapplers, the pragmatists, and the autoethnographers – with overlaps between them. It doesn't mean they are better or worse practitioners or better or worse reflectors on their practice. It simply means that they came to thinking about the Tapatoru process, their practice, and writing their stories in different ways.

The grapplers are those who struggled with understanding the dimensions in Tapatoru, or with the limitations of them. They also struggled with how to articulate and write up their practice. The pragmatists just 'got on with the job'. They laid out their question cards, shuffled them around, selected the stories they wanted to tell, and told them. This is not to say they did not reflect deeply on what they were doing, rather they did not angst about the process. The autoethnographers had elements of the grapplers, but felt better equipped to reflect on action and articulate their practice accordingly. The Tapatoru participants' processes mirror those of my thesis writing - the process of grappling with ideas, making decisions to be pragmatic about the data and stories to include, and looking deeply and reflectively into what and how I do things.

The grapplers

For I:8 it was a struggle as she grappled with putting her portfolio together. She was completing Tapatoru in her own time and felt she did not know the language of the framework, therefore found it difficult to talk about her practice in a way that was reflective of it. She also felt isolated in the process, *"Cos I feel like I'm far removed. I feel isolated in my own bubble and my teaching or learning is really down to me."* However, she did have some support in that she met with a colleague occasionally and looked at the questions and the cards and *"we brainstormed a few ideas as to what you are actually asking in the questions and how we might answer that."*

I:16 acknowledges the holistic, Kaupapa Māori nature of Tapatoru but she grappled with putting the

portfolio together for different reasons to I:8. For I:16 it was a case of how the values resonated with her personally and her practice and then how she might go about articulating this.

To be completely honest, it was just about unpacking kind of what it looks like tangibly and so it's not that I'm not doing this, it's really my identity and who I am and then how do you then turn that into a tangible thing for people. Maybe iwi or tauiwi who understand. You know. And I think maybe parts of me during the reflection process was getting a bit anxious or nervous about the fact that ... there are two options there for the video or the written to help practitioners to share like kind of who they are and what they do. Cos to explain that sometimes is really difficult. To explain who you are and what you do is really difficult ...

I:16's final words in this comment are at the nub of it all, to explain who you are and what you do is difficult. While Tapatoru provides a way to frame this, it also limits what can be told. Here an additional challenge for I:16 were the constraints she felt put on her by the values of the framework and the need to "fit my things into these criteria." This is not to say she thought the values were wrong, rather she brings a wider knowledge and values' base to her work. "I'm really critically aware and reflective of how tikanga Māori informs my practice and so I can make that really clear in what I do and in my work." I:16 sees other tikanga such as kaitiakitanga and tino rangatiratanga as important to and underpinning her work.

I mean one of the tikanga that comes to mind is kaitiakitanga, and how do we promote active guardianship of our taonga, of our land, of our people and how do we then, I guess, pass on that knowledge for others to then carry. ... Rangatiratanga is another one that I would look at – the concept of leadership. I mean, look to be completely honest, there is some much scope. I mean that question is huge and there is so much that you could put in there. Yeah, I guess the question then for me would be what sits under all of that – where does Te Tiriti o Waitangi fit as practitioners and where is our obligation to that, that informs this stuff?

The pragmatists

In comparison, I:18 took a pragmatic and straight-forward approach. Like the others, she has considerable experience in adult education and, "I didn't like look at any of them [the questions] and think, oh my gosh, what am I going to write for that." I:18 was also aware that Papa Rua was not really aimed at her. "I thought it was a way of people proving if they had the qualifications they could do the practical work. Or if they had the practical work that they had the theoretical underpinning." Essentially as I:18 was asked to be part of the trial, she just got on with it.

I always do things ... yeah. I'm like, if I'm asked to do something, like [X] said would you like to do this. I mean I'd seen... and I was kind of curious, but I really didn't think I fitted the profile of it and she said, "No, no I really think you do". So, I thought, okay, I will do it then. So, since I said I would do it, I went and did it.

The pragmatic autoethnographers

I:9 bridges the space between the pragmatist and autoethnographer. Pragmatic in that she recognises there are sufficient cards to enable her to reflect on and talk about her practice. "See, cos I lay my cards out and then I changed them again and went, "Aw that's perfect" and haven't changed them since. ... And you really have to dig deep and I like that. I like that ... it makes me dig

deeper and justify my reasoning for doing some things.” The autoethnographic aspect is a living action for I:9, in that she has not written all her stories in a retrospective way. She applied and tested her approaches as part of the portfolio writing process.

So, the other week, I was like, oh my God I've been teaching for 15 years, you know, how many stories do you want? I could, you know I could [snaps fingers indicating could do things quickly] but I don't want to do that, I want to make use of these. So, the other week there was a question, “How have you strengthened mana or self-esteem”. No that's not it, it's wairua, “How have you encouraged wairua or spiritual wellbeing?” So, in class I had this student I was struggling with and I wanted to do it in the now, so I've made it a reflective thing over a couple of weeks. So, I can see the change. So, I've gone back in and tweaked something and then gone back and written about that. And yeah, it's got me thinking like that too. It's not just a matter of rewriting a story.

I:7 also fits the pragmatic, ethnographic approaches. While she quite quickly determined her first four stories to tell, she acknowledges that teaching adults is a complex process and that being limited to eight stories with a limited number of words (which she did not adhere to), *“Leaves out all the other little joys that come along the way.”* I:7 conveys the complexity as she talks about one of the stories she used in her portfolio.

... it was a complex journey and it was a transformational journey for some of them ... all of those values listed at the top came into play, but it allowed learners to open up to each other and to ... possibilities and to be good at something. These learners have fragile self-esteem and huge amounts of self-doubt so when you put something that doesn't seem like a learning task in front of them, they relax, and they don't carry with them all the failures of the past, they just relax into the joy of it. And then they discover, that A, they are learning and B, they're opening up, and C, they are building relationships. Very powerful.

The autoethnographer

I:10 fits into the ethnographic category. She sees Tapatoru from a holistic teaching and learning perspective and called the values, knowledge and practice of the framework, *“The nuts and bolts of engaging with learners.”*

If we use the framework as a whole, and we talk to the framework, what approaches do you use, what cultural aspects do you build into your teaching and learning, how do you engage your learners? If we just use those words, just from that framework ... we would be able to tie it into actually who we are as practitioners ... it becomes your teaching philosophy, whether or not that be emerging, or developing or whatever.

Rather than using the cards as the driver for her stories, I:10 found that thinking of the stories first and then fitting them to the question worked better for her. She puts this down to the *“creative”* part of her approach to teaching and learning.

And sometimes I went back the other way and went back to the example of a time that I knew something worked well and then thought about what did work well? Oh okay, because I was encouraging, I was engaging them. And then trying to make the connection that way. ... and I think that actually there might be, I don't want to say a better way of doing it, but sometimes we have better stories and sometimes from the stories we can pull out what we did that worked well and then what we didn't do, or what we could do better. Rather than looking at it from the questions, “How I

did this". If we looked at a nice story and then pulled out the examples from that. So, sort of working backwards.

The challenge for I:10 was "sculpting" the stories into the suggested word count which took "serious time". I:10 thinks the kōrero process would have been "a more natural way", given the tendency she has as a writer "to include as much as I can cos I just want to set the scene that I'm trying to paint."

Referee attestation reports

As a way of attesting to practice, participants are required to send their reflective portfolio for sign off and comment by two referees. Referees fill out a form and make a reflective commentary on participants' reflections. This was the most challenging part of the process. Firstly, in terms of the participants determining who their referees should be. "The hardest barrier for me has been another referee. [X] is doing one, but [he's] the only one I've worked with for the last nearly two years. And the other one is [Y], but she's only just got her NCALNE!" (I:9).

Secondly, the extent to which referees know about the participants' current practice or about educational practice more widely and are able to make a professional judgement on practice.

The hardest part is getting referees. The managers are not practitioners. They don't have a skill base from an education perspective. [In addition] ... What is on paper is not enough [for attestation]. Referees need to see practice and do this authentically. ... We don't want to give a standard of practice if they don't have it (I:17).

Finding a Referee was awkward. Colleagues are busy (pages of referee info) and no one witnesses the soft skills I use. I was shy to reveal my portfolio to them (sounded like I was bragging). Also, my role doesn't place me in a class, ... [and is based] heavily on value-based interaction to be successful and useful to the learner, but was difficult for referees using the template provided (Survey Participant).

A third factor was the time it takes referees to read portfolios and provide comment. Participants were aware that those being asked to be referees were busy. Along with some of them getting feedback that they had written quite a lot for referees to read!

It was tortuous, because my colleagues are so busy and it wasn't that they didn't want to do it, it was just that they kept forgetting to do it. ... And I wasn't going to let up, so I kept on her back in the nicest possible way to ensure that she did give me some form of feedback and that is what she came up with. Whereas my other two darling colleagues who have known me for longer really, really thought about what they wrote. And yes, they said nice things, but they justified the nice things that they said, so it wasn't just surface nice. ... Yes, getting the referees was quite difficult (I:7).

The final challenge in relation to getting referee attestation is the extent to which there is a power imbalance. This happens if participants are sending their reflective commentaries to managers with whom sharing personal reflections might be difficult, particularly when there may not be collegial relationships at play or when reflective commentaries do not place individuals in a good light.

So, for me for me it wasn't a problem giving it to my referees. [But] from experience of seeing what staff write to each other or would reflect upon, I would imagine that may be tricky for some. ... 20 years ago I would have cared and with different managers I wouldn't have done it. So that will probably be an issue for a lot of people who don't want to share that information. Your reflections

about things you want to change maybe, which may not sit with a company's or an organisation's political system, so that might be detrimental to some people's careers or behaviours and things. That I think would be hard (l:12).

While these quotes illustrate the difficulty participants had in getting the referees it would be interesting to know about the causes for this. On the one hand the comments point to the idea that referees needed to know more about the purpose of their attestation. While there was a *Referee Support Statement FAQ*, which outlines the purpose, the Tapatoru descriptors, and the process, it is not clear whether participants shared this with their referees. Secondly, it raises the point of the competence of referees to sign off on practice, for example, how qualified are they and how familiar are they with the practice of the person they are signing off? Finally, the power-imbalance aspect is a difficult one to get around. It exists in annual performance reviews, but perhaps people are not as open in these as they are in a reflective commentary on their practice. This then comes back to the whakataukī in the opening chapter, He kokonga whare e kitea; he kokonga ngākau e kore e kitea – a corner of a house may be examined; not so the corners of the heart. This may well have been at play with some of the participants and the extent to which they were willing to share this with managers.

Operating in the distance learning environment

In an ideal world, Tapatoru would have been delivered in a face-to-face environment with some online support, as was started with the PTE mentioned earlier. However, the advent of COVID-19 meant online was the only option and indeed was the option that enabled delivery and participation. This was not without its challenges. While participants appreciated the emails, Zoom sessions, and general follow up from Ako Aotearoa, the lack of the sense of community left some of them feeling isolated and without the ability to learn from each other. As individuals, the Tapatoru Facebook group did not really morph into a community of practice other than by name. And for the group from Ara Poutama Aotearoa, while regional managers had been the driving force behind the introduction, lack of support from immediate managers became an issue for some.

Maybe if there was some sort of forum cos it was the emails I suppose. ..., you'd get this email and it's kind of isolating in a way and one of the things that is really good about these sort of things is being able to learn off other people. ... Yeah, I think it is the missing ingredient here in terms of my experience ... I mean I always think you learn more if you have to teach someone. If I'd had to explain it to someone, I'd have got five times more out of it, it would have put it on a whole other level ... that ako idea ... I suppose if some of my colleagues had done it, then I would have been helping them (l:18).

I find the isolation when I'm doing my studies of any sort. Like with Open Poly when I did my NCALNE. I don't like the isolation. Not being able to have conversations with people. Because thoughts go round and round and round in my head, and I sometimes struggle to get them out coherently on to paper ... if I can talk things through with people it would be so much better (l:7).

Two participants who knew each other before starting on the Tapatoru journey highlight how connection and conversation informed their thinking about Tapatoru, their reflective processes, their teaching more generally and the completion of the Tapatoru award. They set up weekly meetings. As l:9 says, "I don't even know how that came about. It just kind of morphed. I think it was just a matter that we both needed a bit of oommpf to keep pushing our way through it to do it." Part

of the connecting process was driven by I:9's view that adult educators "*are talkers and want to be with a group of people.*"

I quite like [the process]. [X] and I have been collaborating so we've got our questions and we've just been bouncing off what we've written so far and just checking that we either haven't gone too far or not put enough in. So, there's that (I:9).

For I:9's co-collaborator (I:10), the opportunity to work together meant there was someone "*to bounce ideas off*", and someone to tell her not to overthink the stories she was putting together. It also meant that I:10 was not reflecting and writing in isolation but was also able to articulate her thinking about her practice at the same time.

While being offered from a community of practice perspective, the online environment did not pan out in this way. This is not to say Ako Aotearoa did not try to build this community through offers of additional Zoom sessions, it is just that it seems to have been driven by the participants' needs to know about process rather than sharing their thinking about practice. One of the regional managers in Ara Poutama Aotearoa also offered additional online sessions for educators in her organisation and these were not attended either. What was missing was the communicative interaction which meant the opportunity for sharing values, assumptions and practices with others, which is necessary for learning (Tett, 2019), was not possible.

So, what could have been done differently to improve this, keeping in mind that the online community was established in the time of COVID-19 as an opportunity for participation in the trial? Literature on online communities of practice with educators in the foundation education context, points to conditions that enable these communities to operate in a way that is meaningful to all participants. Greenhalgh and Peterson's (2017, p. 4) action research project found there needed to be an introductory workshop about the concept of communities of practice so that everyone understood what it was for and how it would operate. Educators also had the opportunity to talk about their practice at the monthly sessions and ask for solutions where they were challenged. Finally, educators were encouraged to reflect on their practice in between the monthly meetings.

While there was an introductory meeting for the online Tapatoru group, the participants did not know each other, came from different sectors of the foundation education space, and had different roles. In the sessions I observed there was a sense of nervousness from some, with discussions mainly being about the requirements for the evidence submission, rather than discussions around practice. This is not a criticism of the way in which the sessions were run. Rather it is about the pragmatism of the participants who wanted information about the process, so they could then get on with meeting the requirements for their Tapatoru portfolio.

Capability building and attestation

The description above is the 'what happened', but what about the 'so what' of going through Tapatoru? What has been the impact? What has it added to the participants' thinking and practice? In putting evidence portfolios together participants have had the opportunity to deeply consider their practice. Here, three things stand out. Firstly, their recognition and articulation of the Ō Tātou Uara – the values of whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, wairuatanga, and aroha and the way in which

these have allowed participants to think about, build towards, or affirm their cultural competence. Secondly, the extent to which going through Tapatoru has enabled deliberate reflection on action, and for some, reflection in action in relation to their knowledge, practice, and values. Thirdly, it allows for articulation of practice in a way that has not been asked for previously and has enabled a broader understanding of what it means to be a professional in the foundation education sector.

Ō tātou uara and cultural capability

While the participants were experienced and comfortable in their professional knowledge and practice, they were still looking for opportunities to grow as educators. The focus on values provided this opportunity. This translated to describing their practice with reference to the four values of Tapatoru, which in turn reference back to the ALN Effective Practice model in Figure 4.2 and the need to, “Acknowledge and respond to cultural and affective factors to enhance learner engagement and learning success” (Whitten, 2018c, p. 9). They also reference back to the draft standards and Smith’s (2018) point that values need to be seen as presiding over what practitioners do.

The nine participants are on a continuum of understanding and practice in relation to these values. This continuum has four touch points. The starting touch point is not knowing what the values are. This is driven by firstly not understanding the concepts, and secondly not knowing the language of the values or having a language to describe practice in this way. The second touch point is knowing the language and framing the values from the participants’ world view. The third touch point is full understanding of the values, being comfortable with them and actively practising them. The final touch point is living the values and having them imbued in their being and practice. Where the early adopters sit on the continuum is not a criticism of them or their practice. Rather it is a case of where they are at in their journey as adult educators, with all of them showing they are striving to be more culturally competent educators.

Starting touchpoint

I haven’t really thought [about the values]. I can see the advantage, but I haven’t had a chance to, and I don’t know how I could ... I had to google some of the [terms] ... honestly ... It’s not that I’m not interested or don’t want [to know]. It’s just personally I haven’t grown up with Māori. It’s just how it is. It is interesting and I can see the benefit of it. How I would go learning more about it I’m not quite sure (I:8).

However, in spite of this comment, in the anecdotes about her practice I:8 demonstrates she is a values-based educator who shows manaaki and aroha for her learners along with knowledge of her subject matter and how to convey this to her learners.

There was [X]. He had very low literacy levels... So, what I did there ... to make him feel more comfortable I put two or three together ... So, by putting the slowest learner with the older slower learners he felt comfortable which was really good. He also felt a bit embarrassed about his spelling and that, so I took him aside away from the others and spoke quietly ... So, I just helped him with his spelling. And we just went slowly and quietly.

Touchpoint three

In comparison, I:18 is confident and conversant with the values and had no trouble putting her reflections together. This is based on her previous experience and understanding of the values such as those in Tapatoru.

I was fine with it. Like I had to explain to youth workers for years and years, like how to apply the articles of the Treaty to their work. Like look at wairuatanga in terms of being a youth worker. So, I'm having to teach that stuff all the time. So that was fine.

I:7 is also fully cognisant of the depth of meaning that goes with particular values and is prepared to work with refined meanings that pertain to her work and the ways in which she wants to describe it.

... and you have to go and research mana, because we have a general concept of what mana is. However, when you go and research there are all these different layers to mana. And I thought, ah, the one that I need, is manatangata which is the attitude ... so in my reference to mana I made it clear that I was talking about manatangata and manatangata for me was more attitude. Because that is what I see changing here more than anything. ... Mana is a complex concept and I think somehow, we need to fine tune that question as well ...

Touchpoint four

Living the values happens in a deep sense when it is part of how people 'be'. As I:17 comments, "It's easy for me to think about wairua, manaaki – underpinned by te ao Māori, ... I work with a te ao Māori world view." It also happens when participants know how the education system operates and the need to make it a more comfortable place for them and their learners.

Everyday ... going into work for me is deconstructing and decolonising my practice. And I consciously do that through karakia, through embedding whakataukī, through discussions around te ao Māori issues, through understanding that we all have potential and how do we, how do I as an educator support or nurture that (I:16).

These findings resonate with the ideas surfaced in chapters two and three around the extent to which Pākehā can work from a te ao Māori perspective. I can know about it, understand in a te ao Pākehā way what the values mean, but cannot 'be' of that world or see things from that world view. The key point may be that, as in the conscious positionality vignette in Chapter Two, an awareness of knowledge and practice gaps is the starting point. As Parton (in Alkema, 2016a, p. 4) states, "The goal of cultural competence is respectful and effective engagement with people of different cultures to improve health and address inequities." This practice is at the heart of what the early adopters of Tapatoru are doing. Their descriptions of practice show they are mindful of who their learners are – they are culturally conscious, culturally sensitive, and culturally responsive. They also recognise the extent to which their learners have not had positive experiences in the education system, and the need to engage with them in a values-based way.

Reflective practice

Writing up their practice stories gave participants the opportunity to draw out examples of what they do and reflect on them. The act of stopping to recall a particular incident, write it up, and craft it for the portfolio supported the reflective process. In hindsight some teaching about reflective

practice and processes for this might have been helpful as some of the participants grappled with how to do this.

Those who had been taught reflection as part of previous learning experiences knew how to approach it. For example, I:9 talked about her teacher training and “*reflection in action or reflection on action*”, and how she has been able to apply this in terms of, “*being able to go away and think about things and adjust it and being flexible enough that I’ll go back and change that.*” I:16 talks about being used to the reflective process having just completed study for a Graduate Diploma in Tertiary Education and sees the power reflection has to inform practice.

Oh, I think hugely. It provides such a great opportunity for educators to critically analyse their practice and finally have the opportunity to start reflecting on their work which for some people has either never happened or hasn’t happened in long time, which is scary (I:16).

Managers from Ara Poutama Aotearoa also acknowledge the role of reflection and the impact it has on development and practice.

That whole reflective thing I think is really important. I think it enables them to see what they do and provides them with a way of talking about what they do – does that make sense? Because they don’t know, they are not thinking about what they are doing generally ... But this is making them think about specific examples and strategies and I think when they talk about themselves, when someone asks them that now they’ll have much better answers ... (I:13)

The iterative nature of reflection on practice and experience and making changes as a result was not asked for in the reflective commentary portfolio. However, the participants realise the weaknesses in relation to the current reflection process required in the portfolio and see merit in including suggestions for improvements in future iterations of Tapatoru’s reflective commentary approach.

So, what are you going to learn from writing all the good stories? You’re going to learn that you are great, that you are a fabulous educator and that you are doing everything right. Okay. But we don’t do everything right okay. ... so, what strategies can we use next time that can make that teaching or learning experience a better one? So, I think there should be reflection on what didn’t go so well (I:7).

There were also questions about the extent to which practitioners can be truly reflective and are perhaps inclined to see their practice and its impact on their learners in a positive light. As a way around this some participants thought getting learners and/or peers involved in the process would help support (or not) their views on their practice.

Articulating practice

Chapter Four highlighted the challenges for articulating the practice of foundation educators and notes this has traditionally been situated within qualifications. The Tapatoru framework and the reflective commentary provide the framework for participants to articulate what they do from the values, knowledge, and practice perspective. While on the one hand it is “prescribed” in a professional standards way, there is also flexibility for interpretation within these standards given the high level at which each of the papa descriptors are written. This is in keeping with the capability rather than competency approach. It allows foundation educators to say, “This is what I do and why. This is an attestation of my practice.”

If we just look at the actual framework and the diagram that Joseph and Graeme put together, there's nothing on there, except for the subtitle, that talks about foundation. It talks about what we value, what we understand about what we do and the learner in the middle. So, the holistic approach - the learner chucked in the middle, perfect. And all of these things about engaging their culture, pastoral care, support. All that ... to me that's education in a nutshell. That's all education in a nutshell (I:10).

The value of Tapatoru

The individuals had differing drivers for participation in the Tapatoru trial and all of them probably gained more than they had expected. This happened as a result of going through the reflective process and thinking deeply about the elements of professional practice in Aotearoa New Zealand. While it was a retrospective look at practice through the RPL process, it also helped them to acknowledge their practice aligns with effective practice as described in the professional standards.

I feel affirmed in one way that my practice really aligns with best practice, I guess. Best practice being a treaty partner. Knowing, understanding and embedding my roles and responsibilities, as a treaty partner and as Māori, using tikanga Māori to guide my practice, inform it, first and foremost. It's that, the big take away for me is I know how to decolonise my practice and therefore do it with others (I:16).

I think for me it has more of affirmed things that I do. ... I think that's what it's done for me. ... So for me, it hasn't changed my practice moving forward as such, but it has allowed me to feel, how do you say, I wouldn't say it adds to my confidence in that area, either, but it has allowed me to feel that I'm in that zone as well. And I can acknowledge, ... that I'm in that zone cos I've done that activity and this exercise and I've sort of confirmed it to myself that that's where I'm at (I:10).

While there was intrinsic value in the reflection on practice, there was ambivalence from some about the extrinsic award of a digital badge and appreciation of it from others. Chapter Five has canvassed the views on digital badges. In terms of the intrinsic value, I:15 sees “tremendous value” in Tapatoru, given that it attests to ongoing capability and can be used to inform future capability needs. She sees a place for it at induction and for informing ongoing personal development within her organisation with the digital badge being included as part of this process. I:15 says it is worthwhile doing. “It's a useful process to focus on what we're actually doing and then seeing that the practice is consistent within the organisation and our own values.”

In keeping with this thinking, I:9 likes the idea that it attests to her current competence. She also sees the Tapatoru evidence portfolio as a “philosophy statement” that shows what you believe as a literacy and numeracy practitioner. It is also something that needs to be repeated on an ongoing basis.

I:19 believes she got her new job as a result of having gone through Tapatoru and this has increased her sense of self-worth. “I know what to do in the job. ... I realise that tasks are the last thing in teaching. In essence it is about communication – look at people, listen, understand, care about people. It has helped me find my voice and encourage learners to find their voice too.”

While there is value for individuals, some participants also commented there is value in it for their organisations. I:12 would like to introduce Tapatoru into her organisation as a reflective tool for

educators who are working to embed literacy and numeracy into their practice. “[I want to say], this is good, just use it. But I’ll try and be more polite and edge it forward. There is interest though.”

The value to Ara Poutama Aotearoa aligns with the participants’ drivers and in the main this has been about professionalising them and attesting to their capability.

Tapatoru is a way of externally recognising that these people are doing an awesome job, you know. I’m actually looking forward to the other levels of Tapatoru and maybe getting some of these peoples’ supervisors to do it. And that might make them, help them realise what a great job these people are doing. ... [and] also showing that it is a viable career option for people ... and the value of what they are doing [is] recognised externally. I think it helps to show that Correctional education is a viable career option (I:13).

Concluding reflections on participants’ stories

Returning to Fujii and her comment about the “fundamental privilege” it is to be allowed into other people’s lives, I recognised during the analysis of the data that within the interviews there was a “richness of detail and layers of meaning contained in [participants’] stories” (2018, p. 91). I was privileged to have the Tapatoru participants share their stories with me. While their views are also in other chapters, it is this chapter in which they are the major characters. Therefore, what can be concluded from their stories? Firstly, they are experienced practitioners who would have been better placed at higher papa of the Tapatoru Framework. They are also patient practitioners who came to terms with this new framework, and its evolving processes while participating in an online environment.

The RPL process encouraged the participants’ reflection which in turn led them to the ‘how’ and ‘what’ of their practice in relation to values, knowledge, and practice. While this is something they engage with frequently, stopping to articulate it became a reflection in itself. In keeping with the ideas of reflexivity in Chapter Two, the reflection process provides the space for the participants to put a critical lens across their work (Fenge, 2010; Fook, 2015; Fook & Gardner 2007).

The surprise (for me) in analysing the data and putting the participants’ stories together, has been the impact of reflecting on values and the contribution Tapatoru makes to thinking about cultural practice. This had been a critical point for Smith (2018) in the development phase and capturing this as an outcome is an important attestation that the intent has been achieved.

What we have then, which has previously been described in Chapter Four, is a model of practice built for Aotearoa New Zealand. Participants have been led gently and in an affirming way to describe what they do. They have not been confronted by the uncomfortable learning concepts of Chapter Two, “disequilibrium” (Dewey, in Miettinen, 2000), “disjuncture” (Jarvis, 2010), “dissonance” (Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, & Fung, 2007), “unsettling” (Fook & Gardner, 2007). Rather, they have been through Andrew and Le Rossignols’s (2017) “unfurling” process as reflection has enabled them to look inside themselves and say, “This is who I am as an educator” and “This is how I know this”.

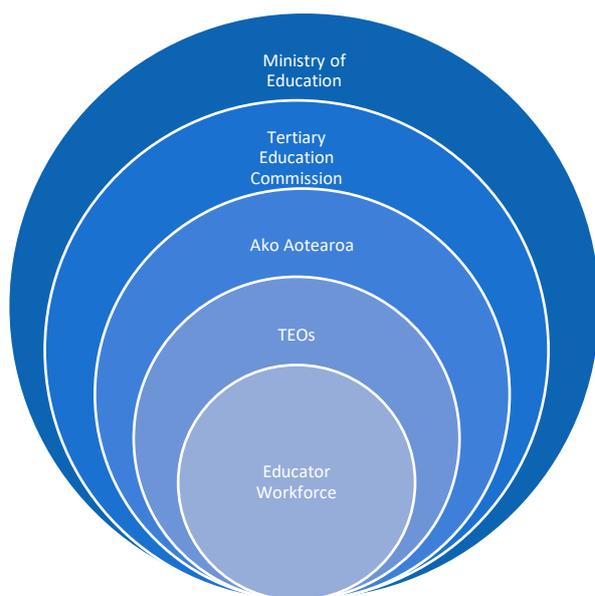
Chapter Seven: Tapatoru Discussion – Making Meaning of the Stories

Introduction

The previous chapters have laid out the range of stories that have shed light on how to build the capability of educators in the foundation space of the tertiary education sector. The context chapter charts the stories from the literature and key informants which show the ways in which educator capability can be built and the model of capability building that has been established for Aotearoa New Zealand. This is followed by the story of the development and introduction of Tapatoru to the sector, with its incipient challenges, and then the stories of those early adopters who participated in the trial.

This chapter seeks to make sense of these stories and understand possible meanings. It is a narrative about Tapatoru which examines the extent to which there is sufficient evidence to support the proposition set out in Chapter Three – ‘that professional standards support and guide the capability building of the foundation education sector’.

Figure 7.1: Education Ecosystem



(Source: Researcher created figure.)

Sense and meaning are made by casting a systems lens across the evidence. I take this approach because firstly, Tapatoru is a system change intervention. Secondly, I want this work to influence policy and practice at each level of the system and for those in the different levels to understand the policy and practice nexus (de Leeuw, McNess, Crisp, & Stagnitti, 2008).

To effect change each level of a system needs to interact and collaborate and there needs to be relationships across and between each of the levels (de Leeuw et al., 2008; Lowe & French, 2021; OECD, 2021; Ranchod, 2016). Successful outcomes rely on all parts of the system working together, acting as an

enabling environment for action and change (Lowe, 2021; OECD, 2021), and as the discussion in this chapter shows, in the case of Tapatoru they did not.

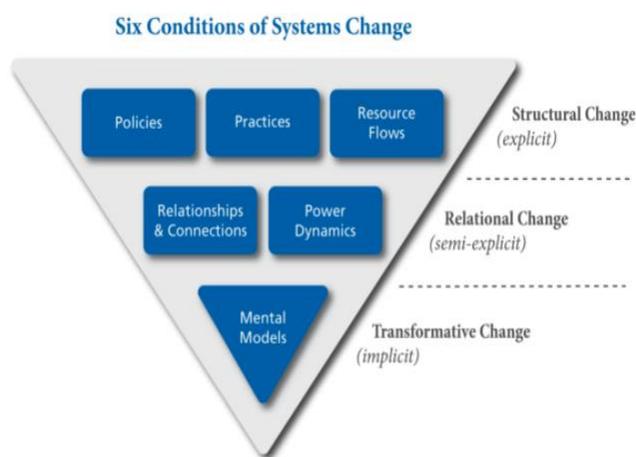
At the macro level, government’s role in the system is about, “strategic planning, co-ordination and buy-in... [and] devising coherent education ... policies” (OECD, 2021, p. 24). To date, in the foundation education sector, these policies have included, amongst other directions and supports, funding to build the capability of foundation educators (Tertiary Education Commission 2008b; 2015). Funding acts as one of the enabling conditions for both the meso and micro levels of the system.

The devolution of funding to the meso level means Ako Aotearoa can deliver capability-building opportunities and TEOs can afford opportunities to their educator workforces. This can be done through internal mechanisms or externally through subject matter experts who deliver PLD programmes to the micro level of the system - the educator workforce. While this workforce might be expected to undertake their own professional development, they need support in terms of time and funding to do this. At the same time, they need to engage with learning opportunities on offer and develop agentic behaviours that enable them to make decisions about their own learning and practice (Kania, Kramer, & Senge, 2018; van Wijk, Zietsma, Dorado, de Bakker, & Marti, 2019).

The arguments set out in this chapter have been sense checked (written key points and a follow-up discussion in a Zoom meeting) with the ALNACC team at Ako Aotearoa. This was important given: the thinking I have in this chapter about culturally responsive pedagogies and the need to test this thinking with the experts in Māori and Pacific pedagogies; the role individuals in the ALNACC team had in the development and delivery of Tapatoru; and the role they will have in its future roll out. The sense checking was also important for testing my thinking about what Tapatoru actually is. This chapter then lays out the case for thinking about how Tapatoru can be used and its value at the macro, meso and micro levels of the system.

How the system operates

Figure 7.2: Six Conditions of Systems Change



(Source: Kania, Kramer, and Senge, 2018, p. 4. [Creative Commons CC BY-ND 4.0 Unported License.](#))

that are explicit; relational change: relationships and power dynamics that are semi-explicit; and transformative change: mental models that are implicit.

In an ideal world the education ecosystem, as outlined above, would operate in a relational way, with people and organisations interacting across the system in a way that allows complex problems to be solved. In the case of this research project, the complex problem is how to raise the capability of an unregulated workforce of foundation educators, in order to improve outcomes for their learners. Working from Kania et al. (2018, p. 4) as shown in Figure 7.2, this means thinking about the conditions that bring about systems change. Structural change: policies, practices and resource flows

Policies, practices, and resource flows

Using this framework and linking it back to the education ecosystem, policies, practices, and resource flows sit with the Ministry of Education and the TEC. Over the last few years, the Ministry of Education has been virtually invisible in the adult education landscape. While they set the direction for tertiary education through the TES, the TEC is left to give effect to this. The Ministry's

role in recent times, along with the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, is its responsibility for the Survey of Adult Skills which is part of the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC). Here the Ministry of Education commissions the field work, analyses the data, and writes a plethora of reports on the findings. They have not been setting overall policy direction based on the survey findings. In terms of foundation education, it has been left to the TEC to fill the gap through its operational policy.

As Chapter Four shows, the gap has been filled by a series of adult literacy and numeracy implementation strategies (Tertiary Education Commission 2008b; 2015) akin to action plans. These have worked around the three-pillared infrastructure of: opportunities for learners (through various foundation-level funding mechanisms); building the capability of educators through qualifications and PLD; and developing and maintaining resources that support educators in their teaching practice. This infrastructure has acted as an enabler in the foundation education space.

With strong leadership from government, considerable work was undertaken between 2007-2018, but since a restructure at the TEC and the subsequent loss of dedicated literacy and numeracy personnel within the organisation, the work has been left in abeyance. This has resulted in the loss of advocacy at the operational policy level as there is no one to make connections, work in a relational way with the sector, and drive operational policy into practice. On a positive note, the infrastructure has been sufficiently robust that it has been able to “survive the vicissitudes of governments and bureaucracies” (Elfert & Walker, 2020, p. 122) and provides the platform on which the TEC can (re)build, and perhaps revision its adult literacy and numeracy work programme, which it is promising to do in late 2021.

In the absence of advocacy and sector relationships, the ALNACC team at Ako Aotearoa has been left to drive practice from the meso level of the system. Through contractual arrangements with the TEC, the ALNACC team has the mandate to take the capability building aspect of the literacy and numeracy infrastructure forward. Here the ALNACC team takes on the role of a conduit at the nexus between policy and practice (de Leeuw et al., 2008). This has caused a little disgruntlement in the sector. While the educator workforce does not want a compliance regime forcing it to undertake capability building, it does expect to see and hear from policy-making government officials as it has done in the past. Here I argue, based on interactions I have with staff in TEOs, that had TEC staff accompanied Ako Aotearoa to the organisations that showed original interest in participating in the Tapatoru trial, the outcome may have been different.

Relationships and mental models

The relationships and power dynamics of the Kania et al. (2018) model come into play as the parts of the system work together to effect change. Working together is about more than contractual arrangements such as that the TEC has with Ako Aotearoa or with TEOs through Investment Plans. It is about recognising the roles people have in the system and the extent to which each part is enabled to take ownership and responsibility for their aspect of the work. Government has the policies and the resources, but it needs the “humanising narratives” (de Leeuw, 2008, p. 12) to convey its thinking so others feel empowered in their roles, understand the policy and practice nexus, and have buy in to them (OECD, 2021; Ranchod, 2016). With the introduction of Tapatoru,

this was not the case as the TEC did not take an enabling role and was not “... in the mix with stakeholders, exploring shifting relationships, power dynamics, and mental models” (Kania et al., 2018, p. 17).

While the context of RoVE and the addition of COVID-19 in 2020 contributed to this, the lack of conversations and interactions (socialisation) with the sector resulted in little knowledge about Tapatoru – what it is, its purpose and value. The socialisation process was limited to the launch, some regional workshops, information on the Ako Aotearoa website, and meetings with five organisations. Given Tapatoru is at variance with the mental models (Senge, 1992, 2006) associated with the traditional markers of capability - qualifications and certificates (Smith, 2018), this was a missed opportunity as “narratives shape the mental models we have” (Kania et al., 2018, p. 9).

I am increasingly convinced that lack of implementation is not the result of poor management. Rather, the process of adoption fails because the new ideas are at such variance with mental models currently accepted by the organization. More specifically, new insights fail to get put into practice because they conflict with deeply held internal images of how the world works, images that limit us to familiar ways of thinking and acting (Senge, 1992, p. 5).

The challenge of introducing professional standards

Tapatoru is a professional standards framework and herein perhaps lies one of the issues related to the limited uptake. I would argue, based on the research, there is a lack of understanding of what professional standards are and how they are to be used. This lack of understanding means organisations do not understand or see the value in capability being attested to through a professional standards award. As Coolbear notes,

Such a scheme needs to provide a strong value proposition to tertiary educators in the development of their work as dual professionals. This means that it needs to be recognised by, and be of value to, their employers in that it supports performance recognition and career progression. It also needs to be cost effective (in Suddaby, 2019, p. 16).

The small history of professional standards in Aotearoa New Zealand goes some way towards explaining why they remain somewhat of an unknown. As Chapter Four notes, the ACE sector (ACE Aotearoa, n.d.) and AUT (Auckland University of Technology, 2019; Buissink et al., 2017) are the only organisations to have picked up distinctly indigenised models of professional standards and used them to both support and inform capability building and attest to teaching practice.

However, what Chapter Four also notes, is that attempts have been made at the national level to introduce professional standards to the tertiary teaching sector. Coolbear, the founding director of Ako Aotearoa, was an advocate for them. He promoted them, along with teaching qualifications, as a way to professionalise and professionally recognise the tertiary teaching sector (Suddaby, 2019). While the idea of an accreditation scheme was socialised, it never gained traction. It is not clear why this is the case, but there is likely to be a combination of factors.

Firstly, the members of other professions have qualifications pertaining to their profession (Révai, 2018) but in the tertiary education sector, educators’ subject matter expertise/disciplinary knowledge comes first and there is an expectation that they will learn how to teach on the job

(Suddaby, 2019). However, a counter argument to this is that secondary school teachers require both subject matter expertise and a teaching qualification to be allowed to teach.

Secondly, the concern from some, including the Tertiary Education Union, that standards become mandated and used as “a management tool” (Suddaby, 2019, p. 38). The same concern is expressed by Misko et al. (2021) in relation to professional standards for the vocational education sector in Australia. This is the weaponising idea that the sector would be keen to avoid, and it was also top of mind for Smith following the launch of Tapatoru.

We need to make sure that this doesn't get weaponised. So that's one of the dangers. That's not at the Ako Aotearoa level, that's at the TEC level. That's what they did with the NZCALNE. It became weaponised. And because of that we traumatised hundreds of tutors, particularly our Māori tutors at the wānanga and different places, as well as others. So, I'm worried. No, not worried. I have some concerns ... The TEC could use it as a weapon against tutors. I'm determined for that not to happen (G. Smith, personal communication, December 10, 2018).

Smith's comment also covers the point about qualifications. The TEC mandated the NZCALNE and, as noted in Chapter Four, this impacted on how the sector felt about this qualification and the need to have it for teaching purposes. Interviewee Two also spoke of the extent to which going through this qualification “traumatised” Māori educators in the ACE sector. Therefore, there is a need to find the balance between compulsion (the stick) and an understanding of the value proposition (the carrot).

You can have either a stick or a carrot, or a bit of both. The carrot is that people can do their jobs better and have improved satisfaction and skills – and it makes teachers lives easier. The stick is that you have to have annual reviews. [You need] a big carrot and a gentle stick (Interviewee 4).

The final point in relation to professional standards is, who the accrediting body will be and who will carry the costs associated with this. Participation in the trial was free and this was a driver for some, particularly Ara Poutama Aotearoa and for the individuals who were self-employed contractors. As Ako Aotearoa prepares to roll Tapatoru out to the sector they are mindful that the cost will be a barrier to uptake given it is not being funded as part of their contract with the TEC in 2022.

The impact of the lack of the socialising narrative

While the lack of knowledge about professional standards has contributed to the lack of uptake, mental models related to qualifications as being the only marker of capability have also acted as a barrier. Chapter Five highlights the lack of understanding about digital badges and the role they have as an award that attests to capability. The comments from Interviewee Five in an organisation who did not take up the offer of Tapatoru highlight this thinking further.

One of the first big eye rolls when I first started to sell it to various people was, “not another micro credential. I've got a million of them and they mean nothing.” And that's common, I think ... That's one of the downfalls of the sales pitch we had – it was bloody micro credentials again – you know. ... For example, one of the librarians said, “Look I've got so many micro credentials, I've got no idea what credentials I've got.” They've got lost in the soup eh ... One of the underlying messages I had was, yeah I get the micro credentials, but I kinda want a good old certificate. ... I want something that says, yeah I've done that and it's not an electronic credential that's on a bloody card somewhere (Interviewee Five).

The lack of socialising also meant a lack of knowledge about Tapatoru across the sector. For example, Interviewee 19 was surprised when she went for a job interview at a large subsidiary of Te Pūkenga that no one had heard of Tapatoru. *“No one even knew about it, and it has the ability to get to the grassroots.”* Interviewee 19 plans to promote Tapatoru within this organisation as does Interviewee 12 at her organisation, which is also a subsidiary of Te Pūkenga. *“This will be another sort of user friendly ... practical tool. It would be good to get more people [using it]. And we can edge it in slowly.”* This on-the-ground approach through organisational champions or mentors can be one of the ways to filter Tapatoru through the system.

Getting buy-in to professional standards has not been helped by the absence of the macro level in the socialising process. The TEC has not been there with the supporting narrative “to win over the hearts and minds” (Kania et al., 2019, p. 6) of educators and organisations in the foundation education sector. At other major change points in foundation education the TEC has been front and centre. For example, the capability building related to embedding literacy and numeracy into vocational education saw considerable investment, along with the TEC forging relationships with the sector during the process. Here the TEC was prepared to front and work with the sector. It was this enabling condition of change that was missing with the introduction of Tapatoru. This in turn made it more challenging for Ako Aotearoa to make the change at the TEO and individual educator level in relation to the mental models – knowledge about professional standards, their purpose and value.

The lack of socialisation and filtering down through the layers of the system has had a considerable impact on uptake. However, now the pilot is finished there is the opportunity to use the knowledge from it, both from the meso level of Ako Aotearoa and the micro level of the educators who have been through the process. The meeting of the top down - bottom up has the potential to resonate more strongly with the sector.

In terms of the framework itself, it has strong bi-cultural underpinnings to the ways in which we work. However, more work needs to be done in promoting the framework and making it become more credible within the adult education sector (Survey Participant).

How professional standards can work

ACE Aotearoa’s story is worth noting here as an exemplar of how professional teaching standards can work in the foundation education sector. So, what are the ingredients of their success? Firstly, ACE Aotearoa had a sound rationale for their introduction. They had demand from their diverse community organisations who wanted to improve the quality of teaching. They also wanted to get a consistent approach to practice across the wider ACE sector, and wanted to attest to the quality and capability of organisations and educators when applying for grants. Secondly, ACE Aotearoa used an external expert who worked closely with the sector to design the professional standards – a ground up approach. The sector was engaged and keen to understand what quality teaching looked like. As Interviewee Two notes, *“They all agreed that they did not know if they were doing good work. Quality was important to them because of the learners.”*

Thirdly, while the original standards built from those in the school sector, they have continued to be refined over time and ACE Aotearoa continues to socialise them through workshops with governance, management, educators, and administrators.

The review cut down the standards - we saw overlap - and as mentioned, was reframed to maintain the integrity of the underpinning principles of adult learning and teaching, and culture, albeit we improved the language to be more familiar to anyone teaching and to be more inclusive. Any tutor/teacher could see themselves in all the descriptors (Interviewee 2).

Finally, the standards are used on a voluntary basis and in different ways by organisations. Interviewee Two says the standards inform “*recruitment, job descriptions, supporting teaching, identifying professional development needs, and one provider has used it to inform writing policy statements of teaching quality for their organisation.*” In addition to these processes, organisations see value in the standards to identify expectations of quality and as reflective tool – “*what does this mean for our managers?*” For individual educators, the professional standards are used as a way to talk about their teaching practice and as a way to ensure they are maintaining teaching quality. This is in line with the thinking of the Tapatoru participants who see professional standards as a way of attesting to current competence.

The socialising of the ACE Aotearoa standards through the development phase and in an ongoing way through professional development, along with the use of them over the years, has enabled an understanding of the value of them at organisation and individual levels. The purpose of the standards was clear. “*Most importantly, we want everyone to be intentional about demonstrating if they are teaching, how do they know they are any good? And we hope the standards, particularly the descriptors, offer guidance and language to help with this*” (Interviewee 2).

In summary then the introduction of professional standards into ACE Aotearoa has worked. Albeit they are not formalised in that there is not an award for, or credentialling of practice. Looking through Kania et al.’s (2018) lens of the conditions for system change, what can be seen is the role relationships played and the lack of power dynamics – there was joint ownership and “humanising narratives” (de Leeuw, 2008). ACE Aotearoa was “in the mix with stakeholders, exploring shifting relationships, power dynamics and mental models” (Kania et al., 2018, p. 17). The ground-up approach meant change was not foisted upon the ACE sector, rather change grew within the sector. The narrative of purpose and value shifted the mental models and caught the ‘hearts and minds’ of the sector who share a joint vision of quality teaching in order to improve outcomes for their adult learners.

Tapatoru – more than a professional standards framework

While Tapatoru is called a professional standards framework, over the nearly three years of this research project, the concept of what Tapatoru is and what it was intended to do has changed, as has my thinking about it. In 2017, I saw it as a way to bring coherence to the foundation education system. Here my fellow researchers and I believed it should describe educators’ capabilities, act as an organising framework for professional learning activities, and provide a framework to inform career development (Alkema et al., 2017). This was the vision built from the thinking that informed other professional standards frameworks and in keeping with the thinking of Misko et al. (2021).

The reality is that, to date, the limited uptake of Tapatoru has meant it has not achieved all of these objectives. However, while it has not achieved the vision, the reality is, progress has been made and Tapatoru has turned out to be more than envisaged by our research team in 2017 and by Smith the

developer. Not only is it a professional standards framework with descriptors of capability, Tapatoru is also an award that attests to capability through the award of a digital badge, and a reflective practice tool. In addition, for the early adopters, Tapatoru has provided the framework to articulate culturally-responsive pedagogy and values-based practice, and for some has contributed to future career pathways. Tapatoru is a professional practice framework. Herein lies its value for organisations, educators and learners.

Descriptors of educator capability

What has been achieved from the vision is a four-level set of descriptors that describe the capabilities required by educators. Tapatoru is built around Ō tātou uara; (what we value); Ō tātou mōhiotanga, (what we understand) and Ā tātou mahi (what we do) (Smith & Te Rito, 2018, p. 6). These descriptors have clear links to the ALN Effective Practice model (Whitten, 2018c). The four papa cater to the different roles educators have in the foundation sector, from those who support learners and/or are new to the sector through to those in leadership roles.

We have a description of capability that has been built from research and one that is particular to Aotearoa New Zealand. While the Tapatoru descriptors are based on the UKPSF, particularly those related to knowledge and practice, the values differ. *“It didn’t grow indigenous, it was indigenised,”* as Te Rito notes in Chapter Five. The other point of difference to the UKPSF lies in the imagery, or the metaphor as Te Rito calls it, and the placement of the learner at the centre with the values at the top. This privileges values in a distinctly Aotearoa New Zealand way and brings culturally-responsive pedagogy into play. This is key to engaging adult learners who have not previously had successful learning experiences. As a survey respondent comments, *“It places values at the heart of practice. [It’s] Not about what we do but how we do it.”*

From the Tapatoru perspective, culturally responsive pedagogy sees the values of whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, wairuatanga, and aroha underpinning what educators do. These values are key to developing relationships with learners and providing rich and transformational learning experiences. This is in keeping with the literature cited in Chapter Four about the role values play in underpinning successful outcomes for adult learners (Brice, 2020; Chu, et al., 2013; Chu-Fuluifaga & Ikiua-Pasi, 2021; Luafutu-Simpson et al., 2018; Kerehoma et al., 2019; Prebble, n.d.; Sciascia, 2017; Southwick et al., 2017). While the values in Tapatoru are articulated as Māori values they are important for all educators not only to *“make them think about their practice for Māori ... [but] they work with all cultures – whatever is good for Māori is good for everybody”* (Interviewee 17).

I’m from the Corrections cohort. Our work environment is vastly different from other Adult Training environments and so I cannot generalise about the usefulness of this framework for other organisations. A weighting of a values based, approach works for Corrections because without values being the driving force, our learners cannot be reached. If education is lighting a fire (not filling the pail) then values, for us, is raking and fanning the embers of shattered learning experiences, without which no flames can be ignited (Survey Respondent).

Making emotional connections through a values-based approach with learners is not a new idea, but it is probably the one about which there is least knowledge in terms of how it is described and what it looks like – a finding confirmed by Brice.

... emotions are enormously significant in education and in pedagogy yet their significance in second-chance teaching and learning has not been greatly probed. Findings highlight a lack of deep understanding about the combined and interconnected influence of learner and teacher emotions in second-chance teaching and learning environments, and to the need for greater consideration and more focused research into the idea of second-chance teaching learning sites as affective spaces (2020, p. 49).

However, emotional connections on their own are not the panacea for solving the complex issue of the educational achievement of adult learners and bringing about a wider range of outcomes for them. Emotional connections through a values-based teaching approach need to be made by educators who know what to teach and how to teach. It is the combination of values, knowledge, and practice as set out in the ALN Effective Practice Model (Whitten, 2018c) that makes for culturally-responsive pedagogy, and it is the articulation of this in Tapatoru that makes it a powerful tool to inform educator practice and capability building.

From description to practice

But the question remains – how do the words translate to practice? The descriptors in the four-level papa outline the expectations. For example, in Pūkenga Papa Rua the high-level descriptors (as noted in the previous chapter) state the requirement for evidence of:

- a commitment to all the professional values
- appropriate base-level knowledge across all four areas of professional knowledge
- successful engagement in appropriate teaching and/or learner support practices across all four areas of professional practice
- successful engagement in continuing professional learning and development in relation to foundation education. This encompasses teaching, learning assessment, learning support, pastoral care, and other areas as appropriate (Smith & Te Rito, 2018, p. 11).

The descriptors do not define practice in a tight way, and therein lay an issue for some of the Tapatoru participants. These high-level descriptors avoid the tickbox, discrete activity approach of competencies (Bowen-Clewley 2016; Scott, 2016) and allow scope for interpretation and articulation of the ways in which values and knowledge contribute to practice in a holistic way in keeping with Lester (2014). There was criticism from Interviewee Seven who would like to have seen some consistent descriptors. *“I don’t want to make the whole process unwieldy ... there should be a checklist for values and a checklist for competencies, that is literally just quick, quick [ticking gesture with hand].”* However, Interviewee 17 appreciated the scope for interpretation within the framework, and recognises that in terms of *“understandings of the words, you can’t give definitions. People can interpret it in their own way. For example, break down wai and rua. It takes the practitioner on the journey. It is not prescribing the journey.”* It is this latter point about getting inside their practice (Tapatoru as a practice framework) that is appreciated by most of the early adopters of Tapatoru.

So, are the descriptors in Tapatoru a nationally agreed set of descriptors? The answer is - I do not know. While they are confirmed by research and the ALN Effective Practice Model, Smith, by his own admission, worked in a reasonably isolated way in the development of Tapatoru. He did consult with

the sector, but the extent of this consultation is not clear. Smith's "robust discussions" with Ako Aotearoa staff described in Chapter Five, and the subsequent work by Te Rito, ensured te ao Māori views were taken into consideration but, to my knowledge, no national discussion was generated. This was perhaps a missed opportunity as Interviewee Four argues that professional standards need to be driven from the ground up so educators understand the value of them and how they support them to do their jobs better. This is in keeping with the approach used by ACE Aotearoa.

I have stated earlier that, limited consultation in the development phase meant little socialisation, with few people garnering an understanding of what Tapatoru is, and its value to foundation education organisations and educators. There is the opportunity now given early adopters have been through the process to promote it further. Recent research from Te Pūkenga indicates the timing might be right. This research garnered the voices of learners and educators and notes as Opportunity 16, "How might employers, trainers and tutors have the general teaching, specialist and cultural confidence, capability and credibility to maximise learning potential?" (2021, p. 47). Tapatoru provides the framework for PLD related to this opportunity should Te Pūkenga be interested in it or in building from it.

Changes to descriptors

It was anticipated that the trial would help get feedback from the participants, and it is not clear what the wider feedback to Ako Aotearoa is. Through this research project I have been able to feed into the trial, but in the main, it has been about the process as this is what the interviewees have talked about. Only one interviewee talked about consideration being given to the inclusion of other values and practices. This has been noted in the previous chapter and is repeated here for the contribution it makes to the discussion.

I mean one of the tikanga that comes to mind is kaitiakitanga, and how do we promote active guardianship, of our taonga, of our land, of our people and how do we then, I guess pass on that knowledge for others to then carry. ...Rangatiratanga is another one that I would look at - the concept of leadership. I mean, look to be completely honest, there is some much scope. I mean that question is huge and there is so much that to you could put in there. ... I guess the question then for me would be what sits under all of that – where does Te Tiriti o Waitangi fit ... where is our obligation to that (Interviewee 16).

The point about Te Tiriti is interesting. Participants who are familiar with Te Tiriti recognise how the values operate within the Tapatoru framework, for example Interviewee 18 has run workshops on Treaty-informed practice in the justice system. ACE Aotearoa grappled with Te Tiriti in their standards and the extent to which the articles should be explicit or implicit and decided on the latter.

In the 2011 version we had language about honouring the Treaty. Tutors would say, "I don't know what this means". "I'm not Māori so I can't do this." In the review we had a robust discussion with the reference group about what we were trying to achieve and it is to be Treaty-based and bicultural. So, the standards were reframed. We didn't get rid of anything in relation to the principles and values but, focussed on the description of what the values are. ... We kept the Treaty in there without it being there. For example, we say, "be responsive to learners' language, be intentional around learner-centred pedagogy." ... [We've] kept the essence, but reworded it ... (Interviewee 2).

Tapatoru has the potential to be a living framework. It may be that the descriptors, while built from research in this first version of Tapatoru, are the 'stake in the ground'. As they continue to be worked with and wider understandings of practice are generated, through discussion and portfolios, these descriptors will shift as new thinking about practice comes to light. If there is a further review and design process it would be helpful to see an across-system process used to ensure ownership of the descriptors and the standards come from the ground up.

Attesting to practice

The three pieces of evidence, the CV, the reflective commentary and the referees' reports come together in the attestation process. They provide, at a national level, a way of attesting to capability and practice that complements a formal qualification process. This process was appreciated by the participants who liked the flexibility the approach offered.

It's more of a user friendly, modern approach. It's online, it can be verbal, it can be written, it can be video recorded. ... you know, it's reflective and you're thinking around ... you've chosen your own questions. I know they're all of a thing, but you've chosen your own questions to reflect your own state and where you're coming from and you're using your own examples (Interviewee 12).

Transparency of the attestation process

Nevertheless, there is still a question about what is being attested to? As the descriptors are high-level how can educators know what good practice looks like at each part of the framework and subsequently how to articulate this? While the early adopters put together portfolios of evidence, some were unsure whether what they were doing was the right thing and would have liked more feedback during the process and on their portfolios.

More of an indication that you have been successful - the only notification I got was from Badgr that I had a digital badge. I didn't receive any other email or feedback about the process or my portfolio. It took quite a while to mark and I wasn't sure if my referee reports had been sent so it would be useful to get more communication along these lines (Survey Respondent).

The referees' reports were the most difficult for the participants to pull together, but they are a key component of the attestation process given the referees' likely knowledge of practice. The three pieces of evidence are sent to Ako Aotearoa for assessment, but here is where, possibly due to the newness of Tapatoru, there is a lack of transparency about the assessment process and criteria for this assessment.

One of the difficulties with the assessment process is that Tapatoru is a capability-building framework and as Lester (2014, p. 40) notes there are challenges with assessing capabilities. It is not a matter of signing someone off against specific criteria. "Rather it is as much about using evidence from the specific context to judge whether s/he is able to act capably across an evolving range of situations envisaged as within the scope of the profession." The values, knowledge, and practices in Tapatoru are not checklists that can be attested to in a competency-based assessment way. In addition, Smith's approach was to keep the evidence descriptive rather than prescriptive (G. Smith, personal communication, July 8, 2019). Returning to Scott (2016) and to the concepts of capability

described by Lester (2014) this approach is appropriate given the capability of educators needs to be seen as holistic, integrative, and fluid.

With the descriptors being high-level, making a judgement about what, for example, “a commitment” to all professional values means, or “successful engagement” in appropriate teaching practice means, is not clear. What is lacking are transparent criteria against which to assess practice, along with exemplars of practice. Exemplars can be built up over time and it was the intention in the pilot to do this. With exemplars there is a need to be mindful that the flexibility of the process allows those going for the Tapatoru award to present their evidence in different ways – written or kōrero, either succinctly keeping to the word limit, or by going free range. *“I was able to write about genuine experiences ... The process was easy. I typed up a storm and kept writing and writing - 8000 words and I could keep talking and talking”* (Interviewee 19).

However, there will need to be higher levels of transparency in relation to the evidence that meets the standard. This thinking is confirmed by the survey participants who would like to see a combination of more information about the marking process – how it is marked, and the criteria for this. Clarity will be essential if the sector is to better understand what Tapatoru is attesting to and subsequently recognise the value of a Tapatoru award.

Changes to the attestation approach

While few of those who had been through Tapatoru made comments about the content of the framework, some had thoughts on how the attestation process could be improved. These included the use of learners’ voices.

What I thought was missing from the process was the voice of the learners that we work with ... That seemed to be like a huge gap ... We’re working with adult learners so why shouldn’t they have a voice in the process. And admittedly someone would choose you know, their teacher’s pet or whatever, but still there seems to be, ... a real missing gap in it, in terms of a process (Interviewee 18).

*So, my suggestion to Graeme was to have, to supplement our ... narratives about ourselves is that we could ... interview two learners, to add to our own personal reflections. So, I have interviewed two learners and have included my own reflections there. ... So, I was able to hear from them themselves rather than **imagine** [her emphasis] that I myself had changed their self-esteem* (Interviewee 7).

Another interviewee thought more consideration could have been given to the background experience of those going through Tapatoru. This could be driven through a staged process based on CVs which are then used to staircase people into the varying papa of the framework. As Interviewee 10 notes, *“So, sort of like start benchmarking it a little bit differently, depending on where the practitioners have come from. You know, what they are bringing with them.”* This is something that might be considered in the future as all the papa become available. At the time participants went through Tapatoru only Papa Rua, the second level, was available and most of those interviewed for this research were at a higher level than that in terms of their experience and qualifications.

The final point about attesting to current capability is there needs to be an ongoing process, in keeping with professional standards processes used in other professions. The digital badge expiry process of around three years supports this and it is what some of the participants want.

You should do it every year, every two years to maintain your practice - like teacher registration. It's a really good reflection tool for my own practice. How do I change things up, do things differently? What if I change, and apply [and say] that worked, that didn't work. Something like this every two years keeps us honest to those we are delivering to, and to ourselves. It keeps you passionate (Interviewee 17).

A reflective practice tool

While I had anticipated Tapatoru would be used as a reflective tool, the extent to which it was used in this way was a surprise. This was possibly due to the RPL process and the reflective commentary framework used for the portfolios of evidence. At the practice level I think this is where it has had the most impact and where the power of Tapatoru lies especially for use by educators to look at themselves (Malterud, 2001; Johns, 2013) and within themselves (Patnaik, 2013). As Chu-Fuluifaga and Ikiua-Pasi (2021, p. 82) note, “Phenomenal educators take time to reflect on their methods, their delivery, and the way they connect with their students. Reflection is necessary to identify any weaknesses that can be strengthened with a bit of resolve and understanding.” Tapatoru can also be used by organisations to reflect on the quality of practice of their educator workforces and to inform professional learning needs.

The reflective process has been fully described in the previous chapter, and I link it here to earlier commentary on reflective practice in Chapter Two as a way of critiquing the reflective approaches used by the Tapatoru participants. Kolb (in Dyke, 2017), says learning happens, not from just the primary experience alone, but by thinking about it, reflecting on it, or turning it into action. However, the process is not linear. Rather it is circular and iterative, happening in individual and social contexts through interactions with artefacts and people. “Reflection can occur simultaneously with action as ‘reflection in action’ – it need not occur simply after the event as ‘reflection upon action’” (Dyke, 2017, p. 25).

This reflection in action approach comes from Schön (1983). It is the process whereby practitioners understand and look at their practice while they are engaged in it. Here practitioners call on their in-depth knowledge, improvise, and create new ways of doing things. Schön calls this “professional artistry” that comes about when there is an experience of surprise or discomfort. It is a process that also allows for a critical lens on practice – why it is done, how it is done and for whom (Fenge, 2010), and allows for meaning and knowledge to be drawn from the practice (Cartmel, 2011; Fook, 2015).

It is difficult to determine the extent to which the reflective practice approach used by the Tapatoru participants is in line with the thinking of these researchers as I do not have sufficient evidence to do so. All the participants talked about the reflective process they went through as they put their portfolios together, with the articulation of their reflective process being described in different ways as shown in Chapter Six.

A continuum of reflective practice

Building from the description in the previous chapter, the continuum of reflective practice started for some as a process of thinking about and articulating what they do – telling their stories of

practice, driven by the questions they set for themselves based on the cards. On the next step of the continuum are those who recognise what reflection is and the processes for it.

I'm always self-reflective, ... I also know full well, that just because you have a formal qualification, a credential that says that you are a teacher, or that you are a pilot, or whatever, it doesn't necessarily mean you are good at what you do. And so I think there needs to be internal reflection. Internal reflection meaning reflection within yourself, but also reflection within an organisation (Interviewee 7).

Further along the reflective continuum are those who use reflection to make meaning. For example, Interviewee Nine who talked about checking her thinking about wairua and then testing her approach with a learner. Interviewee 16 called on thinking about her practice that she had done in previous study. Interviewee Eight thought the process helped as her reflections allowed the time to look at, "what I'm doing and how I'm doing it and how perhaps I could do it better".

The final step on the continuum is using reflection to inform future practice. While the participants' comments make it clear that they used reflection to 'look back' only a few used the process to 'look forward'.

...it's quite good looking for, okay, what can I do around this? That was probably what I got the most out of it, thinking what can I do more? I used to do things in my other roles and how can I put those into Corrections. Like how can I make [X] ... But I love thinking of ways of improving things (Interviewee 18).

So, I wanted to know, was I still functioning correctly, was I still on the right path, did I incorporate Māori values into my work? Ummm what was missing? And I like the reflective side because then it will give you a platform and then you say right, this was this in 2020 and now I need to develop this and then you can see where you can move forward (Interviewee 12).

Reflection as confirmation and affirmation

The lack of looking forward might be partly attributable to the RPL approach and the use of 'talking about a time when'. But this does not mean that, 'talking about a time when' cannot give cause for thinking about what might be done differently in the future. Did going through the reflective process lead to deep and transformational change for the participants? I would say not. For most, reflection for Tapatoru was more akin to a confirmational and affirmational process.

At the start I didn't think I was good at anything. I had no self-worth ... At the end of it I found my self-worth. ... It really gave me courage ... it was transformational for me. I was in a bad work situation ... and it gave me the ability to see someone thinks I'm okay. ... It made me think I could apply for another job. And I got it because of Tapatoru. I feel confident and know what to do in the job. ... It helped me realise I do do this (Interviewee 19).

For the Tapatoru participants the confirmation of their practice was a positive outcome. They are all very experienced in working with adult learners and passionate about making a difference for them. However, while I am saying it was confirmational and affirmational, going through the reflective process did cause the participants to think about where they stood in relation to their understanding and practice of cultural values. It was a conscious awareness-raising process.

... I think, the focus on obviously and the connection to Māori and te reo being used in the framework does actually draw you into that little zone. ... I think it is also important for me to zone in and stand back on it as well (Interviewee 10).

You know. I feel like I'm in a position now where I'm really critically aware and reflective of how tikanga Māori informs my practice and so I can make that really clear in what I do and in my work. Umm and now as a result I can do that with learners. So yeah, absolutely this is kind of my guiding principles (Interviewee 16)

Improving reflective practice

In addition to giving space to thinking about what might be done differently, one of the participants thought the approach (using the cards to frame the reflective narrative) did not allow for telling stories about when things did not go so well and there would be benefit from this approach. This idea is a reminder of the literature in Chapter Two about learning that happens when things don't go as expected and the potential for deep and transformational learning that leads to changed thinking and subsequently changed practice (Jarvis, 2010; Mezirow, 1997). It also aligns with the thinking that Tapatoru would be used to inform professional development when practitioners recognise they have knowledge and practice gaps.

One of the challenges for reflection is that apart from two of the participants who met regularly online, the early adopters were on a solo journey given the online approach that had to be used in 2020. Note, Smith had not intended the process to work this way and had designed the cards for a face-to-face, workshop, group sharing approach.

Reflective practice does not always just mean reflecting on personal experience (although, of course, it can be just that); it can also involve seeking learning from other sources, such as colleagues and broader thoughts on practice collected as research (Hawkins, 2021, pp. 199-200).

In hindsight, and based on these research findings, given the nature of the evidence in the form of a commentary, more could have been done to support the reflective process, even in the form of readings on what reflective practice is. While the cards encouraged the participants to 'talk about a time when', the depth to which this was done varied. Further research is required to look more closely at the reflective processes that are encouraged in Tapatoru and the extent to which this might help inform future practice. And I would go so far as to say reflection needs to be taught as part of the portfolio submission process.

A guide to professional learning

The original vision of a professional standards framework was that it would guide professional learning (Alkema et al., 2017; Smith, 2018), as is the case with the ACE Aotearoa standards and AUT's Ako Aronui framework. In the interview with Interviewee Five (May 8, 2020), I comment,

I never envisaged it as a micro credential, ... for me it was going to be a reflective tool, a tool that if you've got staff, you have discussions with them around their competency, around where they're at - so that career progression thing. So, it was to be used internally [by organisation].

In the short-term Tapatoru has not guided professional learning. In part this is because of the RPL process, the result of which was a reflective process that for most provided confirmation and affirmation of what they were doing. It is also not sufficiently known about or embedded in organisations so it can be used to inform professional learning. But, the potential remains, especially where it is used within organisations to drive discussions about professional learning and development and career progressions. One of the organisations who did not participate in the trial saw the potential for this. *“I think linking it to the career progressions was a nuts-and-bolts thing. We could have done that I reckon”* (Interviewee 5).

Answering the research questions

As this story of Tapatoru draws to a close I need to succinctly answer the research questions set for this project. I will not go into detail as the detail lies in this and previous chapters. So, in a nutshell it is nothing more complicated than the information in the table below.

Table 7.1: Research Questions and Answers

Question	Answer
How is Tapatoru being used to inform capability building?	Those who have gone through the Tapatoru reflective process have been enabled to look at their own practice and recognise what they do well/not so well. It has provided the framework and mechanism for considering and articulating a values-driven, cultural- and learner-centred approach to teaching adults.
What are the organisation and individual drivers for the use of Tapatoru?	<p>Organisational:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • standardising education practice • opportunity to recognise staff in different roles • professionalising educators • providing staff with the opportunity for PLD • funding <p>Individual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • desire to build capability • opportunity to articulate practice • opportunity to reflect on practice • opportunity to be part of a community of practice • to gain some standing in terms of being part of a professional body • for its contribution to future career pathways or employment • funding
What enables and inhibits organisational and individual use of Tapatoru?	<p>Enablers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Links to organisational strategy ○ the drivers listed above

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ organisational champions ○ senior management buy-in ○ communications that lead to an understanding of what Tapatoru is and its value to an organisation ○ funding ● Individuals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the drivers listed above ○ capacity to fit completion of an evidence portfolio around work time ○ an understanding of what Tapatoru is and its value to them ○ Ako Aotearoa’s communications and supporting resources ○ care for learners and the desire to learn about and use value-based, culturally-centred pedagogies ○ funding <p>Inhibitors to both organisations and individuals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the context of RoVE and COVID-19 ● the lack of interaction, the humanising narratives, between the TEC (the macro level of the system) to support Ako Aotearoa (at the meso level) and educators (at the micro level) which led to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ lack of socialisation ○ lack of knowledge about professional standards ○ no understanding of the value proposition ○ lack of knowledge about Tapatoru ● mental models about qualifications as markers of capability
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Concluding reflections on the impact

When I look at Table 7.1, it is a reminder that complexity can be presented simply. While I have not come up with a new theory, I have expanded the original proposition that, as a professional standards framework, Tapatoru supports and guides capability building. As this research project has unfolded, as I have analysed the data and written this story, I have drawn the conclusion from the evidence I have that Tapatoru can be seen in different ways at different layers of the system, taking it beyond the original proposition that it will support and guide the capability building of the foundation educator workforce.

I had envisaged wider uptake of Tapatoru when it was launched in 2018, but the structural and relational aspects required for change in the foundation tertiary education system were missing. This, along with the context of RoVE and COVID-19 impacted on the uptake. The system did not work together in an enabling, interactive way, nor were there the humanising narratives to support greater uptake of Tapatoru.

At the macro government level, it is clear from informal conversations over the last two years with officials from the Ministry of Education and TEC that Tapatoru (its purpose and value) is not understood. The situation is similar at the meso-TEO level, where the lack of knowledge has contributed to the lack of uptake and likewise at the education workforce level.

But I need to be mindful. System change takes time. Tapatoru was a system intervention that required all layers of the system to work together on its introduction. The trial, which has been the subject of this research project, has highlighted what needs to be done in the future and this is further discussed in the concluding chapter. So, what are we left with in relation to Tapatoru at each of the system levels?

At the macro level, Tapatoru is a set of high-level dimensions and descriptors of practice in the form of a professional standards framework. While it is not clear the extent to which it can be called a nationally agreed set of dimensions and descriptors, given there has been little feedback in relation to these, it can serve as a benchmarking and accreditation tool that attests to the capability of educators, including their values, knowledge, and practice. Given the incorporation of Māori values in the framework it can also be used to determine cultural capability. If Tapatoru was to be used across the system, it would provide a greater understanding of the practices of the foundation educator workforce.

At the meso level Tapatoru can be used by TEOs in a range of ways, from recruitment through to a guide for recognising educators' strengths and gaps, and for determining their professional development needs. It can also be used by organisations who do not see the need for formal attestation and are looking for ways to ensure quality teaching. This brings the ways of using Tapatoru in line with ACE Aotearoa's professional standards.

At the micro level, Tapatoru has worked to attest to the practice of those who submitted their reflective commentaries. In the process of putting these together, educators have had the opportunity to reflect at varying levels about their practice, and articulate practice in a way they may previously not have been able to. In doing this they are not just talking about what they do, they are also talking about the values that underpin their work. Here they have been able to surface what whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, wairuatanga, and aroha look like in their practice. This surfacing of cultural consciousness has provided a way into the pathway to cultural competence for some, and an affirmation of cultural competence for others.

Used as a reflective tool for educators, Tapatoru lays out the key tenets of foundation education practice and is thus a professional practice framework. Using Tapatoru in this way allows educators to affirm what they are doing, or to inform changes they might want to make to their thinking and practice. It also allows educators to understand more about their current capability and for a shared understanding at the practice level of what values-based, culturally-centered educators do when, in Hattie's words (2003, p. 2), they gently close the equivalent of their classroom door and perform the teaching act.

Chapter Eight: Professional Practice Discussion

The introduction talks about this thesis as the narrative that cable knits together a collection of stories – foregrounding and backgrounding my professional practice and the research project. In keeping with this metaphor and drawing this story to a near conclusion, this chapter casts off and starts to tie together the loose ends that may have come a little unravelled along the way. I do this by examining and drawing conclusions about myself as a researching professional and as a professional researcher, and through putting forward my new researching practice framework.

A DProfPrac aims to develop new knowledge through a research project. Within the context of this project, it also aims to develop professional practice within the doctoral candidate's field of practice. This chapter mirrors the previous chapter which discusses the findings of the research project and tells the story of my professional practice development. The evidence for this chapter is captured in emails I have written to others in the Tapatoru project, my learning log, through the reflection and reflexivity that have occurred throughout the time of the research project, and more particularly as I have written this thesis. As this story unfolds it has echoes of (Bandura, 2001, p. 11), "There is much that people do designedly to exercise some measure of control over their self-development and life circumstances, but also a lot of fortuity in the courses lives take."

To begin this chapter, I return to the opening chapter as a reminder of the challenge that articulating practice has been as I look inside myself and, in the DProfPrac journey, show this inside to others. He kokonga whare e kitea; he kokonga ngākau e kore e kitea – a corner of a house may be examined; not so the corners of the heart. The story foregrounded in this chapter shows that the practice of a social science researcher is no longer within the confines of a textbook on qualitative research. Rather it is exposed as the lived experience with its imperfections and foibles, with its application of research theory to practice, and the arrival at the conclusion that values are at the very core of what I do as a researcher. These values inform what I research, how I research, why I research, the way I analyse data, the way I re-present findings, and the reflective and reflexive processes used.

It is impossible to stand back at the end of three years and say – "this is how I changed, I was this and now I am that". Change along the way is incremental and without diarising critical points, I could have lost perspective about change that occurs during the doctoral journey. Embarking on doctoral study I felt reasonably confident about my research practice having completed several research projects and felt open to new ways of thinking. My everyday practice required me to read widely the research of others, to have my research reviewed, and occasionally peer review the research of others. I learnt through professional reading and professional development opportunities; through attending and presenting at national and international conferences; and through and with other researchers. I was, and still am, a research practitioner, rather than a research academic.

However, what I have never done, as I have in this DProfPrac, is chart my practice during a research project - the highs and lows, the joy and the pain that occur as situations and contexts change, as things do not go according to plan, and as the aha moments and surprises arrive. The advantage of tracking these moments through a learning log, is that it serves as both a reflective tool (Moon, 2007) and provides the evidence of change that occurred during this course of study. As an artefact of reflection, the learning log tells the story of excitement (at the beginning); disruption, self-doubt,

struggle, joy, persistence, occasional pride (in the middle); and back to self-doubt, struggle and persistence through a quagmire of data to tell a story (at the end). Above all, it is a story that nestles itself around the 'd concepts' introduced in Chapter Two, ("disequilibrium" (Dewey, in Miettinen, 2000); "disjuncture" (Jarvis, 2010); "dissonance" (Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, & Fung, 2007), as these have disrupted, jolted, kick-started, and re-energised my thinking and practice.

From the beginning

I started the DProfPrac not fully understanding what it was. I expected to do a research project and talk a bit about how I did this. The initial assessment was a Review of Learning which I called, *The Apprenticeship of a Researcher*. Putting this together was harder than I expected as I misunderstood the difference between autobiography and autoethnography. I went autobiographically free-range and excitedly sent the first 2000 words off to my mentor, and as I note in my learning log, November 1, 2018, "Think this got a bit lost in translation for me as I sent around 2000 words off to Martin and his response was that "I needed to be more scholarly." In hindsight Martin probably meant me to be more critical and reflective, but this was the 'd concept' I needed and for the next month my notes relate to "reading and more reading", not making as much progress as I had anticipated, generally "getting bogged down", and getting "a bit tired of reading stuff by old white men".

Recognising te ao Pākehā

What is also noticeable in the beginning phase of the DProfPrac is the initial recognition about reflection and my world view and how these impact on practice.

Also like the confirmation that reflection underpins practice. The big question though - how do we know that we are really reflective? My thinking that day - reflection is a cognitive and emotional action. Also made the note that I "used to" unknowingly bring with me a world view that is westernised, traditional, English knowledge – individualised (November 12, 2018).

Following the Review of Learning, came the Learning Agreement in which I had to lay out the case for my research topic and the approach I would take. This is the bread and butter of the professional researcher, so in theory it should have been a relatively straight-forward process for me. However, putting the Learning Agreement together for doctoral study was not easy. My learning log is littered with negative terms. Between January and June 2019, the words: *hopeless, beyond my capability, overwhelmed, bogged down, daunted, lost my way, and struggle*, are to be found.

Theory-informed thinking

But there were moments of joy as I recognised new learning, found new concepts, and worked through new (to me) ways of weaving theory to practice. Joy also came through conversations with my mentors with whom I could test my thinking as they stretched mine.

Well, it has been a bit of struggle getting my head back into this space after a month away. But on the plus side it was like coming to it afresh. You both came with me to Rio (as ear worms!) so in the first few days of holiday my head was awash with the idea of ecosystems and the need for reflection. ... (June 7, 2019).

It also came from research participants in other research work who often pulled me back and made me realise I needed to appreciate what I was working through. I was particularly taken by a comment from a research participant in work I was doing for the Commonwealth of Learning (Alkema & Neal, 2020) who, when talking about her own learning commented, “It’s not about the start to finish, it is about enjoying the journey.” A ‘d concept’ arrives and crash starts me back into appreciating the doctoral process.

Growing cultural understanding

While this was happening, the real-world was also contributing to new learning. On March 15, 2019 the mosque shooting reminded me that what I was going through “*pales into insignificance after the events in ChCh on March 15. ... Like the rest of NZ - saddened, shocked and embarrassed beyond belief.*” Work on the *Hīnātore* project (Kerehoma et al., 2019) was also underway and the combination of my new doctoral learning and working in a team with Māori and Pacific researchers had the biggest impact on my thinking and practice that has ever occurred in my professional life. I capture this thinking in the learning log.

Worked on Hīnātore today with [C, I and N] Two things - why we work well as a team – we bring different perspectives, open, questioning and respectful. Really interesting to hear [I] talk about how we shouldn't use the term Pasifika - as this is not how Pacific people identify themselves - see themselves as individual Pacific groups. Also really interested in [C's] ability for holistic thinking and the connections in people's lives between ako, mahi, whānau - hopefully we are able to capture this in a written report. ... Talked with [I] about writing her case studies. ... Talking through her data and the story has the making of a beautiful 'case'. [I] is an amazing data collector - have been thinking that this comes from her affinity with, in this case Pacific women. And along these lines have been thinking about data collection as both a science and an art. And it is the art that comes from both practice and who you are (June 27, 2019).

In terms of professional practice what I have at this point is an emerging, but confirmational practice-understanding relating to culture. The practice resonates with theories of cultural outsider outlined in Chapter Two (Barnes, 2013; Baker et al., 2015; McIntosh, 2011). While I still grapple with the concept of cultural competence and what it really means, the combination of theory and practice worked together to make me better-informed about what this means for a researcher in the Aotearoa New Zealand context.

In the middle

While the beginning had led me to being more a theory-informed practitioner, or at least being able to articulate my practice in a theory-informed way, the middle left me flat. After the presentation of the Learning Agreement I note, “*To be honest, I felt awful after the presentation. Sitting in the Octagon having lunch, thinking what the ? !*” (September 2, 2019). This was a ‘what is the point of all this moment’. The point of a doctorate? The point of the extent to which there might be any interest in what I was about to research?

New thinking gets tested

But the pattern of bounce-back set in the beginning phase returned when some new (for me) thinking arrived which was at odds with the researching professional who had newly learnt that there was no escaping the self.

[C] introduced us to a new idea. Our position as researchers was that of witnesses to the events and stories of the Hīnātore project. Based on the First Nations protocol of witnessing, witnesses are called to be the keepers of history when important work or an event of historic significance occurs. At the end of the work, witnesses are called forward to reflect back and help to tell the story of the importance of the work that has been done. Witnesses are also asked to store and care for the history they witness and most importantly, to share it with others when they return home. As witnesses our role in Hīnātore was to describe, interpret and draw conclusions based on the data in a way that excluded judgement about the programmes and the outcomes for employees (September 2, 2019).

While this was yet another 'd concept' for me, the witnessing concept resonated with the Māori and Pacific families who came to the sense-making and celebration hui we held. It was researchers as non-judgmental story tellers, using an indigenous approach that found its way into the hearts of these Māori and Pacific families. This surfaced for me that I had two things to balance in my practice - the idea that research can be witnessing in an objective sense alongside the theory I had been working with, that subjectivity is ever present. This is an ongoing polarity that I need to hold, not only from a cultural perspective, but in all the work I do.

Managing change: working through the mess and grabbing opportunities

2020 was to be the year of data gathering but, as the clouds gathered and the shadows fell in late 2019 with RoVE, I was realising I would need to deal with what might happen in the new context. *"I need to work with the idea that change is constant - and it is about learning to manage change /disruption. Need to look at the impact on the stakeholders involved - the constrictions and the opportunities."* Hit again by the 'd concept'. But this was a positive as it provided the space for agility and thinking creatively about how I was going to manage the Tapatoru research project.

As noted in previous chapters, Tapatoru did not get picked up in the way anticipated. Every time there was the promise of a possible cohort, my hopes were dashed. I realised that working in an individual capacity was much harder than working on a commissioned basis with the backing of a government department or organisation. In February 2020 an opportunity arose to be creative when a PTE asked me to support them with some research they were doing on a new practice model they had developed for their adult learners.

I've had a look over the documentation you sent through ... and think there is a way that we can make it work for both of us. You are interested in the extent to which [your tool] works to support learner journeys and for my doctorate I'm interested in tutor capability. ... I think, if you are interested, that we can make this work for both of us. ... (Personal communication to PTE, February 3, 2020)

This was to be a pro bono piece of research that met both mine and the PTE's needs. And then COVID-19 and the possibility of this work was put on hold. By April 2020 I had added two new 'd' concepts – 'despair' and 'disappointment', as I thought everything would need to change – the questions, the approach, the potential interviewees. At the same time though, little opportunities

were presenting themselves in terms of Ako Aotearoa's adaptation and setting up online groups. So, in terms of the rethink of the research approach this gave me some hope. *"Am I lost, not really, just revisiting."*

In the meantime, I was continuing to hone my research skills while working on a research project for an organisation who wanted to know more about how to attract volunteers into their organisation. While I had completed previous research projects for this organisation, it was outside my field of expertise. I used this work as an opportunity to focus in on writing, on how to code and analyse data from unstructured interviews, and to widen my research reading in relation to ecosystems and change management.

By June I was also realising the challenges that came from socialising research in the time of COVID-19. This was something that confronted all researchers and we simply had to work through it as part of our practice. It did make the research, policy, practice nexus more challenging but we needed to be pragmatic and get on with it. The world had changed and as researchers we needed to change with it.

The next thing I've been trying to do (well have been doing) is presenting research via Zoom. And it is trying doing it in this way - very hard to generate discussion. With [X organisation] it has been presenting to groups who have found some of the thinking a bit challenging. I think Zoom is a bit of stop-gap measure for presenting research - especially when you want to run it as a workshop. ... I've also found it trying in that while I think the [X] research was sound and delivered way more than they expected, I think it may have missed the mark. For TEC I've been trying to get views on a paper I've written about measuring and reporting on literacy and numeracy practices (skills use). I've conducted two Zoom meetings, one with two [X] staff, and the other with five practitioners. There was discussion, but not at the level I was anticipating, and I think this is because I missed the mark a little especially with the latter group. I realised (and I already know this!) that people go straight to, "what does this mean for me"... and fair enough. Feel like I failed research 101 about making things simple for practitioners to understand (June 19, 2020).

By June 2020 the opportunity for data gathering from the Tapatoru online group became a reality. I was *"getting a bit excited. Starting to feel I might get to be awash with data - but that is a good thing. I think I need to take all I can get and then work out the process for filtering it. Need to do some thinking around the case study methodology and what this might look like with the disparate data collection."* I was realising that some of the joy in doctoral study came from the lack of constraint in terms of the research approach but, *"It's going to be messy and I'm going to have to learn to accommodate this."*

While dealing with rethinking the approach and getting started on the primary data collection, I also went back to theorists to find out more about how to do this better, particularly in relation to interviewing. I have always thought of myself as an intuitive interviewer but have not really been able to articulate my practice. The combination of new learning, in the main from Roulston (2010) and Fujii (2017), and a new (to me) practice – transcribing interviews, was an aha moment – both for the research project on Tapatoru and for my practice more generally. I have written about my interviewing practice in Chapter Three where the foibles abound, but the surfacing of them has

made me conscious of my practice and, even as an experienced researcher, this is still a work in progress.

As the data collection progressed, somewhat slowly, I was starting to realise that what the Tapatoru participants were going through in putting together their reflective commentaries was the same process I was going through as I looked to articulate my practice. I also realised that the Tapatoru approach and framework was acting as an enabler of reflective practice for the participants, which had not been what I had expected at the start. In an email to Smith, (July 17, 2020), I comment, *“This is the gold - forever we have been talking about how to grow/develop reflective practitioners and the framework - and your questions are allowing people to do this. This is a very small sample, but you are really on to something here.”*

As the data collection progressed, there were hints coming through about cultural competence and the ways in which the Tapatoru framework was opening up conversations about practice. I note this to Smith in an email (August 27, 2020). *“I get a sense that those immersed in the LN world, who've done some work in the cultural competence space are coping well. I don't think this is the case for those who are teaching in the vocational space.”*

Intervening: researcher as participant

I was also concerned about the lack of socialisation of Tapatoru and the impact this was having on what was known about it and its value.

I'm discovering that it is still a mystery to people - what it is and how it works. One of the issues relates to comms - and the lack thereof. The info on Ako's website is hopeless - and I don't know how to tell them that. I've had a colleague trying to promote it with an organisation, but it's a hard sell if people don't know what they would be buying!

The lack of information is also impacting on people who are going through Tapatoru - the online group. One of the interviewees is just perplexed by the whole thing. What it is, what she needs to do, how she needs to do it, the concepts, what she ends up with. It was a really worrying interview and one of those ones where, as researcher I wanted to step in and explain the whole thing to her - but didn't - a dilemma to note in the write up (August 27, 2020).

The arrival of another ‘d concept’ – ‘dilemma’, and one that was not resolved. But it did present an opportunity that I had as a researcher to intervene in the landscape being researched. I needed to consider, *“How do I work to help it to work? How can I work with Ako Aotearoa to make some constructive observations in relation to this?”*

I started by sending a background paper to the Ministry of Education in August 2020. Staff there were curious to know more about Tapatoru and its role in capability building. I had no response to this paper and in re-looking at it I think it missed the mark, given that at this stage of the research project I was not able to talk about the value of Tapatoru and the extent to which it supports the capability-building of educators.

I furthered this thinking around value in a conversation with the ALNACC team at Ako Aotearoa where we decided to co-write a paper around this. In September 2020 I drafted this paper as a

starting point and had no further response from them. Two papers – two no responses. The ‘d concept’ hits again – ‘doom’. I am not sure why this work was not progressed and it may be that after this thesis is complete there is an opportunity to revisit a conversation around the value of Tapatoru and to further promote it with government officials. On the plus side I was able to socialise it a little while working on contract to TEC.

By the end

Analysing the data, writing the stories, and drawing conclusions have allowed me to round off the story of practice. The process of pulling everything together is not an easy one. In my learning log I talk about, *“impasses, blockages, an absolute slog, the use of turgid academic speak.”* But it was not all like the ‘d concepts’ that had gone before. A new one emerged, ‘delight’ as I thought about new ways to present the case of Tapatoru. *“I’m working with the metaphor of storytelling - it seems simple, but I’ve been thinking about it for ages and hope it works for a DProfPrac.”*

While it has been demanding to bring all the data together and tell the story of what Tapatoru means, it is a process in which I have been in complete control, albeit in an environment of change. Working within theoretical frameworks I was free to tell the story in the way I wanted, while at the same time ensuring I remained truthful to the stories the data told.

A framework of practice emerges

In this process I recognised my new framework of practice had emerged. As I worked through the data analysis, reviewed the literature I had read, and told the stories of the participants, I realised that Tapatoru, a model for teaching practice, was also a model for research practice. Key to Tapatoru are the values and the placement of them at the forefront of teaching practice. When I consider all the aspects of research: all the decisions to make about what, why, how, and with whom; the decisions to make about coding and theme building; the decisions to make about how to tell a story; all of these need to be realised as being values-driven.

I was drawn into this values-driven thinking in the data analysis phase. While I had read about it from a theory perspective in relation to being Kaupapa Māori informed in my research (Baker et al., 2015; Cram, 2001, 2006; Jones, 2021; Pihama et al., 2002) and had learnt more about this through my work on the *Hinātore* project I have not been able to articulate what this means for my own practice. Now I think I can, and the practice framework can continue to be refined over time within the research I continue to do.

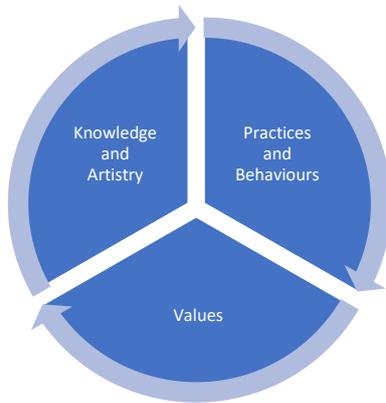
What ultimately drew me to this conclusion was reflecting on my own cultural competence while I was considering the continuum of cultural competence for those going through Tapatoru. As a Pākehā I feel uncomfortable doing this and while I sense checked it a little with the ALNACC team at Ako Aotearoa, I recognise that the best I can do, is say that from a te ao Pākehā perspective this is my framework of practice. Coming back to the quote in Chapter Two, this is possibly all any Pākehā can do.

When you think about it, there is nowhere else in the world that one can be Pākehā. Whether the term remains forever linked to the shameful role of the oppressor or whether it can become a

positive source of identity and pride is up to Pākehā themselves. All that is required of them is a leap of faith (Mikaere, 2011, p. 119, in Barnes, 2013, p. 25).

New framework of practice

Figure 8.1: Practice Framework



(Source: Researcher created figure.)

In essence my framework of practice is made up of underpinning values, practices and behaviours that align with Smith (1999, p. 20, in Pipi et al., 2004, p. 3), and knowledge and artistry. To begin with I thought about using the values of Tapatoru, which have been taken from wider research in the education field - whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, wairuatanga, and aroha. Then another 'd concept' arrived, - 'disquiet'. Could I as a Pākehā talk about my values in this way. In the end I decided I could not.

The tipping point for this decision came from Jones (2021, July 11) who talks about te reo as being about more than words – that it is “another way of seeing”. From a te ao Pākehā perspective I have only limited understanding of the meaning of whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, wairuatanga, and aroha and hence the essence of what sits within and beneath the reo. Thus, in my new framework of practice, the values are culturally-informed; the knowledge is practice- and theory-informed; and the practice is theory-informed, values-informed, transparent, relational, and reciprocal.

In 'doing' – *in practice* – lie the possibilities for learning ... It is only in practice – in the fabric of everyday lives-that knowledgeability, reflection, changing understanding comes about. In theory of practice, knowledgeability follows *from* practice, not the other way around (Martire & Lave, 2016, p. 29).

The values are not that different to the practices and behaviours set out by the Social Policy Evaluation and Research Unit (2015, p. 18) code, namely, “care, respect, inclusion, protection”. But they are values that underpin practice, rather than practices and behaviours. So, my culturally-informed values are as follows.

- Relational: establishing relationships and listening to and providing space for the background stories of participants
- Protection: ensuring the wellbeing of participants, during the research process and in the use of, and re-presentation of their data
- Reciprocity: giving back to participants – either their own data or the story that is told about them
- Cultural understanding: being mindful of participants' belief systems and world views and realising the limitations I have in relation to knowledge of this across different cultures
- Respect: and this works together with the other four values to put participants at the centre of what I do as a researcher, being ever mindful that they are the tuakana to my teina.

Practices are the ways in which these values play out. This goes back to Doucet (2007, p. 74) and the three gossamer walls (Figure 2.2), “the thin and tenuous lines that exist in research relationships.” This sees practice as the interaction and connections I have with research commissioners and/or audiences, and the participants/phenomenon. Relationships develop and shift over the course of projects and require understanding and acknowledgement of positionality that influences my thinking and interpretations of research participants’ stories.

While practices are about relationships and interactions with others, they are also about the interface of practice with knowledge. I cannot be a professional researcher if I do not know how to conduct research. I need to be theory-informed, meaning I need to know how to conduct research from a technical perspective. This includes the research approaches to use; the data to collect and ways to collect it; the ways to analyse data; and the ways to tell the stories from the data.

The practices also include being ever mindful of my-self in the research - my views and pre-conceptions that can be conscious, unconscious, or unchecked. These influence the choices I make throughout the research process. This then calls for the practice of ongoing introspective reflexivity (Hook 2015; Malterud, 2001; Patnaik, 2013) whereby I look to acknowledge my position(s), views, and pre-conceptions in order to open my thinking to a wider range of possibilities. This is about self-awareness in the research process and the need to turn an “investigative lens” on my practice and reflect on what I know and how I know it.

Research practice also calls for epistemological reflexivity (Halliwell, 2010, citing Willing 2001; Palaganas et al., 2017). This enables critical thinking about, the purpose of the research, the topic, the participants, the data I collect and the ways in which I do this, the data analysis approach, and the re-presentation of it as findings. It also involves reflection on assumptions I make and the subsequent impact this has on the research. Combined, introspective and epistemological reflexivity are about the practice of putting a critical lens across my research – why I do it, how I do it, and for whom I do it.

Finally, I have included ‘artistry’ in my framework of practice. This is because, for me, conducting qualitative research does not happen within a positivist paradigm. Across all these aspects of the research process comes artistry as I build relationships, determine methods, gather data, and shape and re-shape what I learn, and re-present it as new or confirmational knowledge.

Impact of the framework

The elements of the framework of practice are not new to me, but the impact of this framework, which shifts the emphasis to values may lead to different discussions about the research process. Previously in my work I have started with what and how questions that have related to knowledge and the process for getting the answers. What does the commissioner want to know? How will I go about finding this out? I can now start the process both by internalising and externalising the role of values in the research process. So, the questions now will be not so much focused on the ‘what’ and ‘how’ at the outset. Rather the questions will shift to ‘why’ and ‘how’. Why does the commissioner want to know this and how might we work together to set the path for finding this out? How can I ensure commissioners understand my values and how these impact on my work with them, the research design and process, and the participants?

Concluding reflections on my framework of practice

This chapter has been the ‘casting off’ story of a professional who researches her practice. Using the knitting metaphor, the Review of Learning was the ‘casting on’. Here the story of my apprenticeship as a researcher was told. Chapter Two picked up the threads of this story and described the growing awareness of self and positioning that developed through introspective and epistemological reflexivity throughout the doctoral study. This chapter brings the practice story full circle. The apprentice has become a journey woman whose work, in the words of Eliot’s (1915) Prufrock, will do “to swell a progress, start a scene or two”. It is now over to me to do this in relation to Tapatoru and potentially influence further understanding and uptake so the capability of foundation educators can continue to grow.

Chapter Nine: Conclusion – The Story for the Future

The previous eight chapters have combined to tell the stories of Tapatoru and my practice as a researcher. In drawing these stories together, this final chapter ties off the loose ends and looks at the implications of the findings from the research project in relation to how Tapatoru can be taken forward. It also considers the ways in which I can further use my framework of practice in my profession and my workplace, along with the contribution it can make to theory.

Getting to the research policy practice nexus

One of the challenges for all research is how to get from conceptual use (changes in knowledge, understanding or attitude) to instrumental use (changes in behaviour or practice) (Huberman, 1992, in Alkema & Roorda, 2017, p. 22). This is the research, policy, practice nexus of de Leeuw et al. (2008). Tapatoru highlights this challenge. It made it from the research (Alkema et al., 2017) to small 'p' policy in that the professional standards framework was developed. However, what it has not been able to do is shift, to any great extent, to practice. The reasons for this have been canvassed in Chapter Seven.

So, what needs to be done? In short, widen thinking about how Tapatoru can be used. The current approach is to operate it as a traditional professional standards framework with a formal process of attestation. The issue with this approach is there is a lack of understanding about professional standards – their purpose and the value proposition for them is not understood. The limited participation in the trial means, while there are pockets of understanding and some champions, there is no groundswell of demand. This, combined with the cost, likely means there will be little uptake, even as Ako Aotearoa prepares to go beyond the trial and roll out Papa Rua to the sector.

On a positive note, the TEC is interested in tracking the impact of Tapatoru and I am going to work with Ako Aotearoa to develop an impact evaluation framework. Using an evaluative rather than research lens provides the scope for getting to outcomes. It may even be possible to go back to those who participated in the trial and look at the impact on their practice a year after their Tapatoru experience.

Widen the thinking about Tapatoru

Returning to Chapter Seven, Tapatoru has the potential to be more than a professional standards framework that results in an award. Its value lies in its descriptors of capability which succinctly describe the dimensions of practice for foundation educators in Aotearoa New Zealand. As such it is a powerful tool that can be used to generate thinking and practice. Values, knowledge, and practice are combined in a holistic way. No longer do we see pedagogy framed from a purely cognitive perspective. Rather it is a culturally-responsive pedagogy that is wrapped in a kākahu of affective and cognitive practices. This is Tapatoru as a professional practice framework.

In addition to describing practice, Tapatoru also acts as a reflective a tool. Herein lay its value to the participants in the research as discussed in Chapter Six. While reflection was enabled through the cards and the template provided for the attestation process, the act of reflection brought the descriptors into the practice of the Tapatoru participants. This is the research policy practice nexus,

albeit on a small scale. As this research has shown reflection and reflexivity are key contributors to effective practice and promoting Tapatoru as a reflective framework has merit – both for individuals and organisations. The reflective process, along with discussions about practice, can in turn help educators determine their strengths and gaps and inform professional learning needs. This can happen at an individual or organisational level where Tapatoru can also support career development when it is used to inform professional discussions with peers or managers.

Generating discussion on these three aspects is key to developing understanding and widening use, but the question is - how to do this? In the current context, gone are the days of national, face-to-face hui, and webinars and Zoom meetings do not readily or easily generate discussion, as I noted in Chapter Eight. But a start must be made if Tapatoru is to achieve the potential it has to inform foundation education practice.

Therefore, returning to Chapter Seven, there is the need to think about how to socialise Tapatoru so the value proposition is understood in the policy and practice world. As an independent researcher part of the responsibility sits with me to translate the findings of this research project and increase the understanding of what Tapatoru is and how it can be used. Some ways I can consider doing this include:

- At the macro level by providing the TEC with a short (two page) description of what Tapatoru is, where it fits within the capability building of the sector; the value of it to government; and also taking the opportunity to talk about it within wider research I conduct for education agencies
- At the meso level, offering to run a webinar for Ako Aotearoa on the findings and work with them to co-design a one-page A3 which shows the ways Tapatoru can be used outside of the formal attestation process. There is also the opportunity to link into work being done by Te Pūkenga as it considers how it might build the capability of educators within its organisation - Opportunity 16 in their recent research (2021, p. 47). Finally, I will look to co-present a paper with staff from Ara Poutama Aotearoa at the 14th international Australasian Corrections Education Association (ACEA) Conference in late 2021
- At the micro level promote Tapatoru in informal discussions with practitioners, starting with promoting some of the ideas on the ALNACC Community of Practice Facebook page, of which I am a member.

The current approach with Tapatoru is to use it as a formal tool for attesting to capability. However, if use is limited to this, given the associated costs, it will simply not be used. The power lies in its potential for use as a non-formal tool. It is this story that needs to be told and sold to organisations and individual educators, so they use Tapatoru to inform their own capability building. While not precluding its current use as an award, it will require a rethink by Ako Aotearoa to expand its use. Also, if Tapatoru is to be used in wider ways it will require some professional development for organisations in relation to how to do this. However, the resources that have been developed, for example, the cards, the reflective commentary templates and the supporting videos will help.

In addition, if in Aotearoa New Zealand we are not going to have tertiary educators qualified through the traditional mechanisms of teaching degrees – we need to change the mental model of what

attests to capability. Tapatoru provides a simple framework for doing this. At the heart of widening use and attestations of capability sits the socialisation process which has not been as strong as it could be. This is no reflection on Ako Aotearoa. Rather, it is as stated in Chapter Eight, the ‘missing in action’ voice from the macro level of the system. Therefore, more needs to be done to get this level of the system to understand what Tapatoru is and the potential it has to contribute to Objective 3 of the TES – quality teaching and leadership.

Framing research practice

As I have stated elsewhere in this thesis, conducting this research project has resulted in new knowledge and learning about the research process and practice. Through introspective and epistemological reflexivity, I have been able to better recognise the ‘what, how and why’ of my practice. It has been a challenge to look inside myself and in the DProfPrac journey show this inside to others.

So, what does this mean for the future of my practice? Firstly, it means putting values at the front and centre of what I do. These are what sit within me and inform how I am going to research and why I will conduct research in a certain way. Secondly, it means being transparent about these values and articulating them within ethical practice discussions for research projects. Thirdly, it means taking cognisance of reflexive practices and being open, honest, and transparent throughout research projects. Not that I think I have not been like this in my work to date, but I have perhaps not had the language to articulate this.

While the framework of practice developed during this research project is not new, it can provide a starter for discussions on what it means to be a Pākehā researcher in Aotearoa New Zealand. I can only see the world from a te ao Pākehā perspective, but I can take a culturally-informed approach. This is the thinking I would like to take forward. I can start with a journal article and also possibly offer a webinar through Ako Aotearoa as they set their research and innovation agenda for the future.

Further research

This research on Tapatoru is just the beginning. More needs to be known about the capability of the foundation education workforce and Tapatoru’s role in this. If further research were to be undertaken, the use of Tapatoru as a non-formal tool at an organisational and individual educator level would make a valuable contribution to knowledge and practice in Aotearoa New Zealand. Further research is also required to look more closely at the reflective processes that are encouraged in Tapatoru and the extent to which these might help inform the future practice of educators.

In terms of a contribution to the wider world of foundation education, I think there is also work needed to better understand what a professional standards framework for foundation educators means. How might a sector that has been the ‘poor cousin’ to vocational and higher education be professionalised?

Concluding reflections

In terms of Tapatoru am I disappointed with its uptake? Yes. But, it was introduced in time of uncertainty, and I am not sure what more could have been done to get more uptake of it. So where does it leave us with Tapatoru? Ironically, I am left coming back to Smith's (2018) comment about fragility that is noted in Chapter Five. I simply do not know what Tapatoru's future holds.

... but whole thing is fragile – it's fragile already ... now there will be people making those decisions who don't know the background of the development, the whakapapa like you do or [X] and others do – not sure where it leaves us, but a pretty uncertain place (G. Smith, personal communication, December 10, 2018).

In terms of my professional practice, in the introduction I talk about articulating research practice as being about what I research, how I research, why I research, and the reflective and reflexive processes used. I also say research is often considered to be academic and theoretical, with product taking precedence. How it is produced seemingly happens within a black box, with the practice and processes closed off. Hopefully, this thesis has opened the lid of the black box and the practice of a social science researcher can be seen.

It is a science and an art. The science is driven by the rigour of the processes used, from the setting of questions, the data needs, the sampling processes, the methods used to collect data, and the methods used to analyse data. All these factors aid the integrity and credibility of qualitative research. The art comes from relationships established with commissioners, research teams, and participants in the research. It also comes with coding and theming of data, and the writing up or presenting of research in ways that resonate with intended audiences, while at the same time doing justice to the stories of the data and the participants. And above all else, as I learnt through this DProfPrac, is that values underpin all the work I do as a social science researcher.

Hopefully this 'case of Tapatoru' is more than Bateson's (2016) "fluff" and Diefenbach's (2009) "fairytale". But only time will tell. In finishing this story and tying off the last thread I am ever mindful of Interviewee Seven's comment noted at the end of Chapter One about her reflective commentary for Tapatoru and its applicability to this thesis.

But how do we know what is right in this story of Tapatoru. We don't until we start getting feedback, we don't know what we've done is actually okay, whether it is too much on the surface, whether it is too deep, too long, too wordy ...

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Appendix: Research Artefacts

Information sheet for Ako Aotearoa

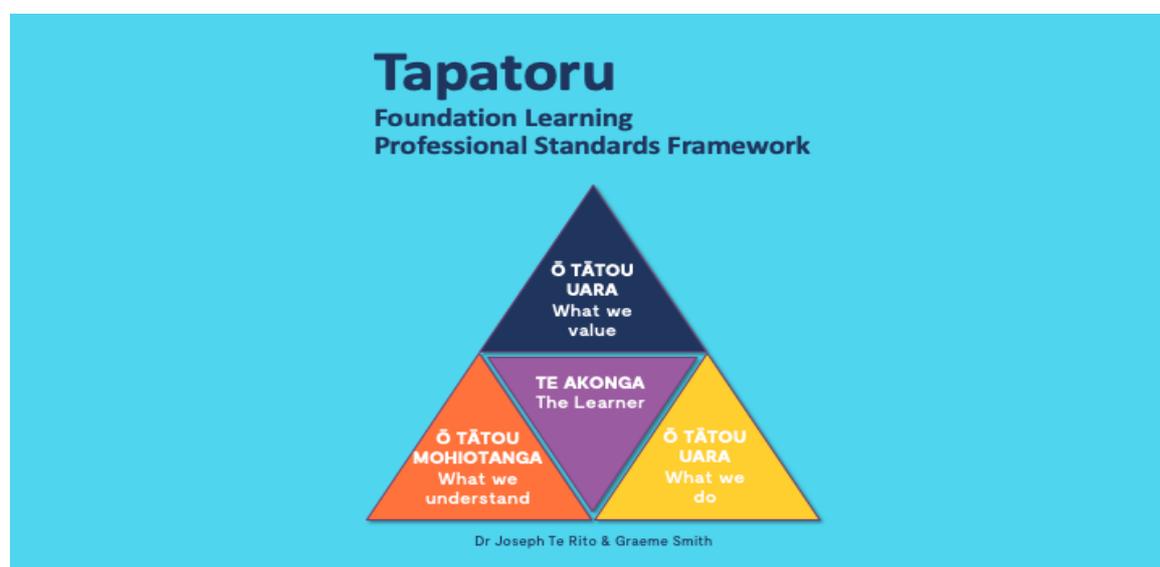
Investigating the use of the Tapatoru: Foundation Learning Professional Standards Framework.

I am undertaking this research as a doctoral candidate with Capable New Zealand at Otago Polytechnic. I have been involved with research and evaluation in the foundation sector (particularly with adult literacy and numeracy) for the last 12 years. Previous research has helped to inform the ongoing work in adult literacy and numeracy in New Zealand.

The information in this sheet describes what this research is about, what will happen with the information and the expected outputs from this research.

Purpose of the research

The purpose of this work is to explore and explain the use of the newly developed Tapatoru: Foundation Learning Professional Standards Framework.



This four-level framework describes the capabilities practitioners need in order to develop the knowledge and skills of foundation level learners. The four skills levels or papa are designed for those who are providing support for learners, such as training advisers in industry training organisations (ITOs), through to those who are directly delivering adult literacy and numeracy programmes in tertiary education settings. It is intended that the standards and skill levels be used to, “inform existing or planned professional learning and development offerings and opportunities. This may include qualifications where they are relevant or appropriate to practitioners and their particular contexts.” (Ako Aotearoa, 2018, p. 6).¹⁵

¹⁵ Ako Aotearoa. (2018). *Foundation learning professional standards framework: Tapatoru*. Wellington: Author.

As this is new to the education sector in 2019 I plan to look at how it is being used to inform the professional learning and capability building of those working in the sector.

What it will involve

Data will be gathered through: interviews with Ako Aotearoa professional development staff (ongoing); interviews with a sample of up to 20 educators who attend professional development; ongoing digital data collection with this sample using the social media tool *Slack*; interviews with up to five managers of the educators; a short online survey of tutors who attend professional development workshops.

The interviews will be semi-structured, take up to an hour, and where possible face-to-face. If face-to-face is not possible I will use Skype or Zoom to connect with participants at a time that suits them best. The interviews will focus on:

1. The role participants have in the sector
2. The types of professional learning they undertake (and why)
3. How the professional learning they do connects to their career pathway
4. How the professional learning connects to the Tapatoru Framework
5. How organisations use the framework to support capability building and career development

Verbatim notes will be taken and the interviews will be recorded and used as back up for checking details. Follow-up data will be collected via *Slack* which is essentially a messaging app for teams that will be used to capture short quick thoughts (around three-five times) over a six-nine month period.

What will happen with the information

The information provided in the interviews and ongoing electronic data collection will be confidential. Raw data, including participant contact information, are stored securely on a password-protected computer and backed up in the cloud storage service, Dropbox. Raw data will also be “depersonalised” through coding with unique identifiers for further anonymity. Any printed research data are held on secure premises in a locked cabinet that is only able to be accessed by the researcher. This includes hard copy of participant consent forms.

Ongoing digital data collection will use the cloud-based service *Slack*. This is password protected and has the capability for enabling privacy settings so participants will not be able to have their comments seen by other research participants.

Protocols for engaging with interviewees and organisations

All interviewees will have the opportunity to be briefed on the purpose of the research, the purposes to which it will be put, and be asked to sign a consent form as part of the research.

The interview process itself will also be on the basis of voluntary contribution – there is no requirement for any participant to share information or experiences. All information provided by interviewees will be confidential to the researcher and will not be reported in such a way as to allow any individual to be identified.

In line with normal research ethics, participation in the study is completely at your discretion. It would be useful for your sector (or organisation - ITO, Wānanga, ITP, PTE) to be named in the final research report, but this is a decision for a senior manager in your organisation.

Outputs from the research

The major outputs from the research will be a doctoral thesis and good practice guidelines. It is also anticipated that there will be research presentations and a possible journal article.

For more information about participating in this work please contact Anne at anne.alkema3@gmail.com or phone 027 332 1712.

This project has been reviewed and approved by Otago Polytechnic's Research Ethics Committee

Information sheet for education providers

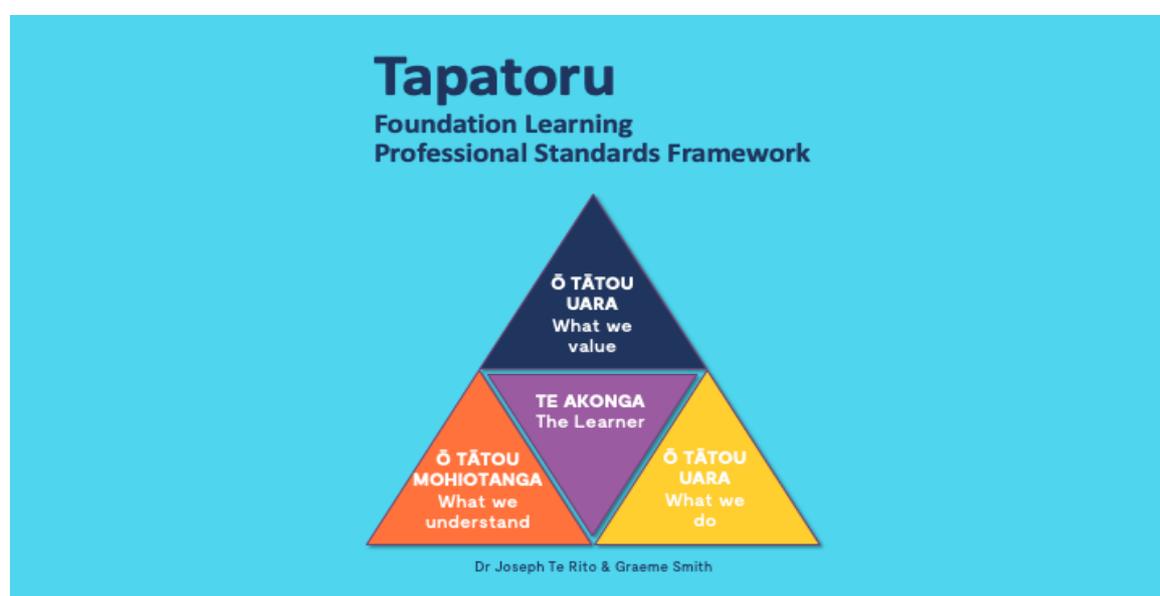
Investigating the use of the Tapatoru: Foundation Learning Professional Standards Framework.

My name is Anne Alkema and I am undertaking this research as a doctoral candidate with Capable New Zealand at Otago Polytechnic. I have been involved with research and evaluation in the foundation education sector (particularly with adult literacy and numeracy) for the last 12 years.

The information in this sheet describes what this research is about, what will happen with the information and the expected outputs from this research.

Purpose of the research

The purpose of this work is to explore and explain the use of the Tapatoru: Foundation Learning Professional Standards Framework.



This four-level framework describes the capabilities practitioners need in order to develop the knowledge and skills of foundation level learners. The four skills levels or papa are designed for those who are providing support for learners, such as training advisers in industry training organisations (ITOs) or vocational training staff, through to those who are directly delivering adult literacy and numeracy programmes in tertiary education settings. It is intended that the standards and skill levels be used to, “inform existing or planned professional learning and development offerings and opportunities. This may include qualifications where they are relevant or appropriate to practitioners and their particular contexts” (Ako Aotearoa, 2018, p. 6).¹⁶

As this is new to the education sector, I plan to look at how it is being used to inform the professional learning and capability building of those working in the sector.

¹⁶ Ako Aotearoa. (2018). *Foundation learning professional standards framework: Tapatoru*. Wellington: Author.

What it will involve

The interviews will be semi-structured around 50-45 minutes. They will be conducted, where possible face-to-face, but this is not possible I will use Skype or Zoom to connect with participants at a time that suits them best. The interviews will focus on:

1. The role of your educators
2. The types of professional learning they undertake (and why)
3. How the professional learning connects to the Tapatoru Framework
4. Why Corrections chose to go with Tapatoru and what has helped or got in the way of this
5. What you see as the value of Tapatoru and how Corrections intends to use it in the future

I will take verbatim notes and the interviews will be recorded and used as back up for checking details. I'll collect follow-up data through emails, Messenger, or an app such as *Slack* which is a messaging app for teams. This will help to gather short quick thoughts about what is happening (around three-five times) over a six-nine month period. (Note in the COVID-19 environment this is now likely to be one-two follow up emails.)

What will happen with the information

The information provided in the interviews and ongoing electronic data collection will be confidential. Raw data, including the electronically-collected data and participant contact information will be stored securely on a password-protected computer and backed up in the cloud storage service, One Drive. Raw data will also be depersonalised through coding with unique identifiers for further anonymity. Any printed research data are held on secure premises in a locked cabinet that is only able to be accessed by the researcher. This includes hard copy of participant consent forms.

Protocols for engaging with interviewees and organisations

All interviewees will have the opportunity to be briefed on the purpose of the research, the purposes to which it will be put, and be asked to sign a consent form – or give oral consent as part of the research.

The interview process itself will also be on the basis of voluntary contribution – there is no requirement for any participant to share information or experiences. All information provided by interviewees will be confidential to the researcher and will not be reported in such a way as to allow any individual to be identified.

In line with normal research ethics, participation in the study is completely at your discretion. It would be useful for your sector (or organisation - ITO, Wānanga, ITP, PTE) to be named in the final research report, but this is a decision for a senior manager in your organisation.

Outputs from the research

The major outputs from the research will be a doctoral thesis and good practice guidelines. It also anticipated that there will be research presentations and a possible journal article.

For more information about participating in this work please contact Anne at anne.alkema3@gmail.com or phone 027 332 1712.

This project has been reviewed and approved by Otago Polytechnic's Research Ethics Committee

Information sheet for educators

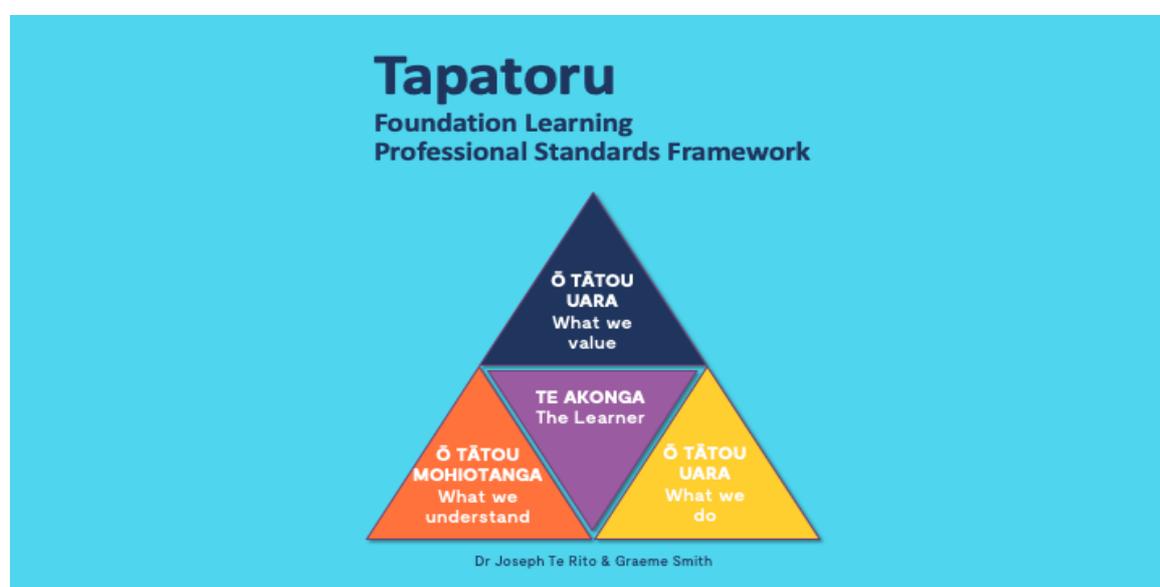
Investigating the use of the Tapatoru: Foundation Learning Professional Standards Framework.

My name is Anne Alkema and I am undertaking this research as a doctoral candidate with Capable New Zealand at Otago Polytechnic. I have been involved with research and evaluation in the foundation education sector (particularly with adult literacy and numeracy) for the last 12 years.

The information in this sheet describes what this research is about, what will happen with the information and the expected outputs from this research.

Purpose of the research

The purpose of this work is to explore and explain the use of the Tapatoru: Foundation Learning Professional Standards Framework.



This four-level framework describes the capabilities practitioners need in order to develop the knowledge and skills of foundation level learners. The four skills levels or papa are designed for those who are providing support for learners, such as training advisers in industry training organisations (ITOs) or vocational training staff, through to those who are directly delivering adult literacy and numeracy programmes in tertiary education settings. It is intended that the standards and skill levels be used to, “inform existing or planned professional learning and development offerings and opportunities. This may include qualifications where they are relevant or appropriate to practitioners and their particular contexts” (Ako Aotearoa, 2018, p. 6).¹⁷

As this is new to the education sector, I plan to look at how it is being used to inform the professional learning and capability building of those working in the sector.

¹⁷ Ako Aotearoa. (2018). *Foundation learning professional standards framework: Tapatoru*. Wellington: Author.

What it will involve

Data will be gathered through interviews with educators at different times. If you are not going to use Tapatoru this interview can be at any time. If you are going to use the Tapatoru there will be an interview at the beginning of the professional learning programme or the RPL process along with some follow up digital data collection during the professional development and putting a portfolio together.

The interviews will be semi-structured around 30-40 minutes. They will be conducted via Zoom to connect with participants at a time that suits them best. The interviews will focus on:

1. The role participants have in the sector
2. The types of professional learning they undertake (and why)
3. How the professional learning connects to the Tapatoru Framework
4. How they plan to use / use the Tapatoru framework to inform reflection and practice
5. Views on Tapatoru as a capability building Framework

I will take verbatim notes and the interviews will be recorded and used as back up for checking details. I'll collect follow-up data through emails, Messenger, or an app such as *Slack* which is a messaging app for teams. This will help to gather short quick thoughts about what is happening (around three-five times) over a six-nine month period. (Note in the COVID-19 environment this is likely to be one-two follow-up emails.)

What will happen with the information

The information provided in the interviews and ongoing electronic data collection will be confidential. Raw data, including the electronically-collected data and participant contact information will be stored securely on a password-protected computer and backed up in the cloud storage service, One Drive. Raw data will also be depersonalised through coding with unique identifiers for further anonymity. Any printed research data are held on secure premises in a locked cabinet that is only able to be accessed by the researcher. This includes hard copy of participant consent forms.

Protocols for engaging with interviewees and organisations

All interviewees will have the opportunity to be briefed on the purpose of the research, the purposes to which it will be put, and be asked to sign a consent form as part of the research.

The interview process itself will also be on the basis of voluntary contribution – there is no requirement for any participant to share information or experiences. All information provided by interviewees will be confidential to the researcher and will not be reported in such a way as to allow any individual to be identified.

In line with normal research ethics, participation in the study is completely at your discretion. It would be useful for your sector (or organisation - ITO, Wānanga, ITP, PTE) to be named in the final research report, but this is a decision for a senior manager in your organisation.

Outputs from the research

The major outputs from the research will be a doctoral thesis and good practice guidelines. It also anticipated that there will be research presentations and a possible journal article.

For more information about participating in this work please contact Anne at anne.alkema3@gmail.com or phone 027 332 1712.

This project has been reviewed and approved by Otago Polytechnic's Research Ethics Committee

Question frame for educators

Key Question Areas	Prompts
<p>1. Experience in the foundation education sector.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What type of organisation do you work in? • Background quals / experience / career pathway • Outline the work you do with learners/trainees (e.g., teaching, advising, supporting, developing resources)
<p>2. Types of professional learning you undertake (and why)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Qualifications ○ Professional reading ○ External (e.g., Ako Aotearoa, other) ○ In-house ○ Communities of practice ○ Peer mentoring / observations • Purpose and benefits/drawbacks of any of these approaches? • How do you decide what to do? What/who guides you? • Motivators? • How does the PD make you feel / impact on your practice?
<p>3. Use of the Tapatoru Framework</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you know about it? • Thoughts on the cultural underpinnings and how this aligns with your approach to learners / your own cultural competence? • How are you using it to inform your professional learning? • What are your drivers for using it? (badges, own interest, organizational interest) • How does your organisation promote its use? • How do you as a community of practitioners in your organisation (or across organisations) work with the framework? • What gets in the way of you using the framework to support your capability building / career development?

4. Views of the Tapatoru Framework

- What do you like/ not like about the framework?
- What do you think of the 'assessment mechanisms' for attesting to levels?
- How does the framework support a coherent approach to capability building?
- What are the benefits (or not) to the sector of the Tapatoru framework?
- What, any changes could be made to the framework?

Primary data table

This table outlines formal primary data collection points and participants. Additional data have been collected in informal conversations throughout the project.

Date	Data
10/12/2018	Personal communication with GS soon after the launch (Zoom) (Interviewee 1 – but noted as personal communication)
22/07/2019	Interview: professional standards expert (Interviewee 2) (Phone)
30/07/2019	Interview: JT developer of Tapatoru (Interviewee 3) (Phone)
29/07/2019	Interview: professional standards expert. (Interviewee 4) (Zoom)
3/02/2020	Personal communication with GS (Zoom)
8/04/2020	Personal communication with GS (Zoom)
15/04/2020	Webinar on Tapatoru – 23 participants
20/04/2020	Electronic artefact: Email update post the first online webinar re Tapatoru
8/05/2020	Interview: staff member from an organisation that did not sign up (Interviewee 5) (Zoom)
20/05/2020	Interview: staff member from an organisation that did not sign up (Interviewee 6) (Zoom)
8/07/202	Electronic artefact: Online Group FAQ
17/07/2020	Attended zoom session for online group
June /July 2020	Electronic artefacts: Series of 4 emails with video links sent to online participant
29/07/2020	Electronic artefact: GS Facebook post with information about the online trial – with video links
3/09/2020 & 16/10/2020	Interview: Tapatoru participant (Interviewee 7) (Zoom)
10/09/2020	Interview: Tapatoru participant (Interviewee 8) (Zoom)
11/09/2020	Interview: Tapatoru participant (Interviewee 9) (Zoom)
10/08/2020	Interview: Tapatoru participant (Interviewee 10) (Zoom)
10/09/2020	Interview: LN expert on PD and micro credentials (Interviewee 11) (Zoom)
15/09/2020	Meeting with ALNACC team to discuss how Tapatoru might be better promoted – notes and email exchanges
16/09/2020	Interview: Tapatoru participant (Interviewee 12) (Zoom)
21/09/2020	Interview: Education manager (Interviewee 13) (Zoom)
24/09/2020	Interview: Education Manager (Interviewee 14) (in-person)
16/10/2020	Interview: Tapatoru participant (Interviewee 15) (Phone)
16/10/2020	Interview: Tapatoru participant (Interviewee 16) (in-person)

27/10/2020	Interview: Education Manager (Interviewee 17) (Phone)
2/11/2020	Interview: Tapatoru participant (interviewee 18) (Zoom)
	Three portfolios of evidence
19/04/2021	Personal communication with GS (Zoom)
19/04/2021	Interview: Tapatoru participant (interviewee 19) (Zoom)
tbc	Personal communication with GS (Zoom)
26/06/2021	Sense checking meeting with ALNACC team (Zoom)

Tapatoru: Survey

This survey had to go out through intermediaries. To help the process the email blurb accompanied the survey link to Ara Poutama Aotearoa on November 29, 2020.

Kia ora - this year you've been involved with the pilot of Tapatoru. At Corrections we'd like to know more about how this worked / didn't work for you. Anne Alkema is helping us to do this as part of her doctoral study. Your responses are confidential to Anne who will write a short report for us.

So please click on the link below which takes you to the survey that will take around seven-eight minutes to complete.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Tapatoru>

Survey introduction

Kia ora and thank you for taking the time to answer this survey. It is being conducted as part of my Doctorate of Professional Practice.

You have been sent the survey as you have considered, started on, or completed Level 2 of the Tapatoru: Foundation Learning Professional Standards Framework. Your answers are confidential to me and you will not be able to be identified.

The survey should take around seven-eight minutes to complete. If you would like any further information about it, please contact me on anne.alkema3@gmail.com.

1. About you
 - a. I work
 - i. As an independent contractor
 - ii. At a PTE
 - iii. At an ITP
 - iv. At a GTE (Government Training Establishment)
2. How did you hear about Tapatoru? (Tick all that apply.)
 - a. At an Ako Aotearoa presentation
 - b. Through the Ako Aotearoa website
 - c. Through the Ako Aotearoa ALNACC Facebook
 - d. From someone I work with
 - e. I can't remember
 - f. Other (please state)
3. Why did you start or think about starting on Tapatoru?
 - a. Comment
4. What do you think about the Tapatoru Framework? (Tick all that apply) (Scale = Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, Don't Know/Not Sure)

- a. It is a framework that encompasses the elements (values, knowledge, practices) required in the foundation teaching sector
 - b. It has cultural underpinnings appropriate for Aotearoa New Zealand
 - c. It is a framework that drives / supports reflective practice
 - d. It is a framework that has helped improve my practice
 - e. It is a framework that all foundation educators should use
 - f. Comment
5. What are the benefits for you of having a professional standards framework? (Tick all that apply) (Scale = Strongly Agree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Disagree, Don't Know / Not Applicable)
- a. It helps me reflect on what I do
 - b. It helps inform my practice
 - c. It helps me talk about my practice
 - d. It is a formal attestation of my practice
 - e. It helps me understand the values that underpin my work
 - f. I can use it to inform the portfolio of evidence I need within my organisation (e.g., for my personal development plan (PDP))
 - g. Getting a digital badge adds to my list of credentials
 - h. Other (please state)
6. To what extent do you think a professional standards framework is needed for tertiary educators?
- a. It is important for the sector to have one
 - b. It is a 'nice to have' for the sector
 - c. It's not really needed
 - i. Comment
7. What are the benefits to the sector of having a professional standards framework?
- a. Comment
8. In relation to the information you received about the portfolio process how useful did you find it (scale= very useful, quite useful, not that useful, don't know / can't remember this)
- a. The emails and embedded videos and written information
 - b. Tapatoru Facebook posts
 - c. Online Zoom sessions
 - d. Reflective Commentary Template
 - e. The Reflective Cards
 - f. Tapatoru FAQs
 - g. Other (please state)

9. You are required to submit three pieces of evidence for Tapatoru. To what extent do you think each piece of evidence is important (very important, quite important, not that important, don't know)
- CV
 - The reflective commentary
 - The referees' reports
10. What other forms of evidence do you think should be submitted?
- Comment
11. Have you submitted the required evidence to Ako Aotearoa?
- Yes
 - No (if this is the answer respondents will answer questions on a different path – see below)
 - Still working on it
12. How easy was it for you to put together / complete the following. (Scale = very easy, quite easy, difficult, not applicable / haven't done it yet)
- CV
 - Reflective Commentary
 - Referee report
13. What helps you complete the process and submit your evidence? (Tick all that apply) (scale = this really helped, this helped a bit, this was not that helpful, this was not needed)
- The information and support from Ako Aotearoa
 - I was keen to participate in the trial
 - I already knew about the values, knowledge and practices in Tapatoru
 - I had or made time to complete the reflective commentary
 - It was easy to find referees
 - I had support from a peer
 - I had support from a manager
 - Other
14. Please provide further comments on what you liked or did not like about the submission of evidence process.
- Comment
15. Do you intend to go on to Pūkenga Papa Toru (Level 3) of Tapatoru?
- Yes
 - No
 - Not sure

No pathway questions

1. At what point did you stop working on the Tapatoru process?
 - a. CV
 - b. Reflective Commentary
 - c. Referee report
 - d. Comment

2. What got in the way of you submitting your evidence? (Tick all that apply) (scale = this was a big barrier, this was a bit of a barrier, not applicable)
 - a. There was not enough information and support from Ako Aotearoa
 - b. I wasn't that keen on participating in the trial
 - c. I already knew about the values, knowledge and practices in Tapatoru so didn't see much point
 - d. I didn't know how to write up the reflective commentary
 - e. I didn't have time to complete the reflective commentary
 - f. COVID-19 (e.g., lockdown and not able to access materials; essential worker during lockdown)
 - g. It was hard to get referees
 - h. There was no face-to-face contact with other people working on this
 - i. I had no support from a manager

3. Do you intend to complete Tapatoru in the future?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Not sure

4. What would help you complete your portfolio of evidence
 - a. Comment

Final Questions for All

5. What changes, if any, would you like to see made to the Tapatoru process?
 - a. Comment

6. What changes, if any, would you like to see made to the Tapatoru framework?
 - a. Comment

7. Thank you for taking the time to do the survey. If you would like a copy of the survey findings please put your email address in the comment box.

Participant survey report for Ara Poutama Aotearoa

Five staff responded to the survey. They heard about Tapatoru either through Ako Aotearoa sources or people at work. Four had submitted their portfolio and one was still working on it. Two would like to continue on to the next level of Tapatoru, and two who were 'not sure' said they would like to know more about it before make a decision - with one of them saying s/he did not know there was a papa toru.

They undertook Tapatoru for a range of reasons,

- One is new to adult education and wanted to apply for a permanent role
- One wanted to have an additional professional accreditation "under my belt"
- One thought it would recognise the work s/he does
- One because s/he was asked to participate in the pilot
- One because s/he likes to learn

Tapatoru framework

They had different thoughts about Tapatoru with more of them thinking that it "drives/supports reflective practice" and "can help inform practice" than the other options provided in the survey. These reasons were followed by, "it has cultural underpinning appropriate for Aotearoa New Zealand".

I'm from the Corrections cohort. Our work environment is vastly different from other Adult Training environments and so I cannot generalise about the usefulness of this framework for other organisations. A weighting of a values based, approach works for Corrections because without values being the driving force, our learners cannot be reached. If education is lighting a fire (not filling the pail) then values, for us, is raking and fanning the embers of shattered learning experiences, without which no flames can be ignited.

In terms of the framework itself, it has strong bi-cultural underpinnings to the ways in which we work. However, more work needs to be done in promoting the framework and making it become more credible within the adult education sector.

Three of them thought it was important for the foundation teaching sector to have a professional standards framework and two thought it was a 'nice to have'. Those who thought it was important for the sector said this was the cases as,

It places values at the heart of practice. Not about what we do but how we do it.

We can have a sense of validation and recognition that other education sectors already have. It also affirms foundation educators in the ways in which they work, and not feel so isolated in their thinking.

Those who thought it was 'nice to have' thought it would be useful for staff who didn't have qualifications in adult teaching and that it would help people "be on the same page" in relation to practice.

In terms of benefits for them as individuals, the strongest benefits of Tapatoru are, it is a formal attestation of their practice, it helps them reflect on their practice, and helps them understand the values that underpin the way they work.

They were less sure about whether it was useful in relation to the more extrinsic factors associated with a Tapatoru attestation, namely the award of digital badge, or that they could use the evidence for internal portfolios required for personal development plans.

It is however, a snapshot, and anecdotes would need to be updated to be a true reflection.

It would look better on my NZQA list.

Staff made few suggestions about changes to the framework, but one noted the need for discussions about Te Tiriti o Waitangi to be embedded in the framework and another that there needed to be a wider range of cultural underpinnings.

Can't think of any. Thank you for allowing me to experience the pilot programme. It has confirmed/ validated the approach I have with my learners.

Tapatoru process

While going through preparing their portfolios staff found the reflective commentary template, followed by the cards, and the FAQs, the emails and embedded videos the most useful. None of them had seen the Facebook posts and two of them did not know about the Zoom sessions. However, the Zoom sessions might be more to do with the Corrections settings and work commitments rather than the value of the sessions themselves.

Difficult for me to attend the Zoom meetings. I would like my employer to better support my attending these from home.

... I can't download anything off the net, ZOOM and Links to download.

The staff think that the three aspects of the portfolio – the CVs, referee reports and portfolios are important. The CVs were the easier to prepare than the other aspects, with the referees' reports being the most difficult to get together.¹⁸

Finding a Referee was awkward. Colleagues are busy (pages of referee info) and no one witnesses the soft skills I use. I was shy to reveal my portfolio to them (sounded like I was bragging). Also, my role doesn't place me in a class, ... [and is based] heavily on value based interaction to be successful and useful to the learner, but was difficult for referee using the template provided.

The referee process did impose on people. Took time/ effort. Template very useful. Multichoice should have 'comments to justify' under each question. "Tapatoru status if appropriate" confused my referees.

Feed back was very hard to get. It took four/six weeks to get it.

¹⁸ Note, interviewees also say this about the referees – and it is because referees may not be familiar with their practice or are too busy to write a report.

They also provided ideas of what else could be included in a portfolio: snapshots of work – handouts, teaching tools, examples of work, and attestations from learners.

In terms of completing their portfolios the most helpful factors were that they had or made time to complete the reflective portfolio, followed by their keenness to participate in the pilot. This was followed by their own knowledge, and information and support from Ako Aotearoa. It looks like they did not need support from peers, but did not feel supported by their managers.

My manager was not supportive of the ways in which this pilot was rolled out for tutors. Although supportive of my professional development, it seemed as though there were some communication discrepancies which caused a bit of tension in the workplace.

My direct manager was not supportive of this programme.

One of the staff members found it difficult because of her/her own knowledge about the *values, knowledge and practices in Tapatoru*. S/he also commented that they had looked for information on definitions of Māori words in a dictionary but was unable to find them.

Overall the staff would like to see the following changes made to the process:

- The process made less onerous for referees and it being more an endorsement process from management
- More information provided about the marking process – how it is marked and the criteria against which it is marked
- More and faster feedback on the portfolio
- More videos and recordings of zoom sessions being made available

More of an indication that you have been successful - the only notification I got was from Badgr that I had a digital badge. I didn't receive any other email or feedback about the process or my portfolio. It took quite a while to mark and I wasn't sure if my referee reports had been sent so it would be useful to get more communication along these lines

Comment

Overall, the numbers of responses in this survey are too small to draw conclusions. However, there are indications that staff have appreciated participating in the pilot and have valued the opportunity to reflect on their practice. They have shown their commitment to this by undertaking the work in their own time and would have appreciated more support from managers.

They provided more commentary on the portfolio process than the Tapatoru framework. However, the comments about the process will be passed on to Ako Aotearoa to help inform future work.

I support a value driven model because an 'organisation will grow in the direction of its deepest held beliefs'.