Te Tukanga Ako

Te Kahu Rolleston

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Read NZ Te Pou Muramura Pānui



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Foreword

Tēnā rā koutou, tātou e hui nei. Talofa lava. Mālō e lelei. Bula vinaka. Greetings!

Just under an hour on the Ōtaki Expressway, driving from our capital at the head of the fish, lies a little tāone hiding an amazing secret. It is released onto the streets after three o'clock Monday to Friday for 41 weeks of the year. Children, mokopuna and teenagers leave their kura when the bell rings, and spill out onto the tiriti speaking Māori. Bump into them together in the supermarket, or across from Māoriland, and it is te reo o ngā mātua tūpuna that you will hear. The language of the ancestors – Māori. Some towns in Aotearoa New Zealand have proclaimed that they thrive to be a bilingual town or city. Ōtaki township and the Māori speaking community just do it. Naturally. Fluently. Spontaneously.

It is in Ōtaki where this year's Pānui speaker resides. Te Kahu Rolleston is a force of nature from Matakana of Ngāi Te Rangi: a poet, storyteller, battle

rap artist, educator and Pāpā. In Māori we describe these oracy skills as a whītiki o te kī, a binder of words; a kaiwhakairo i te kupu, a carver of words; a taniwha toikupu, a taniwha of poetry, and of course, a kākā wahanui, a great orator that projects their voice, sees the audience, interacts with them, and most importantly, moves them.

In August of this year I had the great fortune to see Te Kahu in action in Ōtaki at Te Pou Muramura's inaugural Pōkai Tuhi programme, a week of mentoring and professional upskilling for eight Māori and Pasifika writers into schools and kura. This has been a drive of Te Pou Muramura as indicated by the strong uptake of visits to Kura Kaupapa Māori in our Writers in Schools programme.

We visited Te Kura-ā-Iwi o Whakatupuranga Rua Mano, a tribal immersion school where almost all students are Māori and speak Māori fluently, a goal once only a lofty dream of kaumātua from the 1970s that has come true 50 plus years later. I was seated behind Te Kahu as he spoke and could see the emotion of the taitamariki in the class as the Taniwha-battle-poet performed.

Keep in mind, this class was no stranger to Māori orality. Like Te Kahu, many would have been immersed in hearing pao or extemporaneous ditties made up on the spot, or lengthy political whaikōrero with long chains of reasoning. Here was something different in their mother tongue, te reo Māori. A rap

in te reo rangatira. I had a front-row seat for their unfiltered reactions. Te Kahu rapped out his pepeha and the children were stunned. He continued with linkages and the students were amazed. But then he creatively and rhythmically wove their school name and their class name into his rap in Māori—and an emotion appeared on their faces that I had never seen before. It was pure joy, blended with amazement; a smidge of pride with a dose of Māori humour that left their collective waha agog and squeaking – whā! Tū te ihiihi, tū te wanawana, ka mau kē te wehi!

He had them. Orality first. Then Te Kahu delivered a fantastic workshop where the tamariki wrote, read aloud and performed a few lines of their own raps about their wawata and what attributes they wanted to see in their future descendants, like their kaumātua did two generations before. Te Kahu captured the importance and beauty of the spoken word to motivate them to dream, to write, to compose a rhyme; he encouraged them to read aloud, and got them to listen to each other. It was raucous. It was raw. The class was filled with mutual admiration, and, of course, wild shout-outs. It was a celebration of te reo Māori as a living language in a Māori speaking school in a Māori speaking community, and it was beautiful.

Another school we visited, Koputaroa, a predominantly Pākehā school just out of Levin, commented that normally when authors turn up they

have a bag of tricks, a box of books, or a guitar. When Te Kahu turned up a few weeks earlier, they were surprised. It was just him as he walked from his waka. They were even more surprised when the students of this English speaking primary school were absolutely enchanted with his presentation and his workshop on spoken poetry. They were still singing his praises two weeks later! Such is the power of the bilingual poet.

Te Pou Muramura firmly believes mā te pānui e ora ake ai te tangata: reading is a superpower that can transform us and make life better. In this year's Pānui we pay homage to oracy and the spoken word, as we grow our Māori and Pasifika storytellers and get them into our schools and kura. In previous Pānui we acknowledged that readers and writers need each other. Readers and writers also need oracy. Oracy comes first. Oracy grows rich vocabularies, projects your voice: and, like writing, uses metaphor, irony and humour to touch the audience. It helps us think, it invites us to actively listen, and to understand each other. Most importantly, it can move our heads and our hearts. More than ever, we need this in our citizen toolkit to clearly communicate in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Mā te whakarongo pīkari, mā te kōrero ā-waha, mā te pānui pārekareka, mā te tuhi kātū e ora rawa atu ai a Aotearoa. Through active listening, oracy, reading for pleasure and writing of all genres, we

will have a prosperous New Zealand.

Tēnā rā koe e te pātaka iringa kōrero, e Te Kahu, he taonga te kupu kōrero. Thank you, Te Kahu, for your storehouse of stories. Oracy is a treasure.

Nei anō ā mātou mihi nunui e rere atu nei me te kī, Tihei mauri ora ki te ao pānui pukapuka!

Dr Darryn Joseph
Co-Chair
Read NZ Te Pou Muramura

Aroarowhaki te kāhui i te tihi o Mauao
Tauhōkai i te awa Wairoa te mārua o Te Pura
Kake ake rā ki ngā pae maunga o Kaimai
Ka whakarunga taku rere ki te tonga
Ka tae atu au ki Tokoroa
Ko Ngāti Raukawa, Raukawa ki uta
Pakipaki atu ngā parirau o te manu
E kopa ai te wai o Waikato
Ki Te Taupo-nui-a-Tia,
E tū e tū e Tūwharetoa
Kātahi ko te mananui tēna
Ko te mana o Te Heuheu
Ko te mana motuhake
Ko te mana Tongariro

Kake ake rā ki te tihi o Kaimanawa
Hāro atu ki Waiōuru

Ki Taihape
E tae pai au ki Rangitīkei
Ki Taitoko. Ka mihi ka tika ki a Muaūpoko
Te hōkioi te tipua te tawhito

Topa atu rā te kāhu ki Ōtaki
Te kāinga o taku tau
Ngāti Raukawa ki tai
Tū mai rā Raukawa
Rewa mai nā Katihiku
Huia te marama o taku Rangi Āniwaniwa

E kopa anō au ki runga Akatārawa
Ki te uru ko Ngāti Toa Rangatira
Ki te whiti ko Te Ātiawa ki te pane o te ika
Tauhōkai i Te Awakairangi te mārua
I wāhia okaokatia e Ngake
Mā runga ngā hau kāretu rōnaki mai te manu
Ki Te Whanganui-a-Tara,
Ki te manga o Matiu
Ki te whai ao ki te ao mārama
Tihei Mauri Ora!

Part One

There are many experiences that make me the person I am. The stories that make up the first part of this kōrero contribute in a huge way to the rauemi provided in the second part. It's important for me that people understand the whakapapa of the mahi I do; I didn't just pluck these tukanga ako from thin air. They are things I observed working effectively throughout my learning journey. I am lucky that – most of the time – if someone tells or shows me a piece of information I believe to be useful, I can recall who it was, when they told me, and even directly quote them. You will see how each of the stories included in Part One is a snippet of my education experience that directly inspires and feeds into the tukanga ako in Part Two.

Many people have requested that I document my tukanga ako over the years, many of whom observed one of my workshops in person and later attempted to replicate it in their respective

spaces. Often, they find it very difficult to implement. Hopefully the following insights will serve as a useful support. It may help to understand the tukanga ako as a whole instead of just the excitement of any single activity. I suspect Te Tukango Ako will fill in some of the blanks for those who wish to use some or all of the steps outlined.

Te taura kōrero / It's just a lie that's a little bit true

The first primary school teacher I ever had, her name was Mrs Clare. I always wanted to try my best for her because she was always trying and putting in extra effort with us. Outside of our daily te reo sessions, she would speak te reo Māori to us regularly to ensure we understood. She made sure we attended and spoke at manu kōrero and performed at the local rā whakangahau for kapa haka. She was the tutor, the guitar player, and the composer. Did I mention she wasn't Māori?

One of the biggest lessons I observed was how she knew where the line was for what was appropriate to teach, and what she should reach out to an expert for. She never taught the boys to haka, she brought in mātanga haka for that. She never taught us tauparapara and karakia, she got in mātanga for that. She didn't stumble her way through local Māori

history, she got in a mātanga to teach us. To this day I reflect on how respectful she was in engaging with these Māori spaces. For the most part, the way she taught suited me perfectly. One day, though, I was just unable to pick up what she was putting down.

I remember her explaining to the class what a metaphor is after we read a piece of poetry together. She was just explaining it in passing, it's not like she was forcing us to understand it.

"It's when you compare something with something it isn't," she said.

"So like, the ball is a window?" I said.

"How?" she asked.

"I don't know, I'm just doing what you said," I replied.

"What if I said a car is a waka?" She tried.

"Uhhhm, but, a car is a waka?!" I replied.

From my end it was going nowhere fast – but she kept trying to explain this thing to me in different ways. I believe if she had kept going, she would have found a way to help me understand, but to this day, holding other people up is something I abhor. Once I noticed I was stopping the whole class from moving on, I promptly pretended I understood so we could continue.

I got home and told my mum about this thing called a metaphor that I was struggling with. In the

most mum way possible, she rolled her eyes and reckoned.

"Metaphors are easy...it's just when someone tells a lie that's a little bit true," she said. "You know, manuhiri, manu tīoriori, maunga teitei, blah blah blah! They aren't a manu or a maunga, but they have something in common with that thing. They gather together like birds, or sing like birds, or stand around all day and do nothing like a maunga! Haha nah, or they have big mana like a maunga."

At that instance, my mum's words suddenly met halfway with what Mrs Clare had told me and it all made perfect sense. Two completely different ways of explaining something both helped me to understand. "It's when you compare one thing with another thing it's not." "It's just a lie that's a little bit true." Neither way of explaining it was wrong: in fact, hearing both only added value to my understanding.

Te taura whanaungatanga / Why is it paru?

When I was about 11, the teacher gave our class a creative writing assignment. Our task was to write a letter home as if we were an ANZAC soldier at war. I remember the excitement of the chance to use my imagination in a piece of writing.

When I arrived home that afternoon Mum was still at work. Before actually writing the letter, I lit one of her candles. I wanted to use the wax to seal the letter and use the flame to char the paper. After five sheets of paper had been transformed completely to ash, and Mum's cabinet top looked like a half a packet of Pall Mall red had been smoked, I had finally achieved the look I wanted. In true intermediate kid form, I used my chest filled with air to leaf blow the ash off the cabinet. I started writing, it began with the standard formalities...

"How is everyone?"

"I hope you are all well."

"I miss you all and think about you often."

Other parts, however, were not so standard.

"Ohhh no, I can hear the enemy approaching, they are riding on waka that spit fire and eat everything in their path!"

"They didn't tell us we had to fight machines, monsters and metal tipua in basic training!"

Psshing, cling, "all the windows are shattering!"

Boom bam boom, "I can hear them near, there are flames everywhere!!!"

"This might be it, the end of my life – I think I'm going to di....."

I scribbled down the page, as if the soldier had died mid-sentence before miraculously folding it up and sealing it with candle wax.

The next morning, foaming with excitement, I didn't even wait for my teacher to open the seal. As soon as my mates were all gathered, I tapped and pushed everyone around me so they turned to look.

"Eah, check out my assignment!" I said with my chest puffed up like a berry filled kererū.

I unveiled my sealed letter. The circle of students gasped, as if I had just unveiled some tapu artefact from the war. So far, so good, I thought. Next, I invited someone to break the seal and unfold the letter to show the war-charred writing. I sat silently while people read through the letter. As they were reading, they each reacted to the different parts that connected with them. When they each arrived at the last word with the scribble, they laughed. Victory! Or so I thought.

Now with even more confidence, I approached the teacher's desk.

"Kia ora whaea, I have my assignment."

I put the charred paper on the desk. Immediately she looked mad.

"Why is it all paru?" she asked.

I told her, with a smile, "it was burnt in the war."

With one eyebrow raised, she opened the letter and began reading. She looked towards me, but it felt like she was looking through me.

"Why on earth would a soldier at war continue writing when they are being attacked? Could you picture that ever happening? Would the person reading hear all this shattering and booming, do you think? You need to do this again!"

Redoing work had never bothered me before, but this time felt different. I guess at least, as stupid as it may sound, I thought this mahi and the journey of making it deserved an acknowledgement. You know, something like, "good try but this isn't quite what I wanted, can you do it again." Anything positive, really, would have been fine. Instead I was left seriously wondering: was there no space for my sort of creativity in creative writing?

Like the carvings of a whare, that memory is vividly etched in me. That one small moment, which I'm sure the teacher didn't mean to crush me, impacted me greatly. That moment took me from a person who loved to engage with language in its many different forms to someone who was whakamā for adults to see any creative writing tasks.

The learning I carry from this experience is to always consider the mana and the mauri of those involved. If these things are considered and cared

for, re-doing the work, or being told something needs to be changed, is a lot easier to hear. [1]

Te taura tūwhiti / Alright, put your pens down

In Form Two at Tauranga Intermediate, I had the honour of being in the class of a teacher who has a persona larger than life—a man affectionately known by generations across Tauranga Moana as Pā or Matua Jack. A proud uri of the kohu, a boulder from Maungapōhatu. He tōtara nō te whānua. Koia ko te hotahota o te pū, koia ko te rau o te patu.

This man continues to give his seemingly endless mauri to generations of Tauranga Moana. I observed and learned many things from him. Matua Jack has the ability to reset and lift the mauri of an

1 Mauri as a term and concept has a depth that reaches much further than how I will be discussing it. For the purpose of this kōrero, when I refer to the mauri of the space, the group or individuals, I'm talking about the Mauri in terms of balance of energy. For example, when you say to a room of young people: "alright, we are going to play basketball." For some, it will give their mauri/energy level/life force a boost; for others, their mauri may dip at the thought of basketball. These are two completely different responses to the same thing being said. It's important to understand this dynamic of mauri and how different things happening can have a range of different impacts on the mauri of an individual, and also the collective. Mana, like the term mauri, has a depth that reaches far deeper than how it is being used for the purposes of this mahi. What I mean in this tuhinga when I say mana is how a person or group is regarded by others, and perceives itself, and therefore carries itself, in accordance with that.

entire hall of students whenever he desires.

I recall sitting in a gruelling maths test. Looking around the room, it wasn't hard to see that most of the class was obviously stressed and struggling. He stood up and said, in his firm but fair voice, "Alright you fullas, put your pens down." Before we had a chance to start moaning, he said: "The test isn't done, but I read this funny as joke, and wanted you fullas to hear it."

I don't remember the joke. I don't even remember what the test was about, apart from the fact it had numbers. The feeling of relief I experienced from the joke in that moment, though: that's something I will remember forever. It made the rest of the test so much more bearable. At the end of the test, I remember him saying, "I don't know what you fullas are so stressed for, you're all gonna be in the same class when you get to high school next year anyway! Besides, if you fullas get rubbish marks, it's me who looks bad, not you!" He laughed it off and directed someone to lead karakia whakakapi.

Regardless of how well we did in that test, at least we went home that day without feeling horrible. Matua Jack noticed the big dip in the mauri of the room, stopped it, and turned the space into something that wasn't so stressful. Beyond the relief of the joke, he took a moment to be real with us. He mana, he mauri hoki tō ngā tāngata katoa.

Te taura pūrākau / One bun = emulsion test?

We had a third form science teacher named Mr Cassidy. This was the first time I had a teacher who was Māori, but not in the Māori department. He noticed the class could learn a whole haka bracket, but not five elements of the periodic table. He knew our ability to learn and remember information was fine, but nothing about what or how we were learning science seemed to connect. He turned up to class one day and said, "Alright, put everything away, we're trying something else."

"I need you to learn this information," he said to the class. "I know you can all learn, I've seen it first hand." He continued to tell us that many ancient peoples in the world had things called mnemonic devices that use rhymes, rhythm, story, and other powerful oral traditions as tools to remember things. He then told us to memorise some of the most outrageously average rhymes I had ever heard – even Dr Seuss would have been disappointed. Regardless, he was asking us to do something simple, achievable and something we enjoyed doing...so we did it. 'One bun', 'two shoes', 'three tree', 'four door', etc.

Once we had memorised these ridiculous rhymes, he told us a series of stories to go with them. One bun: "We all like a well baked bun! The best sort of buns have cream in them, and do you

know why? Because if you mix ethanol with water and shake the solution, the liquid will go creamy if there are lipids present. Lipids are fats, FYI," he said.

I still, to this day, know how to do this emulsion test: because my science teacher taught me a silly little rhyme, which reminded me of a silly story he told, which contained real, practical, scientific knowledge.

What this did for me was spark moments of reflection on something we all know but seem to forget. Haka, waiata tawhito/mōteatea, any sort of waiata/music, pūrākau/narrative, poetry, or oral tradition have always been used to hold and convey knowledge. It's the reason my iwi knows about Tainui Waka coming into the Tauranga harbour: we have a tauparapara that recalls it. Growing up, knowing the haka about Pukehinahina didn't just mean I knew a haka, it meant I could recall all the information within that haka.

As a third form student, what was a lot more important to me, though, was the fact that the teacher had given me a fun way to memorise important information easily for tests by using rhymes and story. This meant practising for school tests also meant practising how to structure rhymes, and fill them with information.

Te taura hāngai / Instead of changing you, we will change the assignment

The fifth form arrived. We had an English teacher who was tasked with getting us to memorise a speech from Macbeth. It's not much of an exaggeration when I tell you that this teacher's job may as well have been to extract fish oil from mountain boulders. Since our third form year, our class had a reputation for burning through English teachers like a bonfire does kindling and twigs. One term we had four English teachers. Some teachers stopped teaching our class; others left the school completely after their time with us.

Despite the impossible task that had been thrown her way, this teacher found a way to create a meaningful experience. She did something so very simple, but so very powerful. Instead of forcing us to fit the assignment, she changed the assignment to better fit us! Instead of forcing us to memorise the language of Shakespeare and recite it, she took the time to explain to us what the kōrero was saying, phrase by phrase.

We talked and laughed and discussed what Macbeth was saying. We joked about how odd some things sounded. The teacher then gave us the option to either memorise the speech as it was, or to rewrite each phrase in our own words and memorise

that version to recite.

As a result, we gained a much better understanding of what the speech was saying. When we heard it being quoted, we could explain what particular parts meant in our own words, with a pūkana here and a haka action there to animate our kupu. We were given space where we didn't have to ignore who we were, or how we saw the world, to learn and engage with something new.

What this did for me was to give me hope that there was space in education for the way I preferred to engage with language. I do my best to reflect this approach in all the mahi I do with young people.

MACBETH

Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me
clutch thee.

Is this real? A sparkling toki before me and my
shimmering eyes,
My ringa twitches and itches to grip it up tight

I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
To feeling as to sight? or art thou but
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?

This strange surreal sensation,
Are you real or pōrangi, intrusive hallucination?
Some vivid creation
Of my ill-minded imagination
The fault and result of Hinengaro's cold
starvation?

Part Two

Fast forward 20 years, and schools all around the country keep me extremely busy visiting and inspiring students to write. Actually, I believe inspiring students to write isn't quite the correct term. What I try my best to do is show them the joy and safety I was able to find within language: a way to engage with writing that looked after my own mauri and mana as a whakamā writer.

I understand that a negative experience in school may impact a person's mana, or take energy from their mauri. In the same way, it can also be a space which can help a person grow their mana, by adding a skill to their kete and adding good energy to their mauri through a sense of achievement. Each of the following tukanga can be used collectively or individually, depending on the purpose. It is laid out as a first person step-by-step guide to how I run a basic creative writing workshop.

Te wahapū / Be like a harbour

Basing the things I do in aspects of our taiao is a technique our tūpuna would use. The examples in te ao Māori range from the generic kōrero of kūmara and their sweetness to those more specific to my whakapapa, like Kinomoerua pointing Apanui Ringamutu to Te Toka a Tirikawa as his model and philosophy of victory.

I begin by comparing a kaupapa like 'creative writing' with a thriving harbour. In this single harbour, there are various resources that different people can collect and harvest, depending on their requirements, tools, knowledge, and abilities. There may be metaphors in one part, alliteration in another, simple rhymes in the shallows, complex ones in the deep. My approach is to teach people the tukanga, or the process, around how to safely find and collect something within that metaphorical harbour, or learning space, by helping them to build a relationship with it in some way.

It's not just the act of collecting and harvesting that needs to be understood. For the best odds of safety and success in the wahapū, I do my best to understand the tides, the weather, the swells: gauging the mauri of the environment before just diving in. A person could be the greatest kai gatherer, but ultimately it is still these environmental factors that

are likely to determine how successful the trip is.

Once someone understands the protocols of when and how to safely gather something from the harbour, they can experiment with any of the countless ways to store, prepare, cook, and serve that thing. If I can create this sort of learning environment, I can support the people in that space to at least engage with it. Doing this gives them a base to work from if they ever return to that harbour.

I have found using this sort of model useful for deciding an approach to take, responding to, and resolving the unexpected things that may arise in a learning space. I have used many environments as similar models, but a harbour is what I am using here because it's an environment I have been familiar with and shared a bond with my entire life. A person could replicate this model using an environment which they have their own connection with. The model does not need to be shared with the students—this is a guide for me as a facilitator.

Herea ngā taura whanaungatanga / Everyone has mana, everyone has mauri

My first intention when I appear in front of a group is not to start the mahi, it's to begin weaving some strands of whanaungatanga between us. This will

look different in different spaces, and depending on the group size. The important part is that there is a dialogue, which creates those strands of whanaungatanga.

I help them get to know me. Not me as a professional, but me: what I love to do, where my whānau is from, etc. In this kōrero I find connections, interests in common, unique things about them. Beyond this, the more I get to know about a group and they get to know about me, the more informed the decision can be about whether or not they trust me. Honest and clear dialogue from the start helps to open the space as a place where students will be able to input and be a part of the wānanga, not just a listener or observer.

I have found that building a rapport of understanding, which shows a person they also have the mana to determine how the time unfolds, is important. It offers a sense of rangatiratanga and control over the process. It's a way of respecting the mana of the individuals in a space: and if the space is one based on transparency, people will be able to say if they don't like what's going on.

This intentional whanaungatanga is also an opportunity for laying down a tikanga and guidelines for the time together. An example of one of the core tikanga I set is: "Metaphors can be hilarious and we will laugh a lot in this space, but this is a safe space, so we don't make metaphors that make people feel bad." Once a group tikanga like this is

set, it's important to check in with the group that this is acceptable and achievable to them. It's also important to allow them to add any tikanga they think might be required.

At this point of whanaungatanga, I'm also getting my first gauge of the mauri in the room. Is there anyone who looks to be extremely disengaged? Are there people that seem excited? Are there any who look nervous? Is the room dark and cold? Is it too bright? If so, what can I do to support individuals or the collective to help keep the mauri of the space balanced? Keep in mind that whanaungatanga is rarely, if ever, finished – we always weave more strands of whanaungatanga as relationships grow.

Herea te taura tūwhiti / Pens down, I've got a joke

After some discussion and whakawhanaungatanga, it's time to introduce the subject we will be focusing on. For the purpose of this kōrero, the resource from the harbour of writing I will use as an example is metaphors. I tell them what the focus is, and allow them some time to vent (I may even join in on the moaning if that is also my initial response to the topic).

Once a term like metaphor is introduced to a group, it may cause an instant dip in the mauri for some. It's a strange word, it sounds tricky. Is it even

English? For some, the idea of not knowing already makes them feel as if their mana could be in jeopardy. I neutralise its scariness by making light of it, e.g. "A meta-phor is just meta-five's little brother," or "I had Facebook already, what do I even need a Meta-for?" It doesn't have to be a joke—it can be a relevant quote, or simply just reassuring them that this is completely doable—but it should always make this new thing not as intimidating.

The point is to disarm the intimidation that comes with learning this new thing. It's easier to engage with something funny than it is to engage with something scary. It's easier to engage with something small than something big; it's easier to engage with something light than something heavy.

Herea te taura haumaru / I will keep trying

Now they know what we are doing, I reassure them that I can keep them safe in the sea of words we will be traversing. I also let the confident writers know that they have space to go deeper and dive for more complicated forms of metaphor if the shallows are not challenging enough. There is space for everyone to safely take part! This is me putting my own mana on the line: I'm letting them know that if it goes pear shaped, it's my fault, not theirs.

If at any time there is someone who isn't able to do what I am asking (for example, there's a reason why they are unable to write) I will change their particular task. Not in an obvious way, but in a way that allows them to take part and considers their mana: supporting them more, giving them leadership responsibilities, etc. I will do my best to find a way for them to be able to engage with the space.

At this stage we are ready to start building some collective familiarity with our kaupapa.

Herea te taura pūrākau / Emulsion test

"Who can tell me what a metaphor is?" I ask. Usually there are some keen hands. I allow the students to give a few answers, even if the first answer is correct. I acknowledge and thank everyone for their answer in some way, which helps encourage a space of discussion and wānanga instead of observation. Some people may have heard or have some familiarity with the term. Others may have never heard it. Hearing something explained in multiple ways from different perspectives can often be useful for helping consolidate the room's knowledge on a topic.

I'll select some hands from around the room to answer. Whether every person I have selected has

given a correct answer or no one has, I proceed to tell a short story or narrative, or give an example of some sort about the topic. Often this is where I will tell the story about my mum and "a lie that's a little bit true" [p14]. It's really a point for them to refer back to later and compare their own metaphors with.

If I can't tell a whole story, I give them a basic statement that explains exactly what the topic is in its most simple form: something that they can keep referring back to. I explore with them a simple example like "the sun is a lightbulb," or I explore with them one of my favourite metaphors and the context it derives from. All of these options can work just as effectively as each other. The point is that ākonga are given a guiding example or definition that they can compare with and check their own metaphors against.

Te pūrangiaho / Manu tīoriori, maunga teitei

The following step-by-step activity is the part that people often see and try to replicate: but they often do so without noticing any of the prior steps I have taken to create the environment suitable for it to take place. I have replicated this writing workshop countless times, with groups from kōhanga to

postgraduate students, and I have always seen the following activity work well provided that, in some form, a safe space where everyone's ideas and thoughts are valued and respected has been created. This activity can work without the prior steps, but if you haven't already built whanaunatanga with your group, they will assist in creating the space where the most impact can happen.

The activity starts with collectively building a metaphor in its most simple form, and exploring it until the collective is comfortable enough to go deeper. The following outlines how this is done, step by step, and will help shed light on the thought processes and the factors at play which aren't so easily seen.

1. I pick random things around the room. Often, due to convenience, a four-legged chair is the first object. Ask the room, "What's one thing we can all agree to be true about this chair?" The most common answer is the fact it has four legs. I check in with everyone to make sure the room is in agreement. If some aren't, I allow them the space to voice why they believe it to not be true – and, if required, I take a minute to explore their thought process. This helps to care for the mauri and mana of the individual and the space, especially if they feel strongly about why that chair doesn't have four legs. If

their argument is sound, find another physical fact about the object that's not as questionable.

2. Now we have established something we know is reasonably true: the fact that the chair has four legs. I then ask a simple question that allows them to start making comparisons: "What else in this world has four legs?" This is an activity that a lot of students who may not usually put their hands up to answer will often become noticeably involved in. To keep it going for a while, I try to be very intentional about selecting the students who may not usually answer questions in class.
3. I use the four-legged suggestions to make comparisons with the four-legged chair. "The chair is a horse!" This will usually bring a few laughs. I remind them of the te taura kōrero story [p14], and ask what the part is 'that's a little bit true' when I say the chair is a horse, or a dog, or a donkey, or a dragon, or a Ford ranger. If I use a simple metaphor like 'the sun is a lightbulb' as the example, I ask the room, "If 'the sun is a lightbulb' is correct, does that mean 'the chair is a horse' is correct, and why?"
4. Some might only be able to recognise the four-leg comparison, some might say, "because the chair has four legs and it's furry," others might say, "because it carries me through the long journey that is school." This gives a chance for

students from a wide range of levels to all have a turn and have fun, without looking like they're wrong. It's hard to look silly when the teacher just said "The chair is a horse." The narrative, or joke, or definition, is what we can use collectively, and also what individuals can use to compare and check their own metaphor before sharing with the group.

5. Explain that a comparison about how many legs something has, or what colour it is, is a metaphor that compares physical features. Metaphors aren't just about how something looks: they can also be about what something does. I draw the room's attention to another object, (for example, a window) and ask, "What does a window do?" A common answer to this would be, "It opens and closes." I check that the room agrees with this answer, and the follow up question I ask is, "What else in this world opens and closes?"
6. By this point many of the students will be involved. The window is a book, it opens and closes. The windows are the eyes of the room, the curtains are eyelids. A window is a shop, it opens and closes. This step teaches them different ways to grow and develop their metaphor at a level that suits them. If I don't understand a comparison they are making, I ask them to explain it to me. I don't ask as an adult in a

position of power, I ask as someone who is honestly curious. This means I only want to understand their whakaaro, not judge if it's right or wrong.

7. Now I put it back on the group. I ask them to select things in the room, and as a group we make metaphors about multiple things. At this stage I'm not concerned about the level of metaphor they are creating, I'm only concerned that they have gained some understanding of how metaphors work, how to make them, and how to recognise them.
8. I keep this game going until the consensus in the room is that absolutely anything can be made into a metaphor. This is the approach I take to teaching young people creative writing basics. I don't start with writing—I start with showing them a thought process. Once they have a good grasp on how to come up with metaphors about random things, I ask them to write a metaphor about a particular subject or thing.

From here, because the Herea ngā taura whanaungatanga step [p29] is in place, I return to the Te taura tūwhiti phase [p31] and introduce the next skill I want the group to learn. Then we follow the same four steps: Te taura tūwhiti; Te taura haumaru; Herea te taura pūrakau; Te pūrangiaho.

What you will notice about this method of

teaching writing skills is that there aren't many places where students can fall off the waka. We have removed everything that makes the tasks complicated, and grown the understanding from its most simple form. We then work to add layers of depth. It's important to acknowledge the mahi the ākonga complete in the time together, and close off the session appropriately.

Tō piki amokura nōu
Tōku piki amokura nōku
You have your authority
I have my authority.

Afterword

Some of my most memorable moments using te tukanga ako

Ōtorohanga High School

Around 10 years ago, I was invited to Ōtorohanga High School. The kaupapa they were focused on was the New Zealand land wars. The students had been learning about the land wars from local Mana Whenua pu kōrero. My job was to use this writing approach to support these students to create pieces as responses to these kōrero. As they were listening to the history of the land wars in their region, their role was to create pieces that they would perform in front of the community the following evening.

I asked them to each make note of the five things they personally found most memorable as they listened to the history. We then worked on creating metaphors to explain those memorable notes. Then we constructed rhymes, onomatopoeia, and more, until they had the tools they needed to weave all

these sentences into powerful poems. Many of the students involved made it clear that they absolutely hated writing: however, I have a distinct memory of those students asking to stay in the library over the lunch break to continue writing. The teachers were absolutely stumped. This is something that I have seen many times over the years I have been doing this mahi. When a person is shown a way of writing that is fun and accessible to them, they often want a chance to explore it further.

The following evening arrived, the hall filled with students and community. The students delivered their poems in a spectacular fashion. The audience was in awe. One of the students rolled a giant roll of paper that looked like it had come straight out of a wharekai in the 90s across the floor of the hall. It was the initial petition for the NZ land wars to be taught in schools, led by the Ōtorohanga High School student Leah Campbell. After witnessing the history conveyed in this way, the people present stood and began signing the petition. I will always remember this as an example where, just like in the kapa haka world, creative writing, performance, history and social studies worked together as a vehicle to communicate something. This is a huge mihi to Leah Campbell, the students involved, and the English teacher, for the amazing change they were able to make for the whole country.

Bay of Plenty District Health Board

Another time, I was approached by my aunty, a kaimahi at the Bay of Plenty District health board. They asked me to sit with rangatahi in both Tauranga and Ōpōtiki to support them to create spoken word kōrero. These kōrero would be heard as submissions to the panel travelling the country hearing about rangatahi mental health. It was very obvious on the day of the submissions that the rangatahi I was working with for the DHB were the only rangatahi submitting.

In that space I came to understand how creative language allows space for a person to speak directly about something without having to speak about it at all. It's much easier to say, "It's dark and cloudy in my skies, even when the sun is shining outside," than it is to say "Depression covers me in darkness, but I hide it with a bright smile." The use of creative language is helpful for kaupapa that are difficult to discuss.

Muaūpoko

More recently, a kaupapa was facilitated between Read NZ Te Pou Muramura, the Ministry of Education and Muaūpoko tribal authority. I facilitated a workshop at the local intermediate, and a second at a rangatahi program that was run by the iwi. While at

this wānanga, Matua Darren, a local pūkōrero of the mana whenua, recounted histories and oral tradition of their tūpuna. These stories stretched back to an ancient waka race their ancestor won in Tahiti, connecting this narrative to the lives of the rangatahi in the room, who were all uri of these great tales.

As they listened to the kōrero, I asked them to take notes of the things that 'hit different'. With their notes we followed the same process, creating metaphors and other material they could weave to create coherent kōrero. This led to them being able to take a look at the world we live in through a lens shaped by their tūpuna, and safely navigate through that space while being guided by one of their own pūkōrero.

Office of the Children's Commission

The Office of the Children's Commission contacted me through a good friend, an amazing human called Julia Whaipooti. Julia has brought about huge change in many spaces. At this time she was working as Principal Māori Advisor to the Children's Commissioner at that time, judge Andrew Becroft. They wanted me to gather rangatahi perspectives on a series of different issues. I didn't use questionnaires; I didn't use pamphlets. I supported these students to create a series of creative sentences

that portrayed their perspective and feeling on the things being asked. I had four set kaupapa, which I presented as issues each person could make four creative sentences for. In this space we explored how the kaupapa made them feel, what their experiences were with it, and even how they would change it if they were in charge.

Acknowledgements

Te Kahu Rolleston

Firstly I wish to thank my whole whānau for nurturing me into who and how I am. Before he passed, our koro Melbo was the only person who I remember having lots of books around. One Christmas he walked into his lounge as I was about 30 pages deep into his copy of *Ka whawhai tonu mātou*. I thought I was in for a growling, but he smiled and carried on doing what he was doing. Look koro, they reckon I'm a writer!

I will always be grateful and appreciative of my whānau and upbringing. I know it was privileged in many ways. Shot mum! There have been many people from our rohe who have added to my kete and I am grateful for each of you. I will always be proud to say ko Mauao te maunga ko Tauranga te moana! I want to thank my partner Leslie and our tamariki for putting up with the outrageous hours of mahi that are sometimes required carrying this kaupapa. I love you all!

I want to thank the hundreds and hundreds of schools and communities I have been invited to visit over the years. If these schools did not continuously express how important this kaupapa has been for their students and how much it helps, there honestly wouldn't be any reason for me to do this mahi. Thank you teachers, and students: for trusting in my approach, in this kaupapa, and in me.

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Read NZ Te Pou Muramura

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