

QUALITY ASSURANCE IN TERTIARY EDUCATION FROM A MAORI (indigenous) PERSPECTIVE

INQAAHE CONFERENCE WELLINGTON 2005

Ranginui Walker Emeritus Professor

University of Auckland

The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines quality to mean ‘possessing a high degree of excellence, concerned with maintenance of quality (quality control)’. The cultural context of west European tradition, in which the definition is located, is not stated. This paper examines what Maori, the indigenous people of New Zealand, require by way of quality in higher education.

In the nineteenth century education was presented to Maori by the colonising Pakeha as a civilising and politically neutral enterprise. But the question of whose knowledge and what constitutes knowledge for inclusion in the curriculum was inherently ideological and political.¹ Maori knowledge being ‘subjugated knowledge’ in Foucault’s terms was disqualified as inadequate, naïve and located low down on the hierarchy of knowledge, beneath the scientific level of cognition.² The consequence of that disqualification was the erosion of Maori language and culture to the point of immanent Maori language death identified by Benton in 1969.³ Loss of language, culture and identity in the face of the invading culture was socially debilitating for Maori. The alternatives were assimilation or a ‘return to knowledge’ through local criticism outside the established regimes of influence and power.⁴

Maori rejected assimilation and opted for a return to knowledge whereby quality in education meant the reproduction of their own language, culture and social usages. But in doing so, they also accepted the need to function effectively in the invading and dominant culture. Thus, Maori who were committed to their identity as Maori are by definition bicultural.⁵

¹ Apple, Michael, *Ideology and the Curriculum*, vii.

² Foucault, Michel, *Power/knowledge*, p.82.

³ Benton, Richard, *Who Speaks Maori in New Zealand?* p.13.

⁴ Foucault, Michel, p.81.

⁵ Apple, Michael, op. cit, p.6.

In opting to maintain their own culture, Maori developed a two-stage strategy. The first stage involved proposals for ameliorating the alienating effect of mainstream education by pressing for the inclusion of Maori knowledge in the curriculum. This task preoccupied Maori intellectuals for eight decades of the twentieth century. Although largely accomplished, it is still work in progress. The second stage, begun in 1980, was marked by Maori initiatives to take control over their own education from pre-school through to the tertiary level. This too is work still in progress.

The New Zealand public school system was established in the second half of the nineteenth century. The Native Schools, established in 1867 as part of that system, were artefacts of colonialism designed to ‘process people’ as well as to ‘process knowledge’. They served as ‘agents of selective tradition and cultural incorporation’. Sir Apirana Ngata, farmer, politician and the leading Maori intellectual of the twentieth century drew that conclusion long before it was penned by Apple in 1990. Ngata wrote:

There are Maoris, men and women who have passed through the Pakeha *whare*

wananga (highest school of learning) and felt shame at their ignorance of their

native culture. They would learn it if they could, if it were available for study as the culture of the Pakeha has been ordered for them to learn....It is possible to be bicultural.⁶

In 1923 Ngata translated that insight into transforming action by persuading Parliament to support the publication of research into Maori culture. He clearly understood the nature of power and knowledge - that is, the ability of the state to generate ‘truth’ through research activity and thereby manage the social and political economy. Ngata’s efforts culminated in the establishment of the Maori Ethnological Research Board to publish the work of Best, Buck and Skinner. Ngata adroitly used the imprimatur of the Board to persuade the senate of the University of New Zealand to include Maori language as a subject of study for B.A. To placate potential opposition, Ngata compromised. He pleaded that Maori be admitted into the curriculum among the foreign languages. The senate

⁶ Ngata, Sir Apirana, *Nga Moteatea* (1928, xiii).

stonewalled the request on the grounds that there was no literature to support a teaching programme.⁷ Ngata overcame that objection by citing the work of Sir George Grey, *Nga Mahi a Nga Tupuna*, (Maori myths and traditions) the Maori translation of the *Bible* and *Nga Moteatea* (songs, chants poems). Ngata's own collection of songs, chants and poetic laments and lullabies was published in 1924 as supplements to the Maori newspaper *Te Toa Takini*. *Nga Moteatea*, with translations and annotations, was subsequently published in three volumes by the Polynesian Society, with the first volume appearing in 1959. As the epitome of quality and scholarship, *Nga Moteatea* earned Ngata the award of a D.Litt. from the University College of Canterbury in 1948.

The Senate's agreement to admit Maori language as a degree subject took a further twenty five years to translate into action, but not without prompting from Ngata. At the Young Maori Leaders Conference that he organized at Auckland University College in 1939, Ngata asked the delegates to consider whether Maori language, traditions, history and literature should be taught in schools at the secondary and tertiary level. He also pressed the university to establish a chair in anthropology in the hope of luring his colleague Dr Peter Buck back from Hawaii. The conference recommended the establishment of a Maori social and cultural centre for adult education through Auckland University College, Auckland Teachers College, the WEA and the Technical College.⁸

The outbreak of World War II delayed Maori penetration of the academy until 1949 when Maharaia Winiata was appointed as a tutor in Maori adult education at Auckland University. He was followed by the appointment of Bruce Biggs as lecturer in Maori language in 1951, and Matiu Te Hau in 1952 as a tutor in adult education. The pedagogy of the adult education tutors concentrated on what might be termed cultural reconstruction, validation and incorporation of Maori knowledge into the academy, albeit in the marginalised Department of University Extension. Biggs, domiciled in the Anthropology Department provided academic respectability to the enterprise with his emphasis on quality research in Maori and Polynesian linguistics. The breakthrough made at Auckland was emulated over the next thirty years by the establishment of Maori

⁷ Walker, Ranginui, *Ka Whawahai Tonu Matou Struggle Without End*, 1990, p.195.

⁸ Peters, Michael, Editor & Giroux, Henry A., *After the Disciplines*, 1999, p.p.190-191

studies at all teachers colleges, polytechnics and universities.

In this early period of Maori penetration of the academy, students invariably found the university alien and intimidating. They tended to major in Maori Studies and anthropology where they felt culturally comfortable. In order to increase recruitment and spread Maori students across all faculties, Maori academic staff decided to establish marae on campus to make the university more user-friendly and culturally welcoming to Maori. It was a protracted ten-year struggle. Victoria University opened Te Herenga Waka marae in 1987 and Auckland opened Waipapa marae the following year. Other tertiary institutions did likewise. The modification of tertiary education provision to accommodate the two founding cultures of the new nation was extended to incorporate the cultures of tangata Pasifika with the opening of the fale at Auckland University in 2004.

Although Maori staff and cultural symbols had the desired effect of increasing Maori participation in tertiary education, the university was still an intimidating institution for students from low decile schools. Their sense of cultural alienation was heightened in faculties with competitive and limited enrolment. Students that enrolled in medicine, law and engineering under MAPAS, the Maori and Polynesian Admission scheme, were particularly vulnerable to criticism of lowered entry standards. To ensure their survival, students formed their own study networks and support groups for their preferred mode of group learning.

The Maori effort to make tertiary education more responsive to the indigenous culture of New Zealand, and by extension the Pacific, was complemented by the Hawke Report 1998. Hawke advocated decentralisation of post-compulsory education and training and recognition of Maori claims to education under the 'principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.' Education was subsequently aligned with the government's treaty settlement policy by an amendment to Section 181 (b) of the Education Act 1989 requiring University Councils to 'acknowledge the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi'. The law required Tertiary Education Institutions to take account of the Treaty in their defining documents, including mission statements, charters and profiles.⁹

⁹ Walker, Ranginui, *op. cit.*, p.346.

Initially universities made a ritual bow to the Treaty by acknowledging its principles but little else. In 1995, the inclusion of treaty compliance in the first cycle of audits by the New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit obliged universities to develop their understanding of the treaty and its place in the life of the nation. David Woodhouse CEO of the academic audit unit helped them with an extensive paradigm of ‘Audit Factors Relating to the Treaty of Waitangi’. The salient features of treaty compliance pioneered by Woodhouse include:

- Maori participation in decision-making at all levels
- regular consultation with tangata whenua (people of the land)
- iwi (tribal) input into charters and profiles
- visible symbols of Maori culture in an institution
- staff development courses on treaty awareness
- support mechanisms for Maori students
- relevant courses dealing with Maori knowledge and culture
- support for research projects relevant to Maori.¹⁰

Treaty compliance was new territory for tertiary education institutions. Following the first round of general audits, two universities one polytechnic and the Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners commissioned their own audits on treaty compliance. They were interrogated on measures taken to:

- increase recruitment, retention and graduation of Maori students
- provide learning support for Maori students
- recruit Maori staff
- identify students with academic potential for induction as junior staff
- increase Maori participation in governance and management.¹¹

The emancipatory thrust of treaty audits was sanctioned by the Ministry

¹⁰ Woodhouse David, ‘Audit Factors Relating to the Treaty of Waitangi’, *New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Review*, Appendix 2, p.20.

¹¹ Walker, Ranginui, *Review of Maori in the University*, 1998, pp.3-4.

Treaty of Waitangi Review of the University of Otago, 1998, pp.12-26.

Review of Manukau Institute of Technology Compliance on Treaty of Waitangi Obligations, 2001, pp.3-5.

Treaty Audit Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners, 2001, pp.8-10

of Education's Tertiary Education Strategy released in 2002. The Tertiary Education Commission optimistically looked forward to 2007 when:

- Maori will exercise greater authority and responsibility within the tertiary education system
- Maori communities will increasingly engage with a tertiary education system that is more supportive of the Maori world view, and which is inclusive of tikanga Maori (customary practice).¹²

These statements by the commission define the end point of the two-stage strategy initiated by Maori intellectuals to make mainstream tertiary education more user-friendly to Maori students. As indicated earlier, it is still work in progress.

WANANGA

The second stage of Maori taking control over their own education at the tertiary level was initiated by Professor Whatarangi Winiata of Victoria University. On his return from Canada in 1978, Winiata was horrified to learn that his own tribe was facing Benton's dire prognosis of Maori language death. He launched the generation 2000 project with the objective of quadrupling the number of Maori language speakers in his tribe by the turn of the century.

Between 1978 and 1981, Winiata made four submissions to the Government on behalf of his tribe, the Raukawa Marae Trustees, to fund a Maori institute of learning. Notwithstanding that the teaching of courses in Maori language, customs and hapu and iwi history had been started by voluntary staff, they were rebuffed. Undeterred by the unfavourable response, the Raukawa Trustees established Te Wananga o Raukawa, their centre of higher learning at Otaki. In 1984 the wananga began offering its first degree programme, a Bachelor in Maori Administration. Although the degree had no official recognition, the Raukawa Trustees had confidence in the ability of their own people to deliver quality teaching to the students. The objective was to produce bilingual and bicultural administrators capable of working for their own people or in the public service.

¹² Ministry of Education, *Tertiary Education Strategy*, 2002, p.29.

Winiata's vision of establishing a wananga to satisfy Maori educational and cultural aspirations, not adequately met by mainstream tertiary institutions, was validated in 1988 by the educational reforms under *Tomorrow's Schools*. The provision for 'special character schools' and Hawke's recommendation to recognise Maori claims to education as a treaty right, were incorporated in the Education Amendment Act 1990. The act allowed for the establishment of colleges of education, polytechnics, universities and wananga.¹³ The act states:

A wananga is characterised by teaching and research that maintains, advances and disseminates knowledge and develops intellectual independence, and assists the application of knowledge regarding *ahuatanga* Maori (Maori tradition) according to *tikanga* Maori (Maori custom).

Three wananga were accredited by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority under the legislation, Te Wananga o Raukawa (Otaki), Te Wananga o Aotearoa (Te Awamutu) and Te Wananga o Awanuiarangi (Whakatane). Although these three institutions have much in common in relation to 'ahuatanga Maori,' they also have their own distinguishing characteristics.

At Raukawa Winiata focuses on iwi/hapu studies, the socio-political structures of Maori society that were subjugated and damaged by the colonial enterprise of the nineteenth century. Research at this wananga is concentrated on recovery of the suppressed knowledge on iwi and hapu as a contribution to redefining 'ahuatanga Maori'. The research outputs of students are lodged with tribal archives.

For Rongo Wetere at Aotearoa one of the fundamental objectives of the wananga is to increase Maori participation in tertiary education. With ten campuses and 33,000 students, Aotearoa is the largest tertiary institution in New Zealand. It is the most successful institution at recruiting second-chance adult students and stair-casing them on to higher education.

Garry Hook at Awanuiarangi has redefined the objective of the Wananga,

¹³ Walker, Ranginui, op. cit., p.346.

in the two years since his appointment, to become one of the elite providers of tertiary education in New Zealand. As a scientist, Hook has dedicated the Wananga to increase the output of Maori scientists, a gap that was until recently neglected by mainstream universities.

Degree proposals from wananga are subjected to a rigorous process of scrutiny and approval by NZQA. Wananga have to convince a panel of stakeholders in tertiary education, including, polytechnics, colleges of education and universities, that they are capable of teaching degree programmes. The degree requirements laid down by NZQA include:

- capacity to support a degree programme in terms of facilities, resources, and quality management systems
- qualified staff who are engaged in research
- the title aims and learning outcomes of degree proposals are coherent
- appropriate delivery and learning methods
- assessment procedures that are fair, valid and consistent
- student guidance and support systems
- provisions for evaluation and review of programmes
- provision of facilities for research and support for staff engaged in research¹⁴

Although all three wananga have had their degree proposals accredited by NZQA, they do have a problem arising out of their special character regarding '*ahuatanga Maori*'. In this respect wananga are boutique providers of tertiary education. Their core programmes are centred on the recovery and strengthening of Maori language, culture and customary usages damaged by colonialism. Accreditation panels have no problem measuring these against existing degrees in universities. But with the extension of the field into iwi/hapu (tribal) studies and matauranga Maori, (Maori knowledge and epistemology) accreditation becomes more problematic. One wananga has developed a matrix of 10 values for '*ahuatanga Maori*' and requested that the quality of its programmes be audited by NZQA under that matrix.¹⁵ The values are:

¹⁴ NZQA, *Approval and Accreditation of Courses Leading to Degrees and Related Qualifications*, 2003, pp.1-13.

¹⁵ Te Wananga-o-Raukawa, *The Iwi Presence and Governance and Management at Te Wananga-o-Raukawa, Part One*, 2005, p.18.

- Manaakitanga (kindness, generosity, hospitality, care, support)
- Rangatiratanga (chiefly dignity and behaviour marked by *noblesse oblige*)
- Whanaungatanga (kinship, relationships)
- Kotahitanga (unity, sense of group belonging)
- Wairuatanga (spirituality locating man within and not above the natural order)
- Ukaipotanga (nurturing mother, earth mother)
- Pukengatanga (repository of higher learning)
- Kaitiakitanga (guardians, care for the natural order)
- Te Reo Maori (Maori language)
- Whakapapa (genealogy of knowledge, Maori epistemology).

Although the values have a degree of concordance with NZQA requirements in quality assurance, the ways in which some of them are expressed in the pedagogy and management of wananga far exceed NZQA requirements. Three examples of whanaungatanga, wairuatanga and manaakitanga serve to illustrate the point of cultural difference.

Whanaungatanga, for example locates an individual within the kin groupings of whanau, (extended family) hapu (clan) and iwi (tribe). It was this kinship nexus that Winiata invoked to establish Te Wananga o Raukawa. Whanaunga (kinsmen) with high level tertiary qualifications gave their services free of charge to establish the teaching programme for the wananga. Although the Wananga is now a fully funded institution, there is still a large pool of whanaunga on the roster as kaiawhina (guest lecturers).

Wairuatanga for instance, has been invoked to generate ‘te kawa o te ako’ the protocol of learning as a tapu, (sacred) undertaking in the manner of the ancient schools of learning. This means that the mind must be kept clear of the polluting effects of drugs and alcohol. Wairuatanga has also been used to invoke ohaki, the last testament of a staff member dying from cancer to persuade staff to vote for a smoke-free campus.

In the event of student bereavement, manaakitanga triggers a whole nexus of Maori mortuary practices from staff and students. These include whaikorere, (eulogies) waiata, (laments) collecting koha, (monetary gift

for funeral expenses) escorting the bereaved student back to their home marae for the tangi (funeral) and a formal welcome back when they return to class. These practices far exceed what is demanded by way of student support in mainstream TEIs.

The problem of cultural difference in values, by way of quality assurance, is compounded when a degree proposal is submitted in the Maori language. In this case NZQA has to rely on the expertise of an all-Maori accreditation panel. In February 2005 Te Wananga o Raukawa submitted a degree proposal in early childhood education in the Maori language. It was the first degree accreditation conducted entirely in Maori. The report, submitted to the Wananga in Maori had to be translated for NZQA the accrediting body.

As the wananga expanded their degree programmes into education, science and business, the NZQA requirements became a straitjacket constricting the expression of '*ahuatanga Maori*' in terms of the ten values matrix. In attempting to meet the requirements of NZQA in a degree proposal for a Bachelor of Maori Business for example, the proponents often end up with a 'me too' look about their degree. But as Maori extend matauranga Maori into these domains, as they are doing in teacher training and pre-school education, then it becomes apparent that the NZQA paradigm for assessing wananga degrees is outmoded. Consequently, Te Taihuhu o Nga Waka, a consortium of the three wananga is proposing that NZQA devolve power to accredit degrees to a Wananga Qualifications Validation Authority. A precedent has already been set for that to happen by the devolution of quality assurance functions in polytechnics to APNZ, the Association of Polytechnics in New Zealand.¹⁶

Legislation for a Wananga Qualifications Validation Authority is currently in draft form, pending an appointment with the Minister of Education. In the meantime Te Taihuhu o Nga Wananga is pressing ahead through WINHEC, the World Indigenous Consortium on Higher Education, to establish an international indigenous system for quality assurance and degree accreditation. To this end, a panel from America, Hawaii, Australia and New Zealand was convened in July 2004 at the three wananga. The panel considered the draft document Guidelines for

¹⁶ NZQA, op. cit., p.51.

Accreditation of Indigenous Higher Education Programmes. The panel interrogated three programmes, one from each wananga using the guidelines. A pre-school training programme derived entirely from Maori (indigenous) epistemology received the highest rating.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, quality in higher education for Maori people means the inclusion and reproduction of their own language, culture and whakapapa (epistemology) in the curriculum of both mainstream tertiary institutions and wananga. Implicit in this project for wananga, is matching quality assurance requirements as defined by NZQA. But in the development of their pedagogy since their inception in 1992, wananga have defined 'ahuatanga Maori' in such a manner that they have outgrown the NZQA framework. Wananga have become a cultural vehicle in their own right for the reproduction and transmission of 'ahuatanga Maori'. The next stage in their development is the delivery of quality assurance in terms of indigenous epistemology in the international arena. The establishment of WINHEC is a step in that direction.