

MĀUI TINIHANGA

Transformation through education

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Abstract

The Māui Mua project investigated the experiences of six taura Māori graduates who were the first in their whānau to enter tertiary education. Successful graduates of the Bachelor of Māori Language and Indigenous Studies at Te Puna Wānaka at Ara Institute of Canterbury Ltd (Ara) were interviewed about their learning experience, from their first day through to graduating, and commented on their motivation to study, their times of struggle and pressure, and their supports and strategies to overcome barriers to successfully complete their qualification. The learning experiences of taura Māori were analysed using a framework informed by the Māui narrative. An outcome of this analysis was a better understanding of key factors that influence the learning journey at Ara for taura Māori. In addition, the findings of this study informed the Māui Te Taura pastoral support and mentoring programme and teaching practice at Ara, and guided programme design and delivery to support Māori achievement.

Keywords

equitable, frameworks, learning journey, Māui Mua, taura, Te Whare Tapa Whā

Introduction

The vision of Ara Institute of Canterbury Ltd (Ara) is to transform lives through education. For taura Māori, this is embodied in the Ara

Framework for Māori Achievement (Ara Institute of Canterbury Ltd, 2020). The framework outlines a range of principles leading to taura Māori success. Success for taura Māori is about achieving

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equality in educational outcomes, being confident in their culture, engaging with Māori frameworks of knowledge in the learning journey, finding meaningful employment with equitable incomes, and contributing towards an equitable society (Prendergast-Tarena & Mahara, 2020).

To achieve taura success at Ara, Māui Te Taura, a pastoral support and mentoring programme at Ara, was developed. It is a philosophical approach to guide programme design, delivery, taura support and development. It arose out of the need for an Ara mātauranga Māori model that would draw all the individual Māori initiatives at Ara together. The programme uses peer mentoring to create models of culturally specific learning spaces where Māori values and tikanga are central to learning. In the model, learners are socially and academically connected to support through regular contact with academic staff, role models and peers (Winitana, 2012). The literature advises that such a model requires strong input and oversight from staff knowledgeable in tikanga (Bishop et al., 2007).

A further potential outcome of Māui Te Taura is that it will become part of the Ara fabric of programme design, delivery, taura support and development because of the potential benefit to all taura and staff. The Māui Mua project informed one aspect of this culturally responsive provision, namely, the connections between the cultural narratives of Māui and the lived experiences of recent Māori Ara Graduates.

Review of literature

Māui Te Taura responds to national and regional strategy documents, namely, the *Māori Strategy of Ka Hikitia* (Ministry of Education, 2013), the *Tertiary Education Strategy 2014–2019* (Ministry of Education, 2014) and, locally, Ngai Tahu's workforce development strategy (Prendergast-Tarena & Mahara, 2020).

In 2004, G. Smith argued that for education to achieve transformational outcomes, learning needed to be informed by the cultural preferences of Māori in response to their critical circumstance (p. 51). This notion of culturally responsive pedagogies and practices has been consistently identified in literature as fundamental to Māori doing well in educational settings (Chauvel & Rean, 2012; Webber et al., 2021).

Māori researchers have reported that culturally responsive practice includes demonstrating to taura that they are cared for, valued and believed in (Greenhalgh et al., 2011; Tomoana, 2012); incorporating taura knowledge and experiences

in teaching and learning; and facilitating early engagement with parents and whānau to welcome and encourage their active involvement in, and support for, taura learning. Furthermore, staff need to actively demonstrate their belief in Māori learners' abilities, and support and encourage learners to progress and to succeed (Macfarlane, 2015).

Māui Mua used a framework derived from the Māui narrative (Robinson, 2008) and "The Hero's Journey" (Campbell, 1968). The project targets the internal journey undertaken by taura in their learning, how they surround themselves with supportive people, how they equip themselves for success, and how they navigate and confront a new status quo. Narratives are powerful tools evoking deep learning through archetypes, myth and metaphor (Campbell, 1968). Narratives for Māori are traditional messages of inspiration and of tikanga gifted by tipuna (Webber et al., 2021; Winitana, 2012). The deeds of Māui come from ancient Māui mythology. As the youngest brother, Māui had a tempestuous relationship with his older brothers, but he managed to negotiate and mediate certain positions so that they achieved the wondrous tasks recited in Māui's genealogy (Winitana, 2012).

The framework used in Māui Mua follows the journey of a learner similar to Māui and can be described in a cycle (see Figure 1). It begins in the ordinary/normal realm, Te Ao, but the quest passes through to the unknown world, Te Kore. There is a call to adventure, Te Whakatika ki te Haere, or challenge put before the learner. To continue the journey, the taura require assistance from someone older or wiser—a mentor, Te Kāhu Kōrako—which enables them to cross the threshold from their normal home into the unfamiliar adventure known as Te Uruuru Whenua (entering the unknown). In this realm, taura often experience Ngā Taero a Tūtekoropanga (trials and failure), which with the appropriate support and motivation leads to Te Aranga Ake (rebirth) and Te Whai Hua (revelation) of how to overcome the trials and move forward. At this stage of the journey, taura re-enter Te Ao, having "redeemed" their view of themselves as able to succeed (Te Puāwaitanga). With this new knowledge and understanding, taura have "returned" (Te Hokinga) and apply their learning as they embark on the next Te Whakatika ki te Haere.

At Ara, education is the context for this journey. Education is often the site of struggle for the redevelopment and transformation of Māori (G. Smith, 2004). By using the culturally preferred



FIGURE 1 The Māui Cycle created by Hemi Hoskins and Hūmarie Chick for the Māui Te Taura mentoring programme journal (2020).

pedagogy of storytelling (G. Smith, 2004; Webber et al., 2021), the project enacts culturally appropriate responses and investigates the connections between recent graduates' lived experiences and the guiding process outlined in the Māui narrative. This will lead to better understanding of how taura engage with their transformation and learning journey. It will also inform educators about how to foster the attributes of learners to further their success within tertiary education in Waitaha.

Another Māori framework that contributes to understanding the taura journey is Te Whare Tapa Whā (Durie, 1994). Te Whare Tapa Whā was designed as a Māori Health model and has been extensively adapted and explored within education as a holistic approach to responding to ākonga. The model is based on the metaphor of a whare, whose four walls and the roof form a holistic view of a person and each part of the building represents a dimension of a person's overall hauora.

The model was groundbreaking in that it drew on more than physical wellness as a consideration in health care and incorporated the World Health Organization's definition overlooked in mainstream health of health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not

merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (as cited in Durie, 1994, p. 69). Thus, the model included four dimensions: taha wairua, taha hinengaro, taha tinana and taha whānau (p. 70). The assumption is that if one part of the whare is compromised, the whole structure will be compromised, or, to frame a more balanced view of health, to "ensure strength and symmetry" (p.70).

Ako Aotearoa (2012) provides an adapted version of Te Whare Tapa Whā for use in tertiary education to support Māori learner success. This model holds to the four dimensions developed in Durie's (1994) original model. More recently, a fifth dimension has emerged in the model: taha whenua (Health Navigator, 2020). This accords with Durie's (1994) original explanation of taha wairua, in which spirituality and the connection between people and the environment are inextricably linked. In this later model, the whenua dimension is the ground on which the whare sits, thus making the environment the foundation on which hauora is built (see Figure 2).

For Māui Mua, the five-dimensional model of Te Whare Tapa Whā was also included in the exploration of the graduates' journey to better understand how they were able to establish their

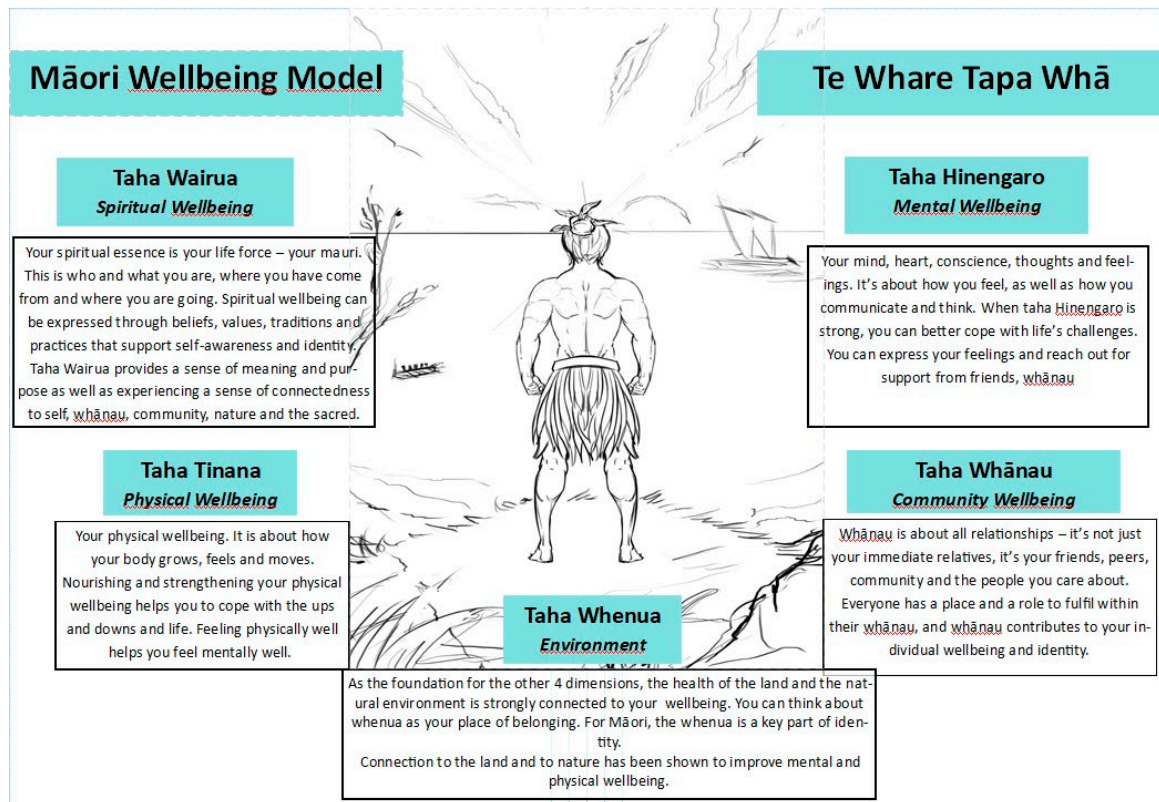


FIGURE 2 Te Whare Tapa Whā, adapted by Hemi Hoskins and Hūmarie Chick for Māui te Tauria

foundations in the whenua in order to ensure the balance of the other four dimensions so that they would achieve success as first-generation Māori tertiary graduates. Previous studies have shown factors that hinder and facilitate Māori learner success in tertiary settings (Greenhalgh et al., 2011; Theodore et al., 2017); however, this study situates itself in a deliberate positive outlook, as in Durie's (1994) holistic view, to explore the use of the Māui narratives in developing frameworks for tauria success within the Ara context. This project seeks to contribute to culturally mediated education provision in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Methodology

The Māui Mua (Graduate Interviews) research project was designed as a qualitative inquiry using a case study (Punch, 2009; Yin, 2009). A case study methodology helps discover causal relationships and understand how and why everything has happened in a certain way (Yin, 2009). As in this project, case studies aim to develop an in-depth understanding of a real-life situation by identifying initial questions that determine the data methods and collection strategies (Punch, 2009).

The theoretical framework for the data

collection and analysis strategies (George & Bennett, 2005; Yin, 1994) came from a framework informed by Joseph Campbell's (1968) *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, the Māui narrative (Robinson, 2008) and Te Whare Tapa Whā (Durie, 1994).

The Māui Cycle (see Figure 1) provided a structure for the interview questions and initial analysis, enabling checking of themes and patterns to emerge. Te Whare Tapa Whā (Durie, 1994) was also used to analyse and synthesise the data.

As appropriate for a case study methodology, the primary data were derived from semi-structured interviews 45–60 minutes in length. Questions were asked relating to the interviewees' learning experiences, including the challenges they faced and the skills and attributes they needed to succeed. The interviews were conducted kanohi ki te kanohi and were voice recorded. The interviews were transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis.

Purposeful sampling (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; L. Smith, 2012) was used to identify the cohort for the research. Because of the nature of the research aims and questions, the interviewees were tauria Māori, first-generation learners, who

graduated with a Māori language degree from Ara and were willing to articulate their learning journey, its challenges and how they overcame them. The interviewees graduated three to seven years ago, so their learning experiences were still current and they have had opportunities to further develop. Given the small sample, it was envisaged that 6–10 participants would accept invitations to be part of this project. Possible research participants were identified through staff knowledge and student records via appropriate institutional sources. Possible participants were contacted by email and by follow-up phone call.

Given the small sample, generalisability was interpreted as the deepening of understanding of the learner journey in relation to the Māui narrative and the benefit this brought to the education. Elliott and Lukeš (2008) say that the benefit of this type of research increases the “power of the community to which the research belongs” (p. 94).

Findings

The reporting of findings focuses on the themes that emerged from the thematic analysis of the interview data. The study revealed common themes in relation to the Māui Te Taura cycle and Te Whare Tapa Whā (Durie, 1994).

Te whakatika ki te haere: The call and motivations for study

The key motivations to study for the taura interviewed included needing to learn or reconnect with te reo ōna tikanga, to gain a qualification, to support whānau and tamariki, and to regain cultural identity for themselves and their whānau:

I wanted to find out more about me. About my Māori side. Dad is Māori but he doesn't know anything. So he couldn't really help that way so I just thought I had to do it for me. And the most inspirational thing was my son. Doing it for him. (Taura 1)

... I think during the time I didn't have any connection to ... like you know like my Māori side. (Taura 2)

... all of that culminated in me started here to get my reo ... I was on a path where this was necessary and at the same time I think because I was older and a parent and surrounded by younger ones who were struggling as well, I felt like it was important for me. (Taura 4)

I was sort of challenging myself to understand my own whakapapa, being a displaced urban Māori,

also realising actually what I needed personally and that was about my identity and feeling connected to a Kaupapa Māori space. (Taura 5)

Te kāhu kōrako: Supports and mentors

It was found that the taura interviewed needed many forms of support to be successful in their study. Key supports mentioned were classmates—tuakana and teina, kaiako, learning advisors and kaitaunaki Māori:

I did turn to my uncle a lot because he's the only one really connected to that side. So he was probably a big support and help throughout it. (Taura 1)

I have never written like an academic essay ... it is important to have good solid group of friends, friends, that support and you are all on the same journey ... Like relationship building, like being able to talk to people, like create connections. (Taura 2)

I was able to bring my baby to class because that is like the crucial part for me. (Taura 3)

However, there were great support systems like learning services, like the tutors, like the tuakana. We established a study group so that we could support each other. That meant also too that at the end of the day, I wasn't getting in my car and going home; I was going to the library to study, because that's where we all were. So I set up little oasis for myself, little kāinga. (Taura 4)

I'm not too scared to ask for help, so being able to connect into learning services a number of times was really useful ... and also having some key fellow hoa mahi that could actually help out as well, so it became very much a whānau kind of approach to some of the aspects of the study. (Taura 6)

Ngā taero a tūtekoropanga: Key barriers

Key struggles for learners were personal, whānau issues and other commitments to work due to financial struggles and juggling study and work. Other barriers included health problems, injuries, mental health and death in whānau. Lack of personal support systems and difficulties with academic skills led to a loss of confidence, feelings of inadequacy and whakamā:

... because I was going through a lot at the time ... coming into Ara was really daunting and it is kind of like whakamā to say you don't know how to write an essay ... I felt like I jumped off the waka for a wee bit ... I felt like I was sinking. (Taura 1)

Oh, sometimes I just wanted to quit ... because sometimes I didn't have that support from my family ... So with having a kid was really hard, he was only two ... it was really tough because you know we had the likes of having a house and having those bills and rent and stuff. (Taurira 2)

Well, I'm not going to lie, there was a couple of times when I was like, man, I should just go, like I should actually just drop out, like it would probably be easier for everyone. (Taurira 3)

... put quite a lot of pressure on, because I was trying to understand my material at the same time as I was trying to explain it in te reo Māori. (Taurira 4)

... before I started building some of these resilience factors for myself, in the past I would have just flagged it, I would have gone, no, it is too hard, this isn't for me. (Taurira 4)

... when I injured myself, quite badly and I actually did want to quit, actually made an appointment with ... to withdraw and actually he just told me to suck it up. (Taurira 6)

Te aranga ake: Getting back on the waka

Taurira talked about the support that helped them to keep on studying in spite of being tempted to give up when feeling the struggles were too overwhelming:

I always knew there was support here. Especially with kaiako ... I suppose I was just whakamā and didn't want to let others know that I need a hand. (Taurira 1)

... moving past the struggles when falling off the waka, what helped getting back on was support from other learners and tuakana, kaiako giving clear and consistent expectations and support from kaiako with some tough love too, te mātauranga Māori and Te Puna Wānaka providing whānau network and a safe haven for taurira to connect culturally to who they are. (Taurira 4)

Ka whai hua: Transformations in the journey

Key transformations in the taurira learning journey that connect strongly to each aspect of Te Whare Tapa Whā (Durie, 1994) included building connections and relationships (taha whānau), developing language and leadership skills, developing cultural competency skills around karanga, tikanga marae

and pōwhiri (taha wairua), employing a Māori world view and using it to navigate life (taha hinengaro), and developing academic skills such as reading and writing and time management and planning. Personal transformations valued by taurira were increased self-awareness, expanding relationships and networks, and increased confidence to engage with Māori kaupapa and becoming grounded in cultural identity (taha whenua):

But when I came out of it, I came out—what do you call it?—proud to be Māori. Not ashamed to be and I think—I look at Māori different from when I started to when I finished. You know feeling some of the mamae that they get. You know that you see Māori being portrayed in media and stuff like that. It opened my eyes a lot more, so yeah, I'd go from being not connected to fully connected yeah. (Taurira 1)

...a lot of my time studying, I think I grew more working here, like the working side of it. Because I had the tools, like the language and an understanding of the culture, but I didn't truly like blossom into the skills ... utilising the skills until I was put into a position where I had to use them and that was teaching ... I am just so proud of myself that I can put it into a Māori perspective. (Taurira 2)

By like having ... feeling like there was a lack of connection, say, to like my whakapapa and my knowledge gave the drive to actually keep going and to go harder ... I think it just made me even more like empathetic but able to navigate that in a way, so I would say like my, not communication skills, but like those personable skills of like uplifting other people and not being a dick about it. (Taurira 3)

Yes, yeah, yes it did, so my world expanded ... that's te reo Māori operating all around me all the time and that was, oh, suddenly I am part of that. That was really cool. It opened up all sorts of interesting worlds for me, like Māori theatre and education and all sorts of stuff ... I would absolutely treasure everything that I learnt here and gained here. ... so this is the home that taught me how to be at home. (Taurira 4)

Yeah, so much more connected now, I felt like I wasn't just acquiring a language, I was acquiring navigational skills and an understanding of the world that I come from ... I have been to the Hokianga twice and met my whānau ... I have

relationships with the leadership of my hapū ... I feel very culturally connected about that ... leadership role in my iwi at home here in Christchurch. (Taura 4)

Yeah, I think I have just learnt to embrace who I am a little bit more and just own it and if I am caught in a space where it is not comfortable or where I don't feel safe, I will call it how it is now ... Where I didn't think I had the language before coming here to do that, so now I feel like I'm equipped, and I can just be like, nah, that is not how we are going to roll ... and planning has been something that has been transferred into my mahi. Started becoming more engaged than I had ever ... we also did a family reunion back at our marae, which we had never done either and I was a huge driver to do that, because a lot of the time we go back and are not really for the good occasions, so I wanted to create those memories and to do that was to actually go back ... yeah, I want to do it again hopefully. (Taura 5)

In terms of my community connections, they have definitely developed, and I have still got obviously the old networks but now feeling somewhat more comfortable moving into a kaupapa Māori space. So after studying, being able to move into a kaupapa Māori mental health provider, which then actually helped me to connect into some other providers and so a sort of snowballing effect. So, the connection to those, bridging of those both worlds has been really useful, and I suppose I use that analogy often is that being Pākehā and Māori, I actually have the ... the space of being able to connect two worlds ... in my current experience working in another kaupapa Māori space. (Taura 6)

Te hokinga: Graduate destinations and continued impacts of the learning

Since graduating, all taura interviewed have moved into Māori professions. They have connected with education, youth development and community organisations. They have also connected with whānau, iwi, hapū, marae, kaupapa Māori communities and kapa haka taura here.

Discussion

The findings of this project show that the taura interviewed progressed from not knowing to knowing and transformed from struggling learners to confident leaders, whether within whānau, the workplace or the community. The taura journey aligned with the hero's journey (Campbell,

1968) embodied in the Māui narrative (Robinson, 2008) and Māui Te Taura programme (Figure 1). The taura had many motivations for beginning their learning for the degree and responding to the call—Te Whakatika ki te Haere. The taura spoke of being close to falling off the waka and the challenges and barriers they faced—Ngā Taero a Tūtekoropanga. They shared what helped them overcome trials and to get back on the waka—Te Whai Hua—including the support they needed from each other, kaiako and learning advisors. Culturally appropriate assistance was pivotal for ensuring taura academic success (Watkins et al., 2022). The taura described their transformation in relation to kaupapa Māori and mātauranga Māori approaches. This research is comparable to the literature about Māori pedagogies and practices that have been consistently identified as fundamental to Māori doing well in tertiary settings (Chauvel & Rean, 2012; G. Smith, 2004; Webber et al., 2021).

It is evident that all taura were close to dropping out of study, showing the need for increased wraparound support for taura Māori to be successful graduates (Watkins et al., 2022). Education is a confronting journey (G. Smith, 2004), and increased targeted assistance is needed. This project explored a three-year taura transformation in which pastoral care was provided using kaupapa Māori and mātauranga Māori approaches. The achievements of the taura interviewed validate mātauranga Māori tikanga, and this also means heightened support is needed in terms of aspects of Te Whare Tapa Whā, to ensure the same valuable results if Māori taura are studying in shorter programmes or studying in programmes without mātauranga Māori approaches.

Conclusion

This project sought to contribute to the body of culturally responsive practice and pedagogy in several ways. First, it explored the Ara taura Māori graduate journey and thus is responsive to the critical circumstances that underpin that journey (G. Smith, 2004). The focus was on Māori graduates who were the first in their whānau to succeed in tertiary education. These graduates provided the perspective of breaking ground in their whānau and, therefore, provided valuable experience and insight on how they navigated the learner journey, how they equipped themselves for success and who they surrounded themselves with to support their success. Secondly, the findings contribute profoundly to a deeper understanding of Joseph Campbell's hero's journey in relation

to the narratives of Māui and how this connects to the learning journey at Ara. The interviews showed that the experience of the taura paralleled the essence of the Māui Te Taura programme as a process of self-discovery and awareness that can support learners in navigating the journey in tertiary study.

Therefore, there is an imperative in tertiary study to raise the visibility and use of mātauranga Māori, Māori pedagogies and tikanga to identify the benefits of this for taura and staff, not only at Ara, but at all tertiary providers.

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Glossary

ākonga	learners
haka	vigorous dances with actions and rhythmically shouted words
hapū	subtribe
hauora	wellbeing
hinengaro	thoughts and feelings, mind, psychological
hoa mahi	classmate
iwi	tribe
kaiako	mentor, teacher
kāinga	home
kaitaunaki	advocate
kanohi ki te kanohi	face to face
kapa haka	a group or team performing haka
karanga	ceremonial call, welcome call
kaupapa Māori	Māori research methods
ka whai hua	revelation
mahi	work
mamae	pain, hurt, wound
marae	tribal meeting grounds
mātauranga Māori	Māori knowledge
ngā taero a tūtekoropanga	trials and failure
Pākehā	a person of predominantly European descent
pōwhiri	welcome ceremony
taha	side
tamariki	children

taura	student, learner
taura here	urban-based iwi
Te Ao Mārama	the known realm
te aranga ake	the rebirth
te hokinga	the return
teina	younger sibling
te kāhu kōrako	meeting the mentor
Te Kore	the unknown realm
te reo Māori	the Māori language
te reo ōna tikanga	the Māori language and its customs
te whakatika ki te haere	the call to adventure
tikanga	associated practices of social position and responsibilities
tinihanga	trickster; change
tinana	physical, body
tīpuna	ancestors
tuakana	elder sibling
wairua	spiritual, spirit, soul
Waitaha	Canterbury
waka	canoe
whakamā	shy, ashamed, shame
whakapapa	genealogy, ancestry, familial relationships
whānau	family
whare	house
whenua	land, territory, environment

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