REFLECTIONS AND LESSONS OF A NON-MĀORI STUDENT WORKING IN A KAUPAPA MĀORI RESEARCH SPACE

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Abstract

I am part of the research group Te Koronga, a Māori Postgraduate Research Excellence rōpū at the University of Otago. Te Koronga conducts research with a vision of mauri ora and is underpinned by a Kaupapa Māori philosophy. For the past six years, under the supervision of Associate Professor Anne-Marie Jackson and Professor Chris Hepburn, I have worked alongside Kāti Huirapa ki Puketeraki of Kāi Tahu and Te Aitanga a Mate of Ngāti Porou primarily in the context of customary fisheries management. For me, as a non-Māori student and researcher, Te Koronga has been a safe space to engage in te ao Māori and Kaupapa Māori research. This paper describes my reflections and explains the lessons I have learned as a non-Māori researcher working in a Kaupapa Māori space.

Keywords

Introduction

Nō Netherlands ōku tūpuna,
Nō Awherika ki te Tonga ahau,
Ko Ōtepoti tōku kāinga ināianei,
Ko Jan de Groot rāua ko Pieter van Halderen ōku koro,
Ko Joan de Groot rāua ko Anna van Halderen ōku kuia,
Ko Caroline rāua ko Andre ōku mātua,
Ko Karen tōku tuakana,
Ko Nick tōku māhanga,
Ko Lisa van Halderen tōku ingoa

I am part of the research group Te Koronga, a Māori Postgraduate Research Excellence rōpū at the University of Otago, which at the time I undertook this research was co-directed by my PhD supervisor Associate Professor Anne-Marie Jackson (Ngāti Whātua), and Dr Chanel Phillips (Ngāti Hine, Ngāpuhi). Te Koronga conducts research with a vision of mauri ora and is underpinned by a Kaupapa Māori philosophy. For the past six years, under the supervision of Anne-Marie and Dr Chris Hepburn, I have worked alongside Kāti Huirapa ki Puketeraki of Kāi Tahu and Te Aitanga a Mate of Ngāti Porou, primarily in the context of customary fisheries management. This work was also under the research group Te Tiaki Mahinga Kai (TMK), which connects kaitiaki, scientists and those interested in mahinga kai to support the practice of kaitiakitanga

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(TMK, 2019). For me as a non-Māori student, Te Koronga has been a safe space to engage in te ao Māori and Kaupapa Māori research. It is a space where we have the privilege of working alongside Māori communities to do work that is community led, is meaningful and, most importantly, uplifts Māori aspirations.

Western research frameworks, which dominate our research institutes in Aotearoa New Zealand, dismiss Indigenous knowledge and, as a result, fail to consider the needs and aspirations of Indigenous peoples (Mikahere-Hall, 2017). There has been a long history of non-Indigenous researchers working with Indigenous peoples in exploitative ways that has led to negative outcomes for Māori and other Indigenous peoples (L. T. Smith, 2012; Walker et al., 2006). Kaupapa Māori theory and methodology is a philosophy that recognises, promotes and centres te ao Māori, te reo Māori, mātauranga Māori, and the experiences and lived realities of Māori communities (Mikahere-Hall, 2017; L. T. Smith, 2012). By using Kaupapa Māori theory and methodology, Māori researchers have been able to exercise tino rangatiratanga by privileging a Māori worldview. Kaupapa Māori research practices have challenged the harmful discourses that invalidate mātauranga Māori and oppose the exploitative way Māori have been researched by non-Māori researchers (Walker et al., 2006). Mercier describes Kaupapa Māori as "one of the most important decolonising actions in Aotearoa to date" (Kiddle et al., 2020, p. 71).

Kaupapa Māori research is considered to be by Māori for Māori, and some argue that "being Māori, identifying as Māori and as a Māori researcher, is a critical element of Kaupapa Māori" (Ahuriri-Driscoll et al., 2007; L. T. Smith, 2012, p. 188). This suggests that, by definition, non-Māori are excluded from Kaupapa Māori research (Jones, 2012). However, L. T. Smith (2012) wrote that "a non-indigenous can be involved in Kaupapa Māori research, but not on their own; and if they were involved in such research, they would have ways of positioning themselves as a non-indigenous person" (p. 186). Jones (2012) and Barnes (2013) have written about their experiences as Pākehā researchers working in Kaupapa Māori education research. Jones (2012) stated, "I point out that the 'for Māori, by Māori' principle of Kaupapa Māori can be seen as a definitional statement, and primarily a political statement of Māori inclusion rather than Pākehā exclusion" (p. 100). Bishop (1994) argued that non-Māori are obligated under Te Tiriti o Waitangi to support Māori research and can be allies and research colleagues (Bishop,

1994; L. T. Smith, 2012). Non-Māori citizens of Aotearoa, which I have been since 2004, are tangata Tiriti, and with the right to live in this country come obligations and responsibilities that we have to uphold, including Māori tino rangatiratanga, so that we can stand in the mana of this relationship.

In 1840, two treaties were signed to lay out the terms of the relationship between tangata whenua and the Crown—Te Tiriti o Waitangi (te Tiriti) in te reo Māori and The Treaty of Waitangi (the Treaty) in English (Sorrenson, 1989). Conflicts have arisen because of differences between the two documents as they relate to sovereignty and governance; however, by signing te Tiriti, Māori rangatira never ceded sovereignty (Amundsen & Newcombe, 2022; Showden et al., 2022; Waitangi Tribunal, 2014). The Crown has continuously privileged the Treaty, rather than te Tiriti, and in doing so denied Māori their sovereignty (Showden et al., 2022). As Pākehā, we have also failed to uphold our obligations, including through our complicity in colonisation, our inaction in the face of institutional racism, our resistance to te ao and te reo Māori, our refusal to properly pronounce or adopt Māori place names, and our indifference to inequities in our healthcare system (Came et al., 2019; Kiddle et al., 2020).

Amundsen and Newcombe (2022) described the transformation from "passive Pākehā" to "active tangata Tiriti" by way of two concepts—truth and reconciliation (p. 2). The authors described acknowledgement of the truth in our relationship as Pākehā with Māori, which they say comprises notions of "pain", "honesty" and "knowing oneself" (p. 8). The concept of pain includes feelings of guilt, anger and remorse when learning about our role in colonisation; honesty revolves around engaging in conversations with Māori or family members to understand their perspectives; and knowing oneself includes an exploration of self, of our own behaviour and acknowledgement of our privilege. The authors also discussed examples of reconciliation: acknowledging our shared history, pronouncing Māori words correctly, reading books written by Māori authors, volunteering with or supporting Māori communities, challenging and educating peers on history and racism, teaching our children about te Tiriti, respecting Māori spaces, and power sharing by using our voting voice to promote Māori interests.

Many of these sentiments were also discussed during a webinar called *Supercharge your Tauiwi-tanga* (Irving, 2021). Catherine Delahunty explained how there is no blueprint for being tangata Tiriti and it requires ongoing reflection on our

power and privilege to action change. The speakers discussed the importance of allowing space for our understanding of tangata Tiriti to evolve but that ultimately it was about building relationships, and part of that was resolving conflict, owning our mistakes and still remaining committed. Emily Beausoleil also discussed how it was important for us as tangata Tiriti to acknowledge where we have come from and to stand with honesty in our own identity. The term tangata Tiriti is an identity inclusive of all non-Māori citizens of Aotearoa and allows conversations around relationships with Māori to not just be dominated by Pākehā (Irving, 2021). Tina Ngata's aunt reminded us to stand in our own identity when she said "stop trying to be Maori, I don't need you to be Maori—I've got that covered. I need you to be a good treaty partner" (as cited in Ngata, 2020, para. 2).

From my understanding, being tangata Tiriti is about acknowledging our past, reflecting on and challenging our present, and committing to a future in which we honour Māori sovereignty and develop our own identity alongside our relationships with Māori, despite how difficult it is. Social responsibility and notions of justice and fairness in society often come from documents such as treaties, and therefore, honouring te Tiriti is not only a political obligation and responsibility, but a personal and professional one too (Murray, 2002; Showden et al., 2022; Yensen, 1989). These obligations and responsibilities apply to the way I conduct myself not only as a researcher but as a citizen of Aotearoa.

At present, calls are being made for changes to the research, science and innovation sector in Aotearoa (see Kukutai et al., 2021). By moving towards a Te Tiriti-led approach that values mātauranga Māori, conversations around the role non-Māori researchers have in Kaupapa Māori research are going to happen. While the accounts of Jones (2012) and Barnes (2013) have been useful for me in developing my own positionality in my research, these researchers have been limited by the institutional expectations placed on them. Jones, for example, "was advised by senior colleagues not to work closely with Māori because she would 'lose control' over her work" (Barnes, 2013, p. 21). As a student, I do not experience the same pressures as those acting in a professional capacity and have been protected by the leadership of Anne-Marie and Te Koronga. I have found no account of experiences from the perspective of a non-Māori student who is part of a Kaupapa Māori research rōpū. This paper is a timely contribution to the conversation of non-Māori researchers working in a Kaupapa Māori research space.

Aim

This paper describes my reflections and explains the lessons I have learned as a non-Māori researcher working within a Kaupapa Māori research space. These reflections are based on research I have conducted in the context of fisheries management and the coastal environment in my capacity as a student in the Master of Science programme and as a research assistant employed by the University of Otago, TMK and Te Koronga. These projects have included understanding kaitiaki perspectives of rāhui as a fisheries management tool, surveys of taonga species in customary protection areas (taiāpure and mātaitai), and a water safety programme.

While I journey through this space, I feel uncomfortable saying that my mahi has been Kaupapa Māori research. While I know the kaupapa and intention of my work is to uplift Māori aspirations through community-led projects in te taiao, given the "by Māori" standpoint of Kaupapa Māori research, it might be more comfortable for me to describe it as working in a Kaupapa Māori research space, working alongside Māori communities or engaging in te ao Māori. When I say working in a Kaupapa Māori research space, I mean that rather than working as an independent researcher, I do this mahi as part of a group of researchers who engage in Kaupapa Māori research.

Setting the scene

In this section I briefly describe my Master of Science research and my role as a research assistant. Later, I will discuss how I approached my research as a non-Māori working with Māori communities and describe how I applied Kaupapa Māori principles in my research.

Master of Science

In 2019, I completed a Master of Science at the University of Otago that investigated rāhui as a fisheries management tool from the perspective of kaitiaki, practitioners of kaitiakitanga (van Halderen, 2020). This research topic was developed over time through conversations with my supervisors, Chris and Anne-Marie, and the chairman of the East Otago Taiāpure Management Committee (EOTMC), Mr Brendan Flack. To gather data, I used the qualitative methods of wānanga and semi-structured interviews in the context of two case study locations, Whareponga and the East Otago Taiāpure (EOT).

Research assistant

Since 2016, I have been employed as a research assistant by the University of Otago, TMK and Te Koronga. During this period of employment, I have supported kaitiaki in the management of customary protection areas by conducting surveys of taonga species to provide a scientific assessment of the state of the fishery. This mahi has included baseline surveys of Moeraki Mātaitai in 2016 to support Te Rūnanga o Moeraki; baseline surveys of Te Ahi Tarakihi and Tūhawaiki Mātaitai in 2018 to support Arowhenua Rūnanga; baseline surveys in Akaroa Taiāpure in 2018 to support the rūnaka of Ōnuku, Wairewa and Koukourarata; and repeat surveys of the EOT in 2016 and 2021 to support the EOTMC and Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki. I have also been a teaching assistant for a field-based course at Puketeraki Marae, where students conducted research projects to address concerns of the EOTMC and Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki, and have been support staff on a Māori approach to water safety programme that was guided by the Wai Puna model developed by Chanel Phillips (Phillips, 2020).

Developing my research approach

The approach taken in my research drew on my understanding of the key Kaupapa Māori principles described by G. H. Smith (1992) and others. Even though there are limitations to my use of Kaupapa Māori theory, as a non-Māori conducting research with Indigenous communities, it is my responsibility to put time and effort into understanding the history of colonisation in Aotearoa, and how it has impacted Māori, particularly in the context of research (L. T. Smith, 2012). There are, and always will be, limitations to my understanding and interpretation of te ao Māori and Kaupapa Māori research as I do not share the lived experience of identifying as Māori nor whakapapa Māori. I have expanded my understanding through the use of Kaupapa Māori principles in my research, and the guidance and support of Anne-Marie and my research group. In our weekly Te Koronga hui, we frequently have sessions in which we learn karakia, or explore and write about different atua, pūrākau and whakataukī that relate to our research. In my own time, I read as much as I can on tikanga (e.g., Mead, 2003), pepeha (e.g., Mead & Grove, 2003) and pūrākau (e.g., Ihimaera, 2020), and I have started my te reo Māori journey through the online classes offered by Tōku Reo (http://www.tokureo.maori.nz/) and the book *Māori Made Easy* (Morrison, 2020). These online te reo Māori resources are a good starting point as I believe that part of being tangata Tiriti is an awareness of taking up space, particularly in te reo Māori classes, which have long waiting lists and should prioritise Māori (Hayden, 2017).

The research approach I took when conducting research with Māori communities was primarily developed from the Kaupapa Māori principle āta and the Kaupapa Māori practices outlined by whaea Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012, p. 124). The concept of āta was developed by Pohatu (2004), who provided a list of principles to guide the "understandings of relationship and wellbeing" (p. 5). From these resources, I developed a set of research principles and applications (see Table 1). My research was also guided by the principle of taonga tuku iho. Taonga tuku iho acknowledges and centralises te reo Māori, tikanga and mātauranga Māori (G. H. Smith, 1992). An example of the way I applied this principle was by privileging the use of te reo Māori words throughout my thesis and not italicising them, which is consistent with Williams (2004) and Jackson (2011).

Case studies

This research used the method of wānanga as a process to build relationships with community members in the context of two case studies—Whareponga and the East Otago Taiāpure. Prior to this, I had also built relationships with the communities through my research assistant role and volunteer work. It is important to note that the relationships my supervisors had with the communities were established many years prior to my own research.

Whareponga

Whareponga Bay is on the East Cape of the North Island, north of Gisborne and 20 km east of the town of Ruatōria. The hapū that holds mana whenua over this area is Te Aitanga a Mate of Ngāti Porou. Whareponga was chosen for a case study as each year there is a rāhui for several weeks before Christmas.

East Otago Taiāpure

The EOT is a customary fisheries management area in Karitāne, north of Dunedin on the east coast of the South Island. The area has been identified as culturally significant to the Kāi Tahu hapū of Kāti Huirapa ki Puketeraki, the mana whenua of this area (Jackson et al., 2018). This area was chosen for one of my case studies as it has a rāhui on Huriawa Peninsula.

TABLE 1 Principles I adopted to guide my research as a non-Māori working with Māori communities in Whareponga and the EOT and how I applied these principles

Principles	How I applied these principles
Be respectful	Be mindful of and intentional with the way I interact with people, be considerate of and listen to others' needs and feelings.
Be reflective	Consider how my actions and research approach affect others (that is, consequences), particularly the impacts on those I am researching, and consider how I can improve myself and my understanding.
Be deliberate in the way that I act, listen, write, communicate	Reflect on my actions, my engagement with others and the way I am communicating, and adjust accordingly.
Be prepared	Research where I am conducting my research, have my set of questions prepared for the interview, have copies of the information sheets and consent forms.
Maintain my conviction that what is being done is correct	Act in accordance with the rest of these principles with the conviction that I am supporting the communities I am working in, and others.
Understand my responsibility	Realise that the narratives and knowledge that are shared with me are personal to those I am interviewing and ensure I maintain confidentiality and do not misinterpret them.
Maintain reciprocity and mutually beneficial relationships	Ensure the intentions behind my research are clear and aim to support community aspirations, as determined by the community.
Study and learn concepts and values important in te ao Māori	Continuously engage in research that enhances my understanding of te ao Māori but acknowledge the limitations of my interpretations as I do not share the experiences of being Māori.
Maintain integrity of self and individuals	Understand the values of others that I engage with in my research and ensure I act in a way that respects those values and my own.
Remain open and consider possibilities	Ensure my thought patterns are flexible, I am open to new ideas and will avoid being clouded by my own preconceived ideas.
Present myself face to face	Attend hui and wānanga in the community, and interview participants face to face.
Create a safe space	Ensure the interview participants and community members feel comfortable and have chosen the place to share knowledge.
Give quality time to participants	Do not have set lengths for interviews and ensure I am not distracted by others.
Listen	Do not talk over interview participants, actively listen.
Communicate clearly and deliberately	Ensure that those I am communicating with are able to understand what I am saying; avoid jargon and disrespectful language.
Protect intellectual property	Acknowledge that a person's narratives, perspective and knowledge are taonga that need to be protected and respected and not used inappropriately. Store any information securely.
Report back	Engage in conversations, present my research in a respectful manner, ensure that interview participants get a copy of the report or chapter they provided knowledge for, and my full thesis or research report on completion.

Wānanga

Royal (2007) described wānanga as "the process and energy leading to understanding", which involves discussion, debate and analysis to allow for "the creation of new knowledge and understanding" (p. 11). Providing space for kōrero, engaging with the cultural landscapes of the people I work with and collaborating with others are the processes that contribute to my understanding of wānanga. I used this method to build relationships and trust with the people I worked with and to understand their connection to each other, and to their place. The wānanga were not formal sessions. For example, they were conversations with the community members in the wharekai of Whareponga Marae after a day of counting pāua, or during a lunchbreak on a planting weekend in Karitāne. Once you have made these connections, the wānanga never ends.

Whareponga

In Whareponga, I first met four out of the five interview participants during a 10-day visit in May 2016. During this visit, the research group TMK, which included individuals from Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, conducted fisheries surveys (see Figure 1). This research trip allowed me to spend

time with the whānau at Whareponga Marae. On one of the days, Year 10 students from Ngata Memorial College, the local high school, helped us with the surveys (see Figure 2). This was an important way of connecting with the wider community and to remind the students about the value of their local knowledge.

The following year, a hui was held at Kariaka Pā to report the findings from the 2016 surveys. At the hui, I made a call for interview participants. The next day, I conducted my interviews at Kariaka Pā (see Figure 3). One interview was done on Whareponga Beach (see Figure 4).

East Otago Taiāpure

I attended many hui and wānanga that were held at Puketeraki Marae and Karitāne that enabled me to build relationships with the interview participants and to better understand the cultural values that are incorporated in the landscape of the EOT.

In early 2016, I enrolled in an eight-day research field course based at Puketeraki Marae. This was the first time I had ever been on a marae. The course taught me about tikanga, not only in the context of the marae but also around te taiao. My research group conducted surveys to assess pāua abundance and interviewed several

FIGURE 1 Whareponga Marae, 2016. Back (from left): Tasman Gillies, Elizabeth Ngarimu, Lisa van Halderen, Emma Kearney. Front (from left): Daniel Pritchard, Peri Subritzky, Chris Hepburn, Derek Richards.

FIGURE 2   Chris Hepburn talks to students from Ngata Memorial College on Whareponga Beach, 2016.

FIGURE 3   Kariaka Pā, 2017. Back (from left): Samantha Jackson, Elizabeth Ngarimu, Chris Hepburn. Front (from left): Anne-Marie Jackson, Tatai Ngarimu, Lisa van Halderen.

FIGURE 4   Interviewing a community member on Whareponga Beach, 2017

key members of the community to investigate pāua accessibility in the EOT. We were fortunate to be supported by Brendan, who helped us take the waka *Hauteruruku* to one of our study sites (see Figure 5). This course sparked my master's research kaupapa to investigate rāhui as a fisheries management tool from the perspective of kaitiaki. The following year I returned as teaching support, which provided another opportunity to engage with the community at Karitāne.

In August 2016, I wrote a research report for He Pātaka Wai Ora, a programme that monitors important mahika kai sites on the Waikouaiti River (van Halderen et al., 2016). This report required multiple hui with Brendan, the principal investigator for the project, and helped expand my knowledge of the area. A community hui was held to present the findings of the report, which provided another opportunity to engage with the community.

In November 2016, I attended a three-day Te Koronga Indigenous Science Research Theme Wānanga, which added to my growing knowledge of the area. We stayed at Puketeraki Marae and each day had a different theme to explore the pepeha of Kāti Huirapa ki Puketeraki—ko Hikaroroa te mauka, ko Waikouaiti te awa, ko Arai te Uru te tai. On day one, we climbed the mauka Hikaroroa (see Figure 6), on day two we took waka out on the awa, Waikouaiti, and on day three we walked the coastline of Arai te Uru.

In September 2017 and April 2019, I attended Ki Uta Ki Tai Volunteer Week, when I stayed at Puketeraki Marae and along with other volunteers and community members, planted native plants to restore habitat along the Waikouaiti River (see Figure 7). This volunteer week supports the community's 200-year plan to restore the pātaka of the Waikouaiti River and the Karitāne coastline. I was also able to spend time with four of the individuals who I interviewed for my master's thesis.

I first presented my master's thesis proposal to the community during the EOT research evening in November 2017, and again in November 2018. These were important hui that allowed me to share my proposed research with the community. The research evening provided the future interview participants with a greater understanding of my research, and an opportunity to provide feedback. In November 2019, I presented my final thesis findings back to the community (see Figure 8).

The lessons I have learned

Here I explain the main lessons I have learned from working with Māori communities in a Kaupapa Māori space. These include being quiet, observing, listening and learning; making and maintaining connections; knowing and reflecting on my place; showing up; getting comfortable with feeling uncomfortable; these are not my stories; and the purpose of research.

FIGURE 5   Taking the waka *Hauteruruku* to Matainaka in Karitāne with Daniel Smart during a field course based at Puketeraki Marae, 2016

FIGURE 6   Climbing up Hikaroroa mauka during Te Koronga Indigenous Science Research Theme Wānanga, 2016

FIGURE 7   Ki Uta Ki Tai Volunteer Week, 2019. Taking the waka *Hiwa-i-te-rangi* across Waikouaiti awa to the sandspit Ōhinepouwera in Karitāne to plant native plants as part of the 200-year restoration plan for the area

FIGURE 8   The 10th Annual East Otago Taiāpure Research Evening at Puketeraki Marae, 2019. Here students and researchers who have worked in the area present their work back to the community.

Being quiet, observing, listening and learning

One of the more important lessons I have learned is to be quiet, observe, listen and learn. As someone who always got "talks too much" on her report cards, this one has been a necessary challenge. Also, as researchers we often feel like we hold "deep knowledge" or "professional expertise", but often this expertise is not required or relevant to the communities we work with and we need to learn when to step aside from this "expert role" (Barnes, 2013, p. 20). Pono, tika and māhaki are important principles that emerged from this quiet observation.

My understanding of pono is to be open, honest, compassionate and sincere with the people I work with. This means acting authentically, being clear with my research and personal intentions from the start, carefully considering the ethics of my research approach, and honouring the voices of the people I interview.

Tika is the idea of being right and just, and requires us to adapt in every community or place we work in because the tikanga and kawa will change with each community and marae. During my first experience of staying on a marae, I remember being told that we should treat it like we would at our grandmother's house. Keep the marae clean, be respectful, karakia before each meal, do the dishes, to name a few. I also learned that what is expected of us in Karitāne is different to that of Whareponga. For example, in Whareponga, we were told that we should not shout on the reef because it will make the sea rough.

Māhaki encompasses humility and respectful conduct, and is embodied in the way we work alongside our community members. Each community has tohunga who we have the privilege of talking to and spending time with. I speak for myself when I say we are not very good at admitting we do not know something and at times are not good at asking questions, but this is often where research ideas are co-developed and innovative methods are established. The concepts of pono, tika and māhaki remind me to be truthful, act justly and be humble, which I do best through quiet contemplation and observation.

Making and maintaining connections

Through my research I have recognised the importance of making and maintaining connections. This begins when I introduce myself through my pepeha. The first time I ever did my pepeha, I used the landscapes of Ōtepoti, but not having been born there, it did not feel right. This initiated a period of reflection to determine where I actually belonged and what place meant to me. I had grandparents who were born in the Netherlands, my parents and I were born in South Africa and then I moved to Aotearoa in my early adolescence, which is where I feel my sense of self and values were established. These days I say I am from South Africa but Ōtepoti is now my home. At the beginning of every hui, there is usually the opportunity to introduce ourselves and make connections. It is easy to start a conversation later when we have a sense of someone, whether we have visited their hometown, walked along their awa or recognise their last name. This is how so many of my relationships with community members began.

Following on from making connections is maintaining connections. Whether it is through revisiting the places we have worked in to report back to the community or emailing, Zooming or chatting via Facebook Messenger, I always make a point of keeping in touch with the people I have worked with. Again, the wānanga never ends.

Two moments linked to a sense of connection and belonging stand out for me. When Anne-Marie, Chris, Samantha Jackson and I arrived in Ruatōria in 2017, we were welcomed onto Kariaka Pā without the formalities of a pōwhiri because of the relationship we had built over time. This was significant because a formal pōwhiri is an important ceremony that establishes the intentions of the manuhiri, and to be welcomed onto Kariaka Pā without one indicated that our intentions were known and were welcomed (Duncan & Rewi, 2018). The other moment was during the pōwhiri for the water safety weekend at Puketeraki Marae in 2021. I was asked whether I wanted to be with the welcoming group or be welcomed on with the other manuhiri. While I decided to be welcomed on to the marae as I had always been, it was a warming feeling to no longer be considered just a visitor to the community that means so much to me. I decided to be welcomed on because Karitāne is not my place, which leads on to the next lesson.

Knowing and reflecting on my place

Knowing my place was another important lesson I have learned through working in a Kaupapa Māori space. This includes knowing where I have come from, where I am now and the places I will go. When I think of place, I think of the cultural, social, political, economic, historical, spiritual and metaphysical notions of place.

Whenever I introduce myself, I make sure I say I am from South Africa so the people I work with know I am not from here. This is how I position myself as a non-Indigenous person and also removes any assumptions of my identity based

on the work that I do (L. T. Smith, 2012). Even though I was not born here, I am afforded structural, institutional and interpersonal privileges that Māori are not because of who my tūpuna were and because of my whiteness (Borell et al., 2018; McIntosh, 1989). For example, I see myself widely represented in books, at university, in the media or in positions of power; both of my parents went to university; I grew up around books; I am encouraged to do well academically; and people do not suspect I was successful as a scholarship candidate because of my race and affirmative action (McIntosh, 1989). We need to have a better understanding of racism—that it is not just an individual act of nastiness, but as McIntosh (1989) described it, it is the "invisible systems conferring dominance on my group" (p. 3). To move from passive Pākehā to active tangata Tiriti, we need to start engaging properly with our history of colonisation and acknowledge the "unearned advantages" and "arbitrarily-awarded power" we have in order to avoid recreating these racist power structures (Amundsen & Newcombe, 2022; McIntosh, 1989, p. 3).

I often remind myself that for many Māori, they *have* to navigate te ao Māori and te ao Pākehā. It is a privilege for non-Māori researchers to engage in te ao Māori, and we must tread carefully. We are able to go back to our worldview as soon as we step out of this research space, often with little reflection. Kiddle et al. (2020) explained this by saying a "downside of your worldviews always being understood by society to be 'normal' is that you are less likely to reflect, question and re-evaluate those worldviews, or be encouraged to do these things" (p. 110). Working in a Kaupapa Māori space has allowed me to better understand, critique and re-evaluate my own worldview, such as my past assumptions and acceptance of universalism, individualism, meritocracy, anthropocentrism and what I believe is valid knowledge.

While reflecting on positionality, it was also important to consider the reasons I wanted to work in this space, my "why". I want to look at the world through an intersectional feminist lens and I want to do better. I want to engage with my research in a way that challenges dominant power structures and investigate what decolonisation might look like in a research space. I feel it is my obligation as a citizen of this country, bound as tangata Tiriti to tangata whenua. Also, the values inherent in te ao Māori were what drew me to this work. The manaakitanga, kaitiakitanga and the holistic recognition of our connection to each other and the landscapes around us were so excitingly different from what I was taught in my undergraduate years.

Showing up

Many of my experiences working in this space have come from saying "yes", showing up and never being empty-handed. When I visited interview participants in Karitāne, I always made sure to turn up with biscuits, grapes, tea and coffee. I volunteered for planting weekends and diving work in the EOT such as removing the invasive seaweed *Undaria pinnatifida*. To regularly connect with the community at Karitāne, I showed up each year at the EOT research evening, where students who have worked in the area present their work to the community. Kanohi ki te kanohi is important for Māori communities because it contributes to the relational process by providing an opportunity to engage and familiarise themselves with a person's face, body language and style of communication (Mikahere-Hall, 2017). While showing up kanohi ki te kanohi may be difficult during the current COVID-19 pandemic, particularly for our vulnerable communities, Zoom calling remains an important way for me to show up to hui.

Getting comfortable with feeling uncomfortable

Another lesson I have learned is that I need to get comfortable with being uncomfortable. The discomfort I feel and have felt working in a Kaupapa Māori space as a non-Māori has predominantly been feeling out of place or as if I am taking up space. As tangata Tiriti, we have to recognise and respect the fact that we are not always wanted or needed in Māori spaces and we do not always have to have our voices heard.

I remember a non-Māori student from Te Koronga asking me how I overcame the feelings of discomfort when working in this space. Their feelings were similar to mine, of not belonging there, taking up space or not always doing the right thing. I told them that I rationalised those feelings by realising that some of our discomfort comes from our worldview not being the "norm". While I said at the time that this discomfort could be considered a diluted version of how many of our Māori academics and students feel working in institutions where their worldview is not centred or even acknowledged, I recognise now that my discomfort is not comparable to their experiences of colonisation (Amundsen & Newcombe, 2022). When feeling out of place, I always remind myself "it's not about you". The manaakitanga from the communities I work with also helps me overcome

this feeling. I have never been made to feel like I was not welcome.

I also constantly grapple with the feeling that I am taking up space in an area that has only just been carved out for Māori researchers and someone else should have my place. I am lucky to have strong Te Koronga leadership and researchers to remind me that we are all working on the same kaupapa and as long as we are on the Te Koronga waka, we are where we are meant to be. However, it is very important for me to remain aware of the times when I need to step back because it is not my place to be or my voice that needs to be heard, and in doing so, not get defensive.

I think we need to openly acknowledge these uncomfortable feelings in order to work through them. For me this means being vulnerable, sharing my experiences and finding ways to navigate these emotions with other non-Māori working in this space in order not to burden our Māori students. It also involves reflecting and asking myself why I am feeling uncomfortable or unsettled. This space is often filled with uncertainty and complexity, and sometimes we just have to be OK with not knowing (Barnes, 2013). Barnes (2013) wrote about Pākehā paralysis, and described it as "the inability of Pākehā to be active participants in social and cultural relations with non-Pākehā people or groups" (p. 2). The paralysis comes from a fear of "getting it wrong", which centres Pākehā feelings at the expense of forming meaningful connections with Māori. While I still frequently experience moments of discomfort, I remind myself of the kaupapa and that it is bigger than these feelings.

These are not my stories

I have learned that these are not and never will be my stories. To tell them I need to honour and protect the storyteller and I need permission, not just an ethics form. This sentiment holds me accountable to the community members I work with. They are not nameless objects in a research project; they are complex humans with lived experiences. An example of this in practice is during my master's research I sent interview transcripts back to the participants with a paid return envelope and then sent the full data chapter back again to ensure they were happy with what I wrote.

The purpose of research

One of the most exciting things that has come from working in a Kaupapa Māori space has been the challenge to my assumptions about research. I now understand that hierarchies of evidence privilege certain forms of knowledge and exclude the expert knowledge holders in our communities (Kukutai et al., 2021). In addition, learning about pūrākau and whakataukī has led me to new understandings of my research through metaphors, symbolism and stories. These taonga and the writings of the other students, past and present, in Te Koronga have inspired me to think beyond the inaccessible and often boring language expected in academia.

I think, most importantly, I have learned that it is possible to do research that has purpose, benefits communities and can make a difference. That is what Kaupapa Māori research is. For example, I was involved in scientific fisheries surveys that supported the EOTMC proposal to close the EOT to pāua fishing that became regulation in December 2019 (Gnanalingam et al., 2021). For research to have purpose, and real outcomes, knowledge needs to be paired with action. As Anne-Marie says, we need to walk the talk. Many of the other students in Te Koronga have been able to do research that supports the aspirations of their own communities and strengthens their identities (e.g., Cunningham, 2018; Mita, 2018). I feel so invested in the work that I do because it has meaning, and I have a responsibility to do it as best I can because, again, it is not about me. It is about our communities being supported to live their lives, to manage their environment on their own terms and to advance their 200-year plan for the people now and those that come after them.

Discussion

Reflecting on the lessons I have learned while working in a Kaupapa Māori space and with Māori communities, I think three important points have stood out. I have gained a better understanding of my own identity and the knowledge that research can have purpose and tangible outcomes. Most importantly, I have learned that without the relationships I have built I would not have been able to do this mahi.

My experiences regarding my identity are similar to those of other Pākehā researchers (Brown, 2011; Came & Zander, 2015; Jones, 2020). Glenn Colquhoun (2015) said that being exposed to te ao Māori as a Pākehā "makes me ask what are those things within my own culture that define me?" (p. 56). Barnes (2013), Amundsen and Newcombe (2022) have all talked about the importance of "knowing yourself" while working in Kaupapa Māori research spaces and as active tangata Tiriti. Anne-Marie often reminds us in Te Koronga that we are capable of learning anything, but most importantly, we have to be happy with who we are as a person, to be comfortable in our own skin

and be content with the knowledge that we have done our best. Mikaere (2011) also reminds us that

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

Pākehā identities need to be developed alongside Māori identities and with the recognition of Māori sovereignty (Came & Zander, 2015; Kiddle et al., 2020; Mikaere, 2011). An individual or group standing in the mana of their identity does not take away from us but enhances our mana, just as the flourishing wellness of Māori communities leads to the flourishing wellness of all communities (Kiddle et al., 2020). How can we achieve our national identity without engaging properly with Māori and reflecting on our own behaviours and actions? For me, research in a Kaupapa Māori space and being a part of Te Koronga have allowed me to do this in a way that is safe for me and the Māori communities I work alongside.

As non-Māori researchers working in a Kaupapa Māori research space, we have to keep showing up and maintaining the relationships we have built with respect, kindness and integrity. These relationships are the foundation for this work. My research is not just objective data collection. It involves real people, whakawhanaungatanga, aroha, manaakitanga, time and trust. I am part of a research group; I am not just an individual researcher who can make decisions without considering others. My role is to support the aspirations of the communities I work with, not determine them.

I am and have been encouraged and protected in many ways by the strong leadership of Anne-Marie, who has always been kind and gentle, and reminded me of the importance of action and accountability. I know I will not engage in Kaupapa Māori research or the type of research I have done if I am not part of a research team led by Māori researchers, as is the case with Te Koronga, or by Māori communities, as is the case with my work with the EOT or Whareponga.

Conclusion

Working in a Kaupapa Māori research space as a non-Māori has taught me many lessons. Not only have I learned how to behave respectfully as a researcher with Māori communities but I have expanded my idea about the possibilities of research and gained a better understanding of my own identity. Above all, I have learned about the importance of building and maintaining relationships. The thoughts put forward in this article belong to where I am right now but the learning is ongoing. I understand that as a non-Māori working in a Kaupapa Māori space I will always be on the outside because I do not share the lived experiences or whakapapa with those that I work with. I might get it wrong, but I will endeavour to remain open, and to learn with good intentions and be accountable for my actions. Te Koronga has allowed me to explore and continue to explore how to be an ally and how to be tangata Tiriti, and to understand that the journey is uncomfortable, awkward, difficult and continuous, but it is our responsibility to do it. Tēnei au Te Koronga.

Acknowledgements

Glossary

aroha	love, empathy, compassion
āta	the principle of growing respectful relationships
atua	deities, gods
awa	river
hapū	sub-tribe
hui	meeting
kaitiaki	environmental guardians
kaitiakitanga	environmental guardianship
kanohi ki te kanohi	face to face
karakia	prayers, chants, incantations

kaupapa	purpose
Kaupapa Māori	Māori based topic/event/enterprise run by Māori for Māori
kawa	marae protocol
kōrero	conversation, discourse
māhaki	humble
mahi	work
mahinga/mahika kai	the act of gathering food, food gathering places
mana	status, prestige, control, power
manaakitanga	hospitality, kindness, generosity
mana whenua	power from the land, authority over land
manuhiri	visitors
marae	meeting house
mātaitai	a reserve management system under the Kaimoana (Customary Fishing) Regulations 1998 (the Kaimoana Regulations) and Fisheries (South Island Customary Fishing) Regulations 1999 (the South Island Regulations)
mātauranga Māori	Māori knowledge
maunga/mauka	mountain
mauri ora	flourishing wellness
Ōtepoti	Dunedin
Pākehā	New Zealander of European descent
pātaka	storehouse
pepeha	tribal saying
pono	truthful
pōwhiri	welcome ceremony
pūrākau	traditional stories
rāhui	ritual prohibition, ban, closure of an area
rangatira	chief
rōpū	group
rūnanga/rūnaka	tribal council
tai	sea, coast
taiao	environment, natural world
taiāpure	a reserve management system under the Māori Fisheries Act 1989
tangata Tiriti	people of Te Tiriti o Waitangi
tangata whenua	Indigenous people of the land, first people of the land
taonga	treasure, valuable objects

taonga tuku iho	the principle of cultural aspiration
tauira	students
te ao Māori	the Māori world
te ao Pākehā	the Pākehā world
te reo Māori	the Māori language
tika	right
tikanga	custom, correct practice
tino rangatiratanga	complete sovereignty
tohunga	expert knowledge holder
tūpuna	ancestors
waka	canoe
wānanga	to meet, discuss, conference
whakapapa Māori	Māori genealogy
whakataukī	proverbs
whakawhanau-ngatanga	process of establishing relationships, relating well to others
whānau	family
wharekai	dining hall of the marae

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This paper describes the reflections and lessons Lisa van Halderen learned from her master's thesis titled *Investigating Rāhui as a Customary Fisheries Management Tool* and her role as a research assistant for the University of Otago and Te Koronga. Lisa started a PhD in November 2021 and will explore the role of coastal communities in place-based education.