



Ko tātou tēnei This is us

The voices of Māori rangatahi takatāpui

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CORE
EDUCATION
Tātai Aho Rau

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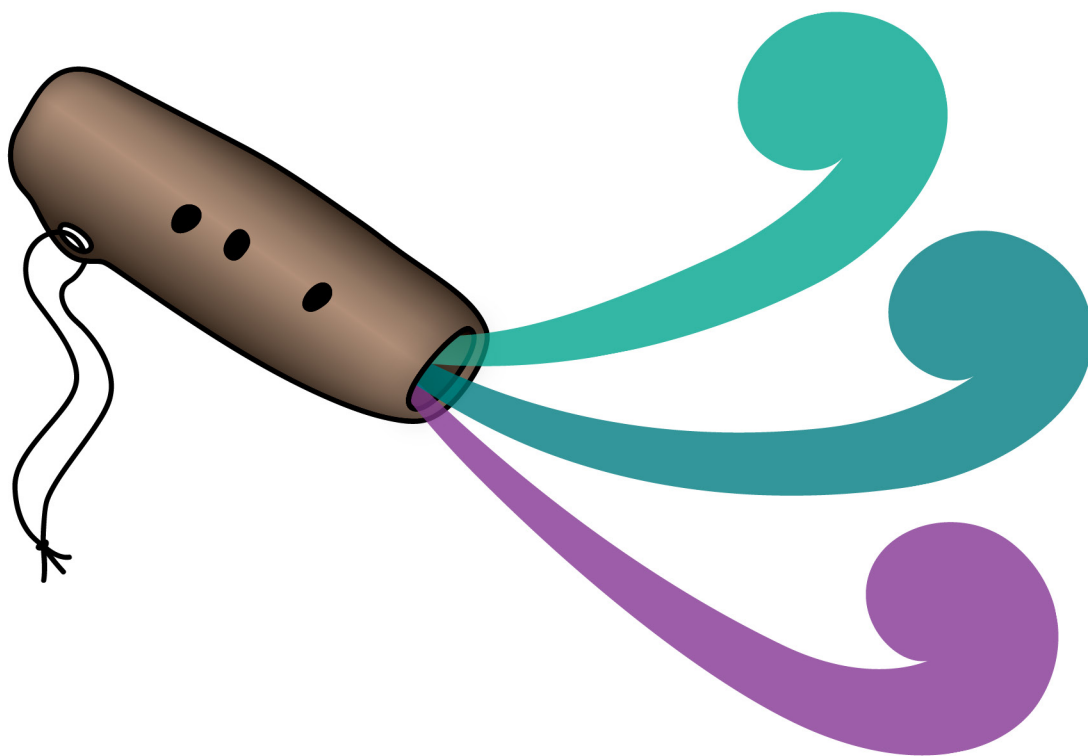
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How this report is organised



This research report is split into three parts to help you understand, share and put into action the learning from rangatahi takatāpui.

The **kaupapa** explains the context and background needed for this type of work with rangatahi and builds history and ideas around this group of people. The tikanga rangahau section explains the methodology we used and why this was a tika and pono way of engaging with the rangatahi takatāpui.

The **pūrākau** are the result of the experience and analysis of the wānanga. From the hours of interviews and hundreds of artefacts came the stories of the rangatahi. Here, the rangatahi takatāpui share their voice with us (kōrero), how it links to the wider world (whakaaro), key points to consider (whaiwhakaaro) and how we might challenge our thinking (whakapātaritari). They do this through important themes which became clear as we analysed their voice:

- Whakawhanaungatanga
- Tuakiritanga
- Whakapapa
- Takatāpuitanga
- Tino rangatiratanga

The **rauemi** are a chance for the reader to take action as a result of reading the pūrākau. Two practical resources, a poutama and whakapātaritari, give frameworks and questions to consider relationships with rangatahi takatāpui and consider next steps.

Mihi ki te rangatahi

Kei te whatumanawa ā tātou pūrākau e pūrena ana!
E tuaritia atu nei ngā kōrero mō ō tātou mātua tūpuna.
E tuaritia atu nei ā mātou kōrero ki a koutou,
Engari rā, he nui kē atu te ako mai, i te ako atu,
Kia tū tahi tātou i a koutou e tuari atu i ā koutou kōrero.
Kia kaha te ako i te māramatanga, te aroha me te mātauranga.
Me te mōhio pū rawa, ko koutou te āpōpō!

Our hearts are full of our stories!
We share stories of our tūpuna.
We have shared our stories with you,
Yet, we have learned more than we have given.
As you share your stories, let us stand with you,
Learn from your wisdom, love and knowledge.
And take comfort that you are our future!

Introduction

This rangahau (research) aims to bring voice to a group that is oppressed and marginalised in multiple ways. The pūrākau (stories) and identities of the wider Māori and queer communities are often defined by deficit narratives. We wish to empower rangatahi takatāpui by presenting pūrākau which clearly shift the theme from pathology to positivity. Moreover, our work will ensure that these narratives are authentic; created by the youth and accessible by the people who have direct contact with and impact on their lives – their whānau and kaiako.

The rangahau connects directly to CORE's vision of an 'equitable and thriving Aotearoa through learning' by supporting a group where health and educational equity and access are clearly barriers¹. The research process involved creating space for a group of rangatahi takatāpui to assert their identity as tangata whenua and position them as future-makers.

There is little information about double-minority groups (Chang, 2016), particularly information that enables direct, positive participation in schooling. While there have been resources created to affirm the adult takatāpui community, there has been little done that can support the participation of Māori takatāpui in compulsory education. Though not intended to be a panacea, this research is an opportunity to begin conversations across the motu; a kōrero that is well overdue.

Lex Davis (he/him) Te Rarawa, and Josh Hough (he/him)

¹ See the work of the Youth 2000 project: University of Auckland. (n.d.). Publications by population - The University of Auckland. <https://www.fmhs.auckland.ac.nz/en/faculty/adolescent-health-research-group/publications-and-reports/publications-by-population.html#e945081bd6747523d63f50921583707a>

Ō tātou pūrākau

Our stories

Pūrākau: Why are they important?

Storytelling is an important way of sharing who we are and making sense of the world around us. Pūrākau have long been a part of establishing and sustaining a Māori world view (Metge, 1999) and moreover, a more devolved and specific understanding of who we are as shared with us by our iwi, hapū and whānau.

Pūrākau can also illustrate the position of takatāpui in contemporary Aotearoa, defining identity, histories and the complex and often contradictory nature of these relationships. Elizabeth Kerekere defines takatāpui as ‘a Māori (indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand) word, historically meaning “intimate companion of the same sex” ’ (2015, p.4)². Linking this meaning to a famed pūrākau asserts the reclamation of a Māori LGBTQIA+ identity. This poses a response to the Western intervention on a traditional identity both socially and historically.

This process of intervention is illustrated through the pūrākau of Tutanekai and Hinemoa. The beauty of this pūrākau aroha is well known; the twist of Tutanekai’s intimate relationship with his male companion Tiki less so. Tracing through differing recounts and analyses of how this story can be used to show a takatāpui relationship quickly illustrates the complexity of the situation takatāpui find themselves in today – the intersection and friction between western, Christian, traditionally held points of view and te ao Māori.



However, it is more than a matter of accuracy and disputed sources and meanings. The power in the pūrākau lies in the act of retelling. With a ‘takatāpui reading’ of this pūrākau, they are included and their presence in the world is legitimised – they are again visible in te ao Māori, where they have always been. It is a conscious decision to set aside the perspective and voice of George Grey (Department of Māori Affairs, 1962) who captured a version of this narrative and wrote it according to his set of

2 Definition of takatāpui and relationship to Tiki:

- Kerekere, Elizabeth. (2015). *Takatāpui: Part of the Whānau*. Auckland: Tiwhanawhana Trust and Mental Health Foundation.
- Health Research Council of New Zealand., & Hui Whakatipu. (2001). *Report from Hui Whakatipu: Whaiora Marae, Otara, Auckland December 1997*. Auckland: Health Research Council of New Zealand.

References discussing history:

- Department of Māori Affairs. (1962, June). *The Story of Hinemoa and Tutanekai*. National Library of New Zealand. <http://teahou.natlib.govt.nz/journals/teahou/issue/Mao39TeA/c19.html>
- Queer History New Zealand. (2002, July 11). *Tiki - Queer History New Zealand - Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender New Zealand History*. <http://www.Gaynz.Net.Nz/History/Tiki.Html>.
- Koyasky, M. A. (2002, February 15). *Tūtānekai & Tiki*. Matt & Andre Komasky: The Living Room. <http://andrejkoymasky.com/liv/fam/biot2/tutane01.html>

Discussion around authenticity:

- Roussos, T. (2008) *ISLAND STORIES, ALTERNATIVE VOICES Contemporary Depictions of Transgressive Post-Independence Masculinities*. Sydney: The University of Sydney. p. 12

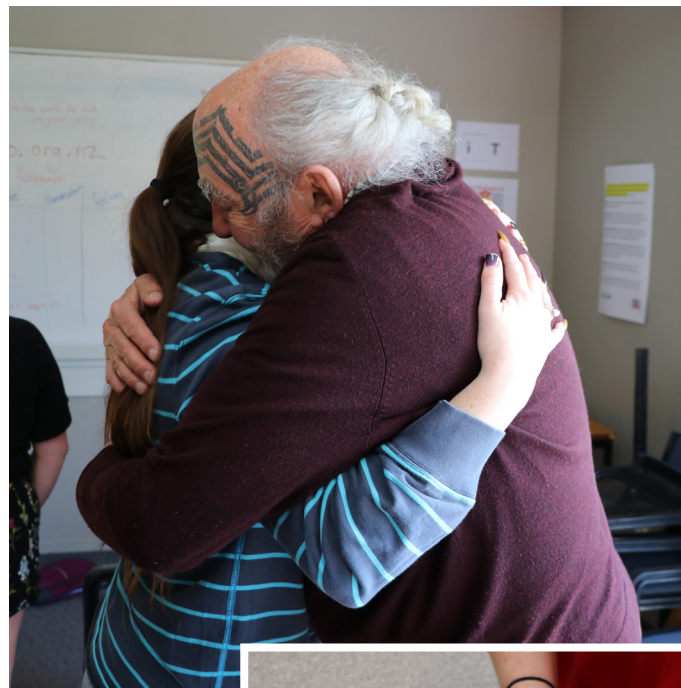
western frameworks. By telling this story through a takatāpui lens, it marks where they may stand in history. It gives an indigenous voice: it gives whakapapa, it is a reappropriation, it is brownwashing!

Takatāpui redefine themselves using their own stories and their own people. Having grounded themselves in a tupuna pūrākau and a whakapapa, this gives an indigenous position from which to tell their own pūrākau. The power of pūrākau lies in the process and not just the product. This is why we have chosen to use pūrākau as a way of expressing identity, fostering connection, and framing a challenge to the world. Lee (2009) situates the constructive way Māori can use traditional forms of storytelling to reconsider 'issues of power, culture and identity' (p.9). She explains how we use pūrākau methodology to access and reclaim traditional knowledge and understandings through 'oral narratives, which comprise philosophical thoughts, epistemological constructs, cultural codes, and worldviews' (p.1). It is an empowering and indigenous process.

'Māori have continued to explore pūrākau in new arenas – changing, adapting, adding and recreating pūrākau to suit modern-day settings' (p.4). We can use pūrākau to tell contemporary stories as we have done with Tiki. This is another reason why we have chosen the pūrākau approach as it enables Māori to undertake research in cultural contexts (Lee, Pihama, & Smith, 2012) with a culturally empowering process.

Through this mahi we seek to share pūrākau to claim space for rangatahi takatāpui, through a process that is dynamic and appropriate for who they are – and who they strive to be. Their pūrākau are powerful and instructive, and deserve to be collected and shared in kind.

To our rangatira takatāpui Tiki, we honour your place as a tupuna for takatāpui. As we tell your pūrākau, we tell our own. You were famed for your playing of the koauau, let us honour your impact on our lives with our voice, let our breath mingle. As we hear and remark on the beauty of the song you have shared with us, let others hear ours!



What other factors influence and shape the pūrākau?

Te ao Māori

The position of Māori in contemporary Aotearoa is widely written about, and though not limited to, it is marked by a host of negative socio-economic indicators (Lloyd, 2018). This can colour the way Māori are perceived, often confining them to a deficit narrative.

Working to address the intergenerational issues facing Māori, there has been a shift in the perception and leadership of Māori wellbeing, allowing for tino rangatiratanga in this work. The case for an explicit approach to health in the Māori LGBTQIA+ community is passionately outlined in the Honour Project Aotearoa (Pihema et al, 2020), identifying the specific nature of Māori wellbeing and the impact of colonisation and systemic racism.

Remediating the negative impact of post-colonial Aotearoa involves self-determination of strengths in the takatāpui community. The Honour Project Aotearoa records factors that takatāpui perceive as integral to their wellbeing: 'Tuakiri (identity 87%), whānau (family 84%) and te reo Māori me ona tikanga (Māori language, values and culture 75%) were... reported by takatāpui and Māori LGBTQIA+ participants as important for maintaining their own health' (Factsheet 1, 2020). Working through, and with, mātauranga Māori as a means to finding better wellbeing for our youth becomes particularly pointed when considering the additional issues specific to LGBTQIA+ rangatahi.

Te ao Pākehā

The Youth19 Rangatahi Smart Survey, part of a series of studies looking at the health and wellbeing of high school students in Aotearoa, has consistently reported the challenging experiences of LGBTQIA+ youth³. In the latest iteration of the Youth19 survey,

LGBTQIA+ youth have clear health and wellbeing inequalities when compared to other students – compounded by the fact that two thirds of schools report not having specific structures of support for LGBTQIA+ youth. A sense of belonging at school is important and moderates the impact of bullying, but data suggests that schools have little policy in place to support rainbow and gender minority students (Fenaughty, 2020).

Intersections

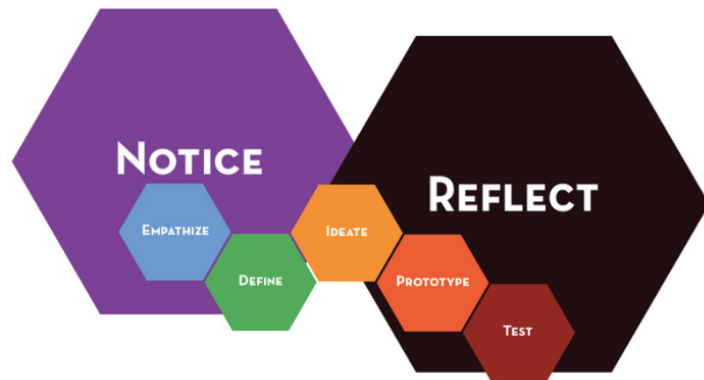
The intersection of Māori and LGBTQIA+ identities suggest that rangatahi takatāpui are at a painful crossroads of identity and community in Aotearoa; caught between difficult realities and challenged by multiple oppressions.

Yet in spite of this, and perhaps because of it, our rangatahi do not cast themselves as victims and have shown themselves to be agents of change rather than passive. They appear to be typical of their contemporaries. For Gen Z, a shift in leadership has occurred where influences have changed from experts who were older and authoritarian to leaders who inspire and engage. Effective leaders demonstrate not just intelligence quotient but emotional quotient – they share knowledge and information yet understand emotion and connection (McCrindle, 2020).

Creating space for generational change is an important aspect of identity in our mahi. Recognising how rangatahi generationally work and think is an important part of engaging with intersectionality. The connection between EQ and equity for this generation is apparent, and it now falls to those who work in intersectional spaces to choose a tikanga that will honour the intention, identities and intersections of rangatahi takatāpui.

3 Information, studies, analysis and factsheets on the Youth2000 series available at:
• <https://www.fmhs.auckland.ac.nz/en/faculty/adolescent-health-research-group/youth2000-national-youth-health-survey-series.html>
• <https://www.youth19.ac.nz/>

Liberatory Design



Clifford, D. (2017). We inspire + develop the creative confidence of educators + support innovators catalyzing powerful models for teaching and learning. [Google Slides]. https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1S-7fZojfgGs3M3T110vaXZFztRvjmMdkCjU4UilQ5i0/edit#slide=id.g1f13b8acbf_0_459

Liberatory Design is an equity-centred design framework which ‘shifts traditional power dynamics related to decision making and brings forth deeper innovation and agency amidst institutionalised norms and structures’ (National Equity Project, n.d.). It was created by Tania Anaissie, Victory Cary, David Clifford, Tom Malarkey and Susie Wise as part of a collaboration in 2016 between the National Equity Project and the Stanford d.school’s K12 Lab, and facilitated at our wānanga by Alicia Poroa and Tamara Yuill Proctor of Liberatory Design Aotearoa.

Design in this context does not refer specifically to graphic design, user interface design, or user experience design, though it can encompass these. Instead, Liberatory Design offers a human-

centred design process and practice in which outputs cognisant of and responsive to the larger historical context of oppression, and opportunities inherent in the design process, are co-constructed by community members.

Any system produces what it was designed to, and as such, design (and redesign) is central to working towards equity. The Liberatory Design process supports stakeholders to locate their designs in an awareness of values, emotions, biases, assumptions, and situatedness of both themselves, and those they are designing with. From a place of self-acceptance, individuals and groups are able to employ curiosity, courage, and humility to design authentically and equitably.

Liberatory Design was used in this context as we believe that racism and inequity have been designed into society, and therefore, can be designed out. To achieve this, a radical new approach is needed – one that centres the margins and acknowledges rangatahi takatāpui as centre-stage in their narratives. Through this process, the rangatahi takatāpui at the wānanga were empowered; telling their stories, wrestling with complex situations, designing inclusive ways of being and doing, and continuing to make positive change in their own lives and the lives of others.

The Liberatory Design Resource Collection is available from www.liberatorydesign.com.



Wānanga

Wānanga are a kaupapa Māori way of transmitting knowledge, exchanging opinions and connecting with each other through learning. The purpose of holding our wānanga was to create an intentional space in which rangatahi takatāpui could explore matters of identity through culturally enriching experiences. These included experiences and learning where we could deep-dive into mātauranga Māori and mātauranga takatāpui. So positioned, rangatahi takatāpui were empowered as leaders and changemakers. They offered a profound vision located in a deep understanding of Māori and queer identities for the future of school and education in Aotearoa.

We connected with a number of people and kaupapa:

- Liberatory Design Aotearoa: Alicia Poroa and Tamara Yuill Proctor
- Waiata: Lita Kumia and Marama Buck
- Taonga Pūoro: Mahina Kingi-Kauī, Liam Dacombe
- InsideOUT: Nic Dorward
- Pegasus Health: Irihāpeti Mahuika and Ester Vallero
- Tūhono Taonga, Tūhono Tangata: Irihāpeti Mahuika and Jon Jeet
- Kahukura Pounamu Charitable Trust: Teoti Jardine and Maire Kipa
- Kura support: Jeremy Faumuinā, Gayle Lauder, Nardine Schroder



Futures thinking

Though it is not possible to know the future, it is possible to approach it in a structured way so that we might make sense of what seems to be happening and recognise opportunities for what could happen. Futures thinking offers us this structure, and its use enhances our capability to challenge, and in some cases shape, tomorrow and beyond.

Futures thinking often involves the practice of scanning, a process by which drivers of change that could disrupt the present in otherwise unexpected ways are identified. To make this process robust, recognising signs of disruption in both global and local contexts is important. As Aotearoa does not exist in a vacuum and our local cultural movements are affected by those beyond our shores, we look near and far as we scan for trends and signals of change.

Scanning quickly reveals the legacies of an oppressive and inequitable narrative at play. On the global stage, homosexuality is still illegal in 72 countries which over 1.5 billion people call home (The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association, 2016). Violence, torture, detention, denial of rights, and discrimination across health, education, and government systems are a daily reality for many members of the LGBTQIA+ community.

In Aotearoa, our systems reflect a bias toward heteronormative ideals. Current laws do not provide explicit and comprehensive legal protection from discrimination regarding gender identity, expression or sex characteristics in New Zealand (New Zealand Human Rights Commission, 2020), and stress, distress and suicide risk are elevated among our gender minority and intersectional youth (Youth 2000 Series, 2019). The fallout of the historical silencing and marginalisation of the queer community is catastrophic, and the urgency of centring the narratives of our rangatahi takatāpui so that they might survive and thrive is paramount.

Yet, as we scan, there are signals of hope for the LGBTQIA+ community both locally and internationally. In Aotearoa, Her Excellency the Right Honourable Dame Patsy Reddy believes we are ready for an LGBTQIA+ Governor-General (Hall, 2021). Nepal will in 2021 recognise LGBTQIA+ in the national census (Thomson, 2020). Costa Rica legalised same-sex

marriage in May 2020 becoming the 28th country in the world to do so (Cordoba, 2020). In June of 2020, the United States Supreme Court passed a ruling stating that workplace discrimination against LGBTQIA+ citizens is prohibited under federal law (BBC News, 2020). To an overwhelmingly positive reception, transgender actor and star of the The Umbrella Academy, Elliot Page announced that 'I am trans, my pronouns are he/they and my name is Elliot.' (Bollinger, 2020).

The wānanga gave an opportunity to scan and explore the international and local contexts through the eyes of the rangatahi takatāpui. To make the practice of futures thinking accessible and tangible, they were invited to unpack and speak into a particular context that affects them immediately for most of the year – the present and the future of school. Empowered as designers and visionaries, they boldly shared their narratives with each other, drawing on their own experiences and those of their fellow ākonga to reckon with the landscape of 21st century schooling in Aotearoa.



So informed, they were invited to give themselves the gift of permission. Permission to share the pain of what has been, permission to reimagine what is, and permission to design what could be. This resulted in a vision for the future, excerpts of which are shared below.

The Personal – A letter to myself

This piece from Erin offers a chance to reimagine her gender identity by writing to her past self. Though the context is historical, a well-rounded view of the future is informed by looking back to look forward.

“

Dear [former identity],

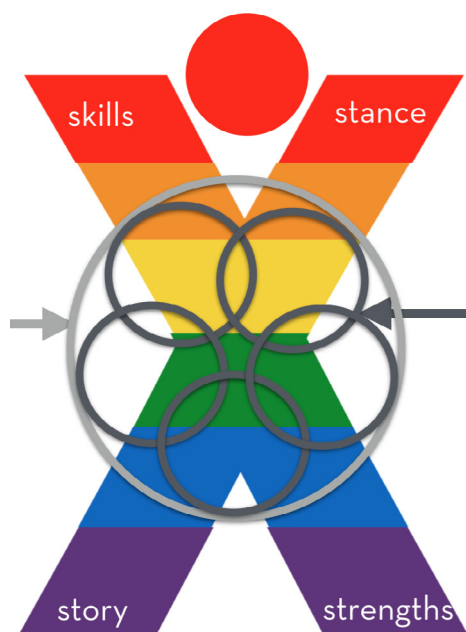
For all the mistakes you made and all the harsh words that you heard while growing up, I would like to thank you. Thank you for all the things you decided to do when you were upset. Thank you for all the times you learned from your mistakes. And thank you for every decision you made, because without you, I would have never known that one day we would meet.

I never realised how uncomfortable we were in our skin. We needed time away from the stress, self doubt, and nervousness. Our loving family supported us on a trip away where we were surrounded by like minded LGBTQ+ people, and this allowed us to face all the things we'd bottled up. You allowed me to finally meet Erin, and for that I will always be grateful. I am able to be the amazing person that you let me be. Even with all the flaws in the world and 99 problems that are yet to come, that's fine, because we both know that I got this. So have fun wherever you are, [former identity].

”

The Collective – X-shaped person

At the wānanga we adopted Design School X's (DSX) X-shaped learner framework (Design School X, n.d.) through a lens of cultural situatedness. The X-shape grounds people in their stories (their truth, whakapapa, and experiences), strengths (intrinsic abilities), skills (acquired abilities and understandings), and stance (developing values, beliefs, and passions). Through the process, the rangatahi takatāpui's cultural capital and lived experiences were affirmed, and they were invited to live into their fullest identities; reckoning with who they have been, who they are, and who they are becoming.



Adapted from: Clifford, D., C. Hui., J. Pandya. (n.d.). DSX Graduate Profile. [Image] DSX.
<http://www.designschoolx.org/our-students/>



From this place of self-knowing and acceptance, they collaboratively imagined a fully-realised takatāpui identity held within the X-shaped framework, and through it, expressed a shared purpose:



Rangatahi Takatāpui X-shaped Ākonga

Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership • Connecting with others • Sharing my story without being judged by myself and others • Achieving the goals I set in my life
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-love and self-acceptance • Courage and self-confidence • To always say, “keep going” • To be able to express my mind • To always be able to make a friend wherever I am • Risk taker • Optimistic • Compassionate • Altruistic • Curious • I bring out the best in others wherever I am
Story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To give this part of my life justice and describe it with happiness • To tell the people I have met about my story and thank them for being a part of it • Being proud of who I am and where I come from • Coming together as whānau
Stance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To value people’s individuality and what makes a personality – not their appearance • Kindness to others • Don’t be racist, homophobic, transphobic or sexist • Spread love

Pūrākau Themes

In this work we wished to honour the identities of rangatahi takatāpui and share their voice through an experience that would sustain their Māori, LGBTQIA+ and Gen Z worlds. Through the wānanga and reflective processes outlined above we have found that our rangatahi takatāpui gave us a profound insight into their perception and understanding of the following themes:

Theme

Big ideas

Whakawhanaungatanga	Connection and relationships	Vulnerability, collective, intentional space
Tuakiritanga	Identities	Negotiating identities, walking between worlds
Whakapapa	Family and strong relationships	Family relationships, lineage, contexts, history
Takatāpuitanga	Māori LGBTQIA+ history, knowledge	Understanding representation, gender identity
Tino rangatiratanga	Leadership and self-determination	Leadership, self actualisation, decolonisation, naming

We present five pūrākau written around these themes, with our rangatahi takatāpui sharing their voice with us (kōrero), how it links to the wider world (whakaaro), key points to consider (whaiwhakaaro) and how we might challenge our thinking (pātai/whakapātaritari). After the pūrākau we share a poutama to support educators to move their relationships with takatāpui from sympathetic to transformative. The whakapātaritari from each of the individual pūrākau are also grouped together at the end of this rangahau so that you may continue the kōrero within your settings.

Ko tātou tēnei!

Remy (she/her): Whakawhanaungatanga

Remy's kōrero

Remy was strong and had always worked hard to hold her own. She was proud that she had a part-time job and worked hard at school to do her best. She felt that she drew on an inner source of confidence and was happy to be with others. Remy was great in a group situation but she didn't always need to be in the spotlight.

She felt the same way about who she was. Remy knew about how she thought of herself but didn't always share this with others. Sometimes it was because she didn't feel safe or comfortable; sometimes it was because others had already made assumptions about her and it was just too much effort convincing them otherwise.

This is what made the wānanga uncomfortable at first. Seeing others share things about themselves and how it made them emotional wasn't something she was used to. But, seeing their honesty made her feel comfortable to share things about herself. In fact, she was surprised at what she told others and what they told her.

The wānanga space was different: people were open, honest and encouraged to share what they saw in each other – this challenged how she saw herself. She made a conscious effort to be part of the space at the wānanga and let herself be vulnerable – tough when you are the strong one. Also, she let herself take in compliments and the positive views others held of her; it made her feel whakamā, but this was eased by the fact she could be kind right back!

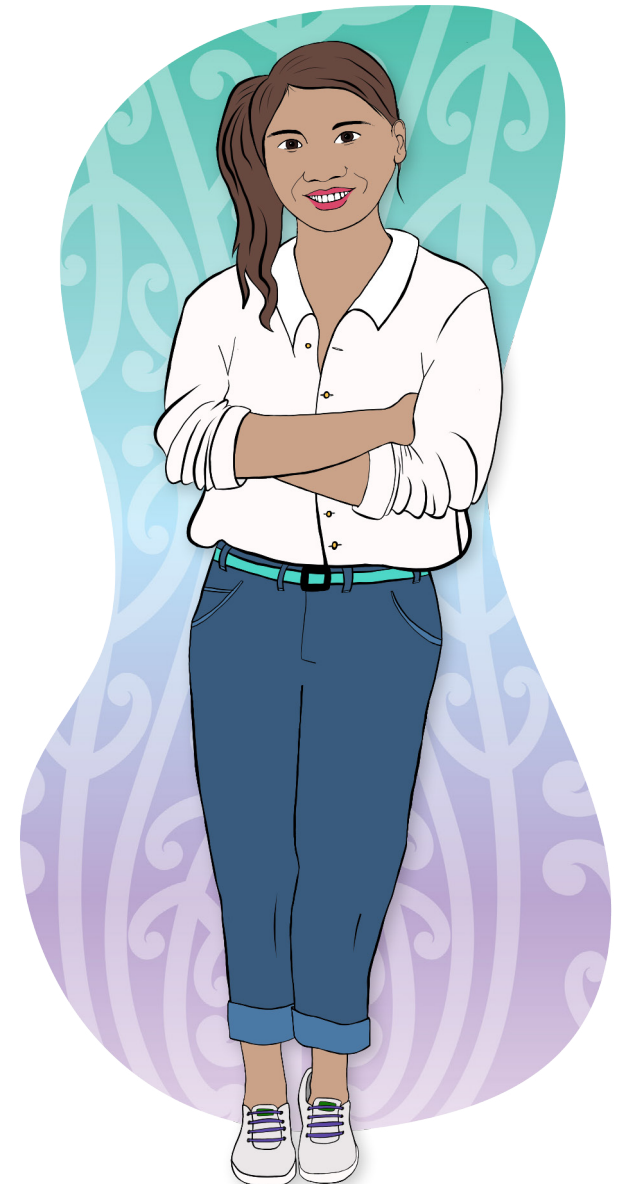
Vulnerability, collective, intentional space

“

We all have feelings. You can be mean to someone, and you won't know it hurts them on the outside, but it could really affect them on the inside. And you had no idea. And it's sort of the same about the LGBT community. You just need to be kind of generous to everyone. You don't know what's going on in other people's lives.

- Remy

”



Whakaaro

Remy's story teaches us about the importance of kindness and the power of leaning into vulnerability.

While no stranger to how unfeeling people can be, Remy doesn't see herself as aggrieved or as a victim. It would be a very human response for Remy to choose to use her words to wound, but instead, she uses them to give life.

Embodying whakawhanaungatanga, Remy encourages others and affirms their strengths. Her kindness often invites connection from others in return, and as she has lived on the margins, this can sometimes be difficult to accept.

Living life this way takes courage and the willingness to be vulnerable; sharing with others a little of ourselves in the hope that they will see our humanity and respond in kind. This can be emotionally charged, and as the rangatahi experienced, crying together fosters deep connection. When we lower our walls and connect on a relational level we learn more about each other and, as Remy points out, begin to see ourselves in new, empowering ways.

It is hard to connect on a relational level when you don't feel safe, and unfortunately for many rangatahi takatāpui, schools are often not safe spaces. Schools can be exclusive, and those in power need to hear and act upon the voices of rangatahi takatāpui to achieve an inclusive redesign of education.

Whaiwhakaaro

- Rangatahi takatāpui rarely get to enter into spaces in which they feel safe, heard, and able to be their full authentic selves.
- Rangatahi takatāpui are seeking meaningful, authentic connection, and are courageously vulnerable in their pursuit of this.
- There is a wealth of information on and from marginalised communities who have been trying to get their voices heard for many years.

Pātai/Whakapātaritari

1. Is space provided for mentoring where rangatahi takatāpui feel safe and are able to trust teachers?
2. Is there access to spaces in and out of school where rangatahi takatāpui feel they belong?
3. Are the spaces affirming of diverse cultures and other ways of being than those seen in the dominant culture of 'white spaces'?



Supporting quotes

I was a bit surprised what other people thought of me. I definitely didn't see that in myself. It really made me open my eyes and I was like, oh, I can actually, you know, do it.

- Remy

As soon as I saw some people start to cry at the wānanga, I thought maybe this wasn't so bad. And everyone opening up - I never thought some of the people there would open up to a big group of people like us. Then I thought, I am in the right place.

- Pirika

I don't know how to get to that point of emotional understanding with anyone at school. This happened at the wānanga because of a cultural aspect - with other people knowing that I can just be 'me'.

- May



Pirika (she/her): Tuakiritanga

Pirika's kōrero

Pirika had often watched from the outside: from the edges of her identities. Though she loved kapahaka and waiata Māori, she had been shy and reluctant to join in because she didn't feel she fit in. Sometimes it was because she felt she didn't look Māori enough, other times, there were other louder and better voices.

She also felt like this in regard to her sexuality and gender identities; it wasn't something she felt she could talk about with whānau at home or with others at school. She felt that although she didn't have the chance to, or couldn't, fly the flag on the outside, it didn't match how she felt on the inside. Even her friends would be surprised at how she felt on the inside. People misread or assumed so much about her.

Pirika had the chance to lead tikanga Māori at the wānanga, and though it scared her, it also made her feel good, powerful even. She had space made for taha Māori and she stepped into it. Having space to think about and understand how she felt about her own gender and sexuality gave her some understanding, things to think about, and questions to answer.

On her return from the wānanga, Pirika gifted the pounamu she had made to a teacher who she felt had supported her in finding her identity. Though it still isn't easy pulling the rau of her identities together, she has had some space and time to consider this and can build from here. She knows that walking in the spaces in and around her identities will be a gradual and lifelong process, with stumbles and progress at different speeds, but she is ready to walk that journey.

Negotiating identities, walking between worlds

No one had actually shown me what it was like to be yourself. I was so locked up in the closet... I didn't like talking about the LGBTQ community because I thought it was a bad subject to talk about with some people. Some of them would get really offended by it and go off at me, saying "you're not a part of that", but I actually am. It just made me close up more and more within myself which really sucked.

- Pirika



Whakaaro

Pirika's narrative speaks to how those with positional power and influence have, and often continue to underserve our rangatahi takatāpui.

In the past, when Pirika took the brave step to share deep truths about her identities, she was gaslit, rebuffed and ignored. The damaging effect of this is internal withdrawal; shrinking away from self-expression and being denied the affirmation that comes from being supported in living into an identity.

At the wānanga, Pirika showed her courage again, accepting an opportunity to step into a position of leadership as she led the wider group through waiata. Everyone fed off her strength and confidence, and in this moment, Pirika felt powerful, able and whole. Unfortunately, opportunities for Pirika to live into her fullest identities don't come around too often as most experiences aren't designed for her or people like her.

This experience is a common one for rangatahi takatāpui, and is symptomatic of how they are left on the margins, excluded entirely, or erased from the very same support networks and systems which should be serving them. Yet, there is hope. Systems are created by design – sometimes intentionally, sometimes not – so it follows that the implicit racism, sexism, gender-bias, ableism, classism, and harm that have been designed into them can indeed be designed out.

Whaiwhakaaro

- Rangatahi takatāpui refrain from making assumptions about each other's identities and invite us to do the same.
- People want to be accepted for who they are and treated with dignity and respect. This is no different for rangatahi takatāpui.
- Rangatahi takatāpui have a voice and know what's best for them #NothingAboutUsWithoutUs.

Pātai/Whakapātaritari

- Are you aware of your own identities and how these impact the wellbeing of rangatahi takatāpui?
- Have you identified, explored, and challenged your assumptions about intersectionality?
- School culture can be oppressive and biased against rangatahi takatāpui. Are you actively trying to disrupt this? And if so, how?
- Are you intentionally listening to, advocating for, and allying with rangatahi takatāpui? If so, how?
- How will you take responsibility to ensure the systems and assumptions influencing your work are transformationally equitable, diverse, and inclusive?

“

Supporting quotes

I felt so powerful because no-one was judging me for my singing. Usually when I used to lead kapa haka people would say, “you're white” and, “you're a fake Māori”. When I did it at the wānanga everyone said, “well done Pirika” and I was like, “thank you, so much”.

We're just like everyone else. We're not one big personality, we're not all the same, we're all different. Just approach us. You don't have to be all homophobic or scared of us. Just be normal like you would with any other person.

I'm glad that I went to the wānanga otherwise I wouldn't know who I was today. I'd still be in the closet. I'd still be shutting myself away.

- Pirika

”

Mana (they/them): Whakapapa

Mana's kōrero

Mana's journey has stretched from one identity to another. Taking pride in who they are, they have been able to draw on the strength of their multiple identities: Māori, Pākēha, non-binary, manga enthusiast! Mana has been passionate about how these perspectives weave and clash, and they have studied and researched queer indigenous identities in their own time.

While their journey ahead is still beset with challenges, they are able to stand firm in their story, lending their strength and wisdom to others walking connected paths. Mana has worked hard for something that so many seem to have so easily – to be seen for who they are, and not discriminated against.

In searching through historical and modern contexts, they have connected the whakapapa of queer indigenous peoples around the world. This knowledge offers Mana a better understanding of themselves; a queer indigenous whakapapa.

This shone through at the wānanga, where they were able to connect, add to and illuminate the group's learning together, especially as it related to the trans community – they are a born leader. What made the wānanga transformative is that they were able to share it with a member of their whānau, and their Dad was able to see Mana thrive in this space. They were able to be vulnerable together, taking a long walk and sharing their hearts with one another. This is whakapapa thriving.

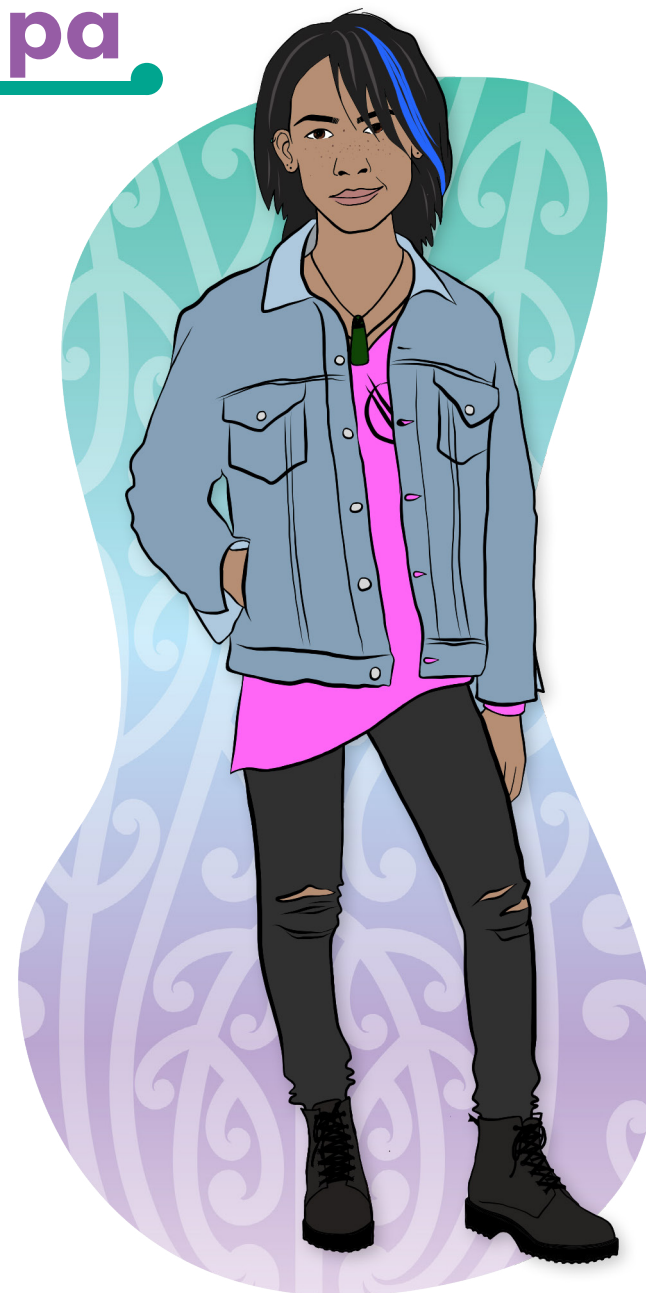
Family relationships, lineage, contexts, history

“

A lot of Māori stuff is actually pretty binary - the guys do this, the girls do that. So I'm not sure how comfortable I am with that because I don't know which one I would be more comfortable with. Like kapa haka, I never was able to fully want to do that because I don't feel comfortable in either of the gender roles...and I don't want to make a big scene about it.

- Mana

”



Whakaaro

Mana has turned their knowledge of queer indigenous identities into action, and is a passionate advocate for takatāpui rights in their school and at home. They have been a powerful voice for identity-affirming pronoun use in their school. They work to build their understanding of who they are, in spite of the fact the formal curriculum offers little at times.

As so many system and cultural norms are binary by design, Mana is repeatedly forced to choose between options that leave no space for their non-binary identity. Wear the female school uniform or the male one? Take the male or female role in kapa haka? Submit to a binary gender to receive medical treatment, or try to educate yet another doctor? This constant othering is complex and exhausting.

Whakapapa is dynamic, especially in the takatāpui space. It encompasses biological and chosen families. Whakapapa can grow from collective groups in the community, friendship groups as well as wider or immediate family. All of these whakapapa groups give rangatahi takatāpui a place of belonging, in the past and for the future. When they are activated and affirmed, the nature of the connection can be transformational.

Relationships and perceptions can be transformed when rangatahi takatāpui are given safe space to challenge their classmates, teachers, doctors and whānau. This can be achieved by ensuring rangatahi takatāpui feel valued, affirmed, and listened to. For many schools, systems and cultural norms, this is a disruption to the 'business as usual' approach and requires intentional action.

Whaiwhakaaro

- Leave space for rangatahi takatāpui to identify in ways that are authentic to them, and ensure you learn from them and respect the knowledge they trust you with.
- Whakapapa, whānau and relationships are dynamic; recognise that belonging and kinship has many forms.
- The process of acceptance and understanding is specific to each relationship and needs support, time and space.

Pātai/Whakapātaritari

1. Do you normalise the use of preferred pronouns in the ways you speak and in the systems in which you operate?
2. In what specific ways do you make your school inclusive of gender diversity?
3. How do you work with whānau of takatāpui rangatahi? In what ways do you value, challenge, and support them?
4. Where there is whānau conflict, how do you keep rangatahi takatāpui safe?



Supporting quotes

It's not as easy as it looks being takatāpui. I think sometimes people get the idea that things aren't as bad as they are because there's takatāpui they know that seem to be doing fine. But just because we have gay or even transgender politicians, we still live in a country where conversion therapy is legal. That just seems so backwards to me.

- Mana

I'm almost constantly changing my GP because I never find the right one. I'd feel a lot more comfortable if the doctor didn't just assume and maybe asked what my pronouns are when we first meet. Just knowing that the doctor's is a safe place is what I want.

- Mana



Erin (she/her): Takatāpuitanga

Erin's kōrero

Erin was always proud of who she is – her whānau celebrated her whakapapa Māori and family connections from abroad. She was also growing in confidence in understanding how she fit into the LGBTQIA+ world. Although she held space in many different worlds, she was passionate and loved learning more about her identities.

She enjoyed the different opportunities that her school gave her to support her understanding and confidence in te ao Māori. Still, she felt friction as these words collided with one another – especially when she thought of gender and sexual identity and how they fit in with her whakapapa Māori.

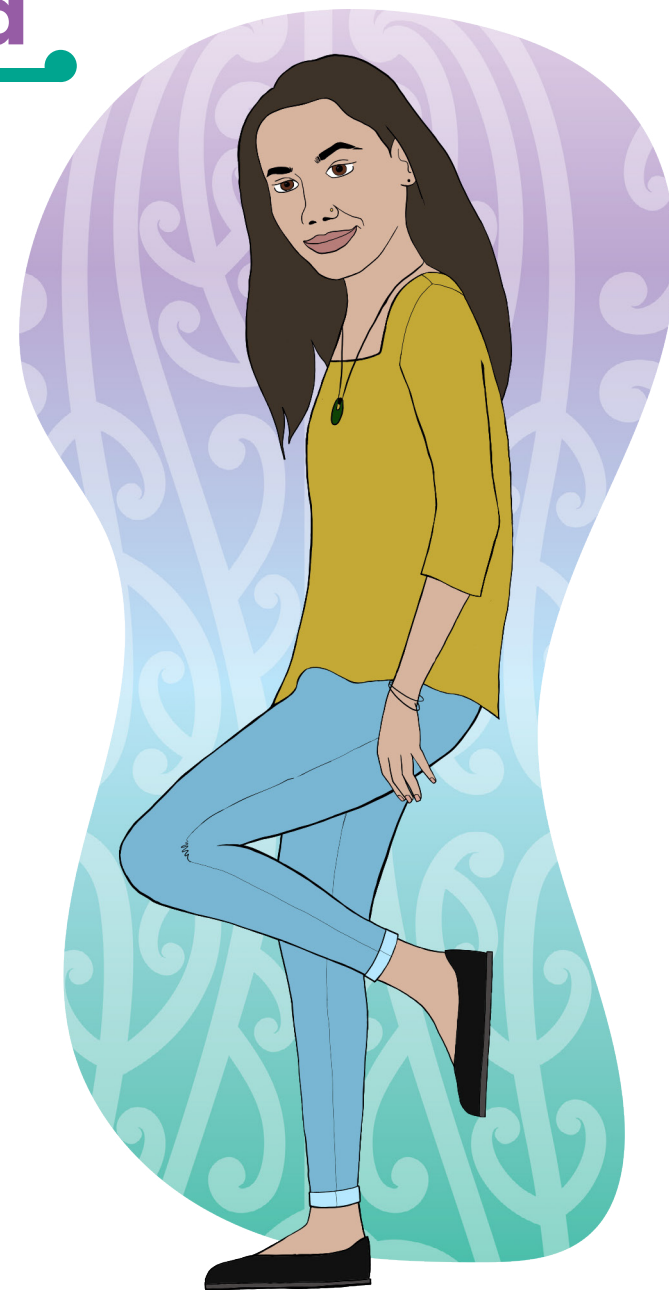
Erin had the chance to share, discuss and challenge how her complex identities work together at the wānanga. She learned about western constructs of her gender, sexuality and diversity in te ao Māori. She had always had a place in the Māori world – Erin wondered why she hadn't been taught this earlier! Erin was excited to apply her knowledge to stand with more confidence in all of the worlds that she is proud to draw from.

Understanding representation, Māori/sexuality/gender identity

When learning about my Māori heritage, same sex couples were accepted and having a child was to carry on generations. They could have same sex marriages and relations and I felt rather happy and proud that that was accepted in our culture for years until New Zealand was integrated with other cultures.

I was happy that Māori heritage would have allowed that, and it was perfectly fine for me to have feelings for other girls. Despite not learning this in school.

- Erin



Whakaaro

As discussed in the previous section, the modern use of ‘takatāpui’ as an identity is a response to western ideas of sex, sexuality and gender, and emphasises one’s identity as Māori as inextricably linked to their gender identity or sexuality.

Erin illustrates this; she holds a diverse understanding of her cultural, gender and sexual identities. Like many of her contemporaries, this is fluid and can challenge those around her. She navigates this with confidence and with a healthy disregard for societal norms.

Erin celebrates the growth of her understanding to include not only the western but also the Māori constructs of who she is. She reflects that she did not have the opportunity to do this in school.

Schools in Aotearoa were not predominantly designed with indigenous perspectives of the world in mind. These include consideration of diverse sexual and gender identities: takatāpui, fa’afafine, fakaleitī, laelae, and others.

Whaiwhakaaro

- Rangatahi takatāpui are hungry for knowledge which they can apply in their own contexts. The wānanga was for many the first opportunity they had to engage with mātauranga takatāpui.
- There were noted generational differences at the wānanga in perceptions of sexual and gender identity and expression, with rangatahi takatāpui demonstrating their comfort with individuality and fluidity.
- Safety in exploring identity-focused knowledge was key. The mahi was challenging and personal, and rangatahi takatāpui valued the intentional space and expert support to unpack this.

Pātai/Whakapātaritari

- Schools in Aotearoa have excellent health and wellbeing policy guidelines in the Ministry of Education’s Relationships and Sexuality Education documents. Do you purposefully ‘localise’ them to include the identities of your Māori and Pasifika students?
- There are indigenous identities and perspectives of sexuality and gender. How will you transform your education practice to be inclusive of these?
- How will you redesign your school so that its culture shifts from sympathetic to transformative?



Supporting quotes

Without the wānanga, I would never have found out that I am more comfortable in my skin as ‘Erin’ than I would have been as the gender I was assigned at birth, and I will be forever thankful for that.

- Erin

Takatāpui is not just a Māori person identifying as something other than ‘cis het’. I don’t think a lot of people understand that there is a whole culture to being Māori. Takatāpui isn’t just a gay Māori or a trans Māori person. It’s different.

- May

I’ve been thinking about te reo Māori and the use of matua and whaea in the classroom, and there doesn’t seem to be a word beyond ‘ia’ that is a diverse honorific.

- May



May (she/her): Tino rangatiratanga

May's kōrero

May was always proud of who she was and wasn't going to let others tell her differently. She was loud and proud about all the different parts of her identity. She had also been generous in sharing with and supporting others who were finding out about themselves. But, this was always a conscious effort; everyday she affirmed her strength and happiness, even though she might not be feeling it that day. She knew herself but she had worked extremely hard to get there.

May turned this knowing into helping and supporting others around her through loving and challenging them; sometimes people needed hugs and other times a push. She was good at knowing when to do either. May was a leader. Not always in that up the front way, but she led others all the time whether she knew it or not. Part of knowing about who you are is that you can become frustrated and impatient with those who refuse to try and understand. This frustration is often what drives May to push on and she is keen to discover and apply this energy to change the world around her.

At the wānanga May learned more about culture and leadership. A natural leader, May fuels her dynamism with knowledge: sharing it, using it to lay down challenges and activating it to inspire action in others.

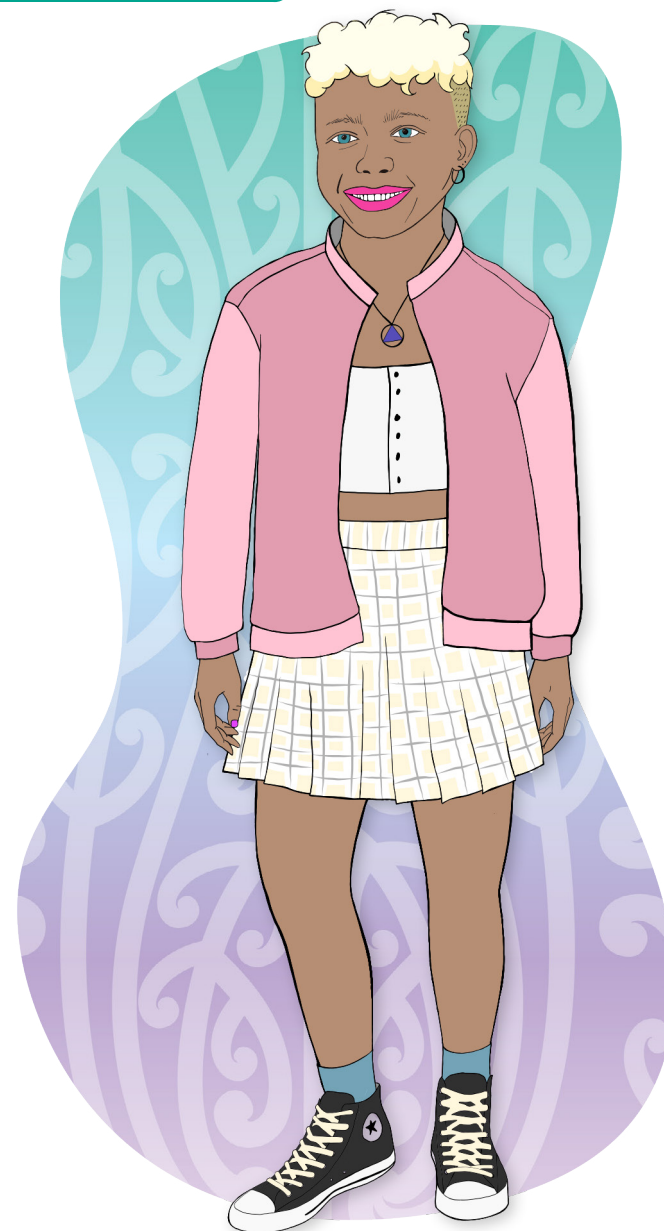
Leadership, decolonisation, self-actualisation

“

I intend on informing people more, anyone that I can, on the different identities that there are and that it's cool if you identify as anything other than cis het. Regardless of whether it's takatāpui or just general queer – you are all good, you are valid, and I appreciate you. I know that there are a lot of people that can't find that within themselves.

- May

”



Whakaaro

May's journey shows us a different side to leadership than is typically held up by western culture as the aspirational ideal. Rather than flexing her considerable knowledge and seeking to one-up other people, May leads from alongside. Sometimes she offers a balm, sometimes a nudge, and sometimes she uses her own past experiences to relate, but no matter the interaction, she always approaches it with aroha and respect. She is quick to let others know that she sees them, accepts them and values them.

Rangatahi takatāpui have in many cases had to grow up quickly. Many have been forced to reflect on who they are and how they fit with a society not designed for them. This 'othering' has been damaging in many ways and has contributed to isolation, disillusionment, anxiety, and depression.

Yet, rangatahi takatāpui are courageous. A diverse mix of voices leads to better outcomes and societal systems for everyone, and rangatahi takatāpui have been ready for a long time to not only share what they think, but to be leaders in working together towards a more equitable, inclusive, and just society.

Whaiwhakaaro

- Rangatahi takatāpui are kaitiaki of knowledge about themselves and about the takatāpui community. They know how to use it powerfully to engage with others, and so positioned, they are able to use it to make systemic change.
- Rangatahi takatāpui are aware that much of their culture has been suppressed, erased, and whitewashed. They are hungry to reconnect with their whakapapa and mātauranga.
- Rangatahi takatāpui display emotional intelligence and maturity beyond their years. Their lessons on leadership and altruism are powerful and transformational.

Pātai/Whakapātaritari

- Schools often force rangatahi takatāpui to abandon their identity in leadership. How might you support them to remain true to who they are as leaders?
- Does your school recognise and grow rangatahi takatāpui as leaders?



Supporting quotes

I share my experiences with my peers and other people who I know identify as takatāpui but aren't necessarily out. I've done this with a few students and we've cried together.

- May

I am learning more about gender in Māori indigenous culture in general because I want to know what's been whitewashed.

- May

When we all did the preferred name and pronouns at the beginning of the wānanga I was very proud to be able to identify as what I am. We could all do that and it made me happy. I wish our school did that, however because it's got "Girls' High School" in the name, it's never even questioned.

- May

Let's educate more young students about themselves and what they can achieve, ways that they can get out of their own heads, that they can think positively, and that they can do things.

- Remy



Transforming relationships with rangatahi takatāpui

Are you a person who makes decisions that affect the lives of rangatahi takatāpui in their learning environments?

Here are some ideas you can consider to move your relationships from sympathetic to transformative.

Leadership

Enabling rangatahi takatāpui to bring their identities and leadership to their school lives to help others by listening and acting on their voice and advice.



Partnership

Rangatahi takatāpui voice informs your work or the way you work. You value and understand the notion of allyship.



Policy & Organisational Inclusion

Rangatahi takatāpui voice is included in decision making. They are visible, celebrated and distinct.



► Transformative

Understanding

Ākonga are using curricular and wellbeing learning opportunities to increase understanding of rangatahi takatāpui and collective happiness in their school environments.



Ally

You understand the nature of being takatāpui and have undertaken learning about the Māori & LGBTQIA+ communities.

You have considered your place and role in making school a safe and effective place of learning for rangatahi takatāpui.



Safe Spaces

You have enabled safe spaces in your kura: physically, mentally and spiritually. Physically: Toilets, changing rooms. Mentally: Curriculum, access to support organisations. Spiritually: School groups, connections to community groups.



► Empathetic

Safety

Implementing all health and safety and legislative requirements to ensure the safety of rangatahi takatāpui.



Bystander

Ensure that rangatahi takatāpui are safe and have access to learning.



Protection

You have generic systems in place to support the wellbeing of rangatahi takatāpui.

You expect kaiako to implement these.



► Sympathetic

For Rangatahi

For Kaiako

For Kura

Moving your relationships from... to...

Ngā Whakapātaritari | Provocations

Provocations for reflection on your own behaviours and how they affect rangatahi takatāpui.

WHAT	A series of questions designed to provoke whakaaro and kōrero
WHO	Teachers, leaders, and anyone who makes decisions that affect the school lives of rangatahi takatāpui
WHY	A way to disrupt thinking and behaviour as schools transform spaces and relationships
WHERE	Can be applied to any context where youth from marginalised groups are present
HOW	We encourage the use of these whakapātaritari in solo reflection, group kōrero (such as staff meetings) and organisational planning for strategy and policy

Whakawhanaungatanga

Schools can work to sustain spaces that are specifically affirming for rangatahi takatāpui.



1. Is space provided for mentoring where rangatahi takatāpui feel safe and are able to trust teachers?
2. Is there access to spaces in and out of school where rangatahi takatāpui feel they belong?
3. Are the spaces affirming of diverse cultures and other ways of being than those seen in the dominant culture of 'white spaces'?

Tuakiritanga

Schools can work to identify, challenge and explore identities.



4. Are you aware of your own identities and how these impact the wellbeing of rangatahi takatāpui?
5. Have you identified, explored and challenged your assumptions about intersectionality?
6. School culture can be oppressive and biased against rangatahi takatāpui. Are you actively trying to disrupt this? And if so, how?
7. Are you intentionally listening to, advocating for, and allying with rangatahi takatāpui? If so, how?
8. How will you take responsibility to ensure the systems and assumptions influencing your work are transformationally equitable, diverse, and inclusive?

Whakapapa

Schools can work with whānau and rangatahi takatāpui to help them flourish.



9. Do you normalise the use of preferred pronouns in the ways you speak and in the systems in which you operate?
10. In what specific ways do you make your school inclusive of gender diversity?
11. How do you work with whānau of takatāpui rangatahi? In what ways do you value, challenge, and support them?
12. Where there is whānau conflict, how do you keep rangatahi takatāpui safe?

Takatāpuitanga

Schools can embrace and celebrate diverse indigenous gender and sexuality identities.



13. Schools in Aotearoa have excellent health and wellbeing policy guidelines in the Ministry of Education's Relationships and Sexuality Education documents. Do you purposefully 'localise' them to include the identities of your Māori and Pasifika students?
14. There are indigenous identities and perspectives of sexuality and gender. How will you transform your education practice to be inclusive of these?
15. How will you redesign your school so that its culture shifts from sympathetic to transformative?

Tino rangatiratanga

Schools can affirm rangatahi takatāpui as leaders.



16. Schools often force rangatahi takatāpui to abandon their identity in leadership. How might you support them to remain true to who they are as leaders?
17. Does your school recognise and grow rangatahi takatāpui as leaders?

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