Māori Mentors: Expectations and Perceptions

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Abstract

This article is informed by a kaupapa Māori methodology and reports on a "by Māori for Māori" peer mentoring programme. The programme, offered by the College of Business at Massey University, focuses on Māori students who are studying at a distance. We outline the programme and the experiences and perceptions from kanohi ki te kanohi (face-to-face) interviews and discussions with seven Māori student mentors who are studying internally. Using Durie's (2009) model of Māori student success we identify a number of attributes that mentors developed by participating in this programme and providing help and support to distance students. Results suggest that mentoring programmes can provide mentors with opportunities to develop in areas such as leadership, which may not have been previously identified and discussed in the literature.

Keywords: Māori students; distance students; mentoring; mentors; tertiary; indigenous; Aotearoa; developing attributes; leadership

Introduction

> If I could list all the positives about the programme [mentoring Māori students studying via distance] I would be writing until the cows come home. I will keep it simple and say that I would recommend the programme to anybody who wants to be a leader, to be able to work as a team, to be able to help someone out. (Māori student mentor talking about the mentoring programme)

Education is vital to enhancing the capability and capacity of the workforce. The benefits gained by Māori participating in education have a direct effect on employment, standards of living, health, and income. Ongoing education is necessary to recruit and sustain Māori across the workforce sectors. According to Rawlings (2010) "there is visible evidence that having a degree benefits Māori economically as well as having social and cultural benefits" (p. 299).

There are a number of Māori mentoring programmes operating in the tertiary education sector with the goal of improving student retention and completion. For example: Vision 20:20 (2016) at the University of Auckland (www.fmhs.auckland.ac.nz), Te Rau Puawai Workforce Development based at Massey University (Ratima et al., 2007), Ngā Kaiārahi Mātauranga (2016) at the University of Waikato (www.waikato.ac.nz) and the Whai Ake Mentoring Programme (2016) at Unitec (www.unitec.ac.nz). Other tertiary education institutions have run mentoring programmes specifically for distance students; for example, The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand (Boyle, Kwon, Ross, & Simpson, 2010).

More recently, a study of Māori mentoring programmes in tertiary education found that Māori students enrolled and receiving support from Māori mentors completed a qualification (mode of

study was not identified), while many of those who did not complete were not enrolled in the mentoring programme (Tahau-Hodges, 2010). Much of the research on Māori mentoring programmes has focused on the pass rates of students and the importance of Māori cultural values on the student's educational success (Durie, 2005).

A Māori mentoring programme focusing on Māori students studying at a distance was piloted in the College of Business (COB) at Massey University (MU) in 2014 and continues to operate. The key goals of this mentoring programme are (1) to increase the completion and pass rate of Māori students studying via distance in core BBS papers; and (2) to develop leadership skills and abilities among the Māori student mentors (who are studying internally).

In this article we discuss the experiences and perceptions of the seven Māori student mentors who worked with Maori students studying via distance in 2015. The mentors' comments form the basis of the discussion and we use their voices to illustrate the development, or improvement, in their leadership skills and abilities. The findings add to the growing body of knowledge surrounding peer mentoring for both Māori and non-Māori (see, for example, Heirdsfield et al., 2008) but, more importantly, will begin a discussion about the benefits of mentoring for the mentors who participate in the programme.

The Aotearoa New Zealand context

The external context in which tertiary education providers operate is becoming more and more regulated. Funding from the Tertiary Education Commission has started to take student pass and retention rates into account, and research funding is allocated from the contestable Performance Based Research Fund (PBRF). While equity funding (which is based on the number of Māori students) is available, this money can be used for a variety of purposes including scholarships, part-funding of Māori academic staff positions, or specific student recruitment and retention positions (Te Wiata, 2016; White & Te Wiata, 2014).

Over the past 20 years MU has supported a number of initiatives which have focused on the recruitment, retention, and success of Māori students. In the early 1990s a Māori learning support position was established in the Department of Māori Studies and, over time every college and campus established dedicated Kaitautoko Māori (Māori Support Staff) positions. In late 2010, support services in the University were centralised and the Te Rau Whakaara (TRW) kaupapa was developed as a university-wide strategy. The overall intent of TRW was to provide a guided and seamless pathway into, through, and out of university for Māori students.

Te Rau Whakaara advisors worked across the study life cycle, from initial engagement to graduation, with prospective students and with new and returning students from all study modes. Each advisor worked in the paired roles of recruitment and retention, although some spent more time in one or the other. In 2014, TRW was disestablished and staff moved to Student Recruitment, External Relations, to focus solely on Māori student recruitment. This resulted in a gap in the area of Māori student support, retention, and completion.

Most Māori staff at MU are acutely aware of the need for designated retention and success programmes for Māori students, and their support for TRW was clear at the 2011 launch. The gap left by the disestablishment of TRW is vast. In the following year, to help fill the gap, the COB opted to pilot a mentoring programme with Māori students in its core BBS papers. The pilot received funding support from the Office of the Assistant Vice Chancellor Māori and Pasifika, and the National Centre for Teaching and Learning. The COB had a high proportion of Māori students (30%), second only to the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. Of the COB students, 70% (570) were studying via distance, and approximately one-third of these are enrolled in at least one core BBS paper. By the end of the pilot's first semester in 2014, a slight

increase was evident in the pass rates of Māori students in some of the core papers, and a decision was made to continue with the programme.

The Māori mentoring programme in operation

This programme was established 'by Māori for Māori' and piloted in the COB in Semester 2, 2014. The pilot programme showed positive outcomes for Māori students studying the core BBS papers via distance with a slight increase in overall pass rates (Koia, 2015). This programme has continued.

The goals of the programme are:

1. to increase the completion and pass rates of Māori students studying via distance in core BBS papers
2. to develop leadership skills and abilities among the Māori student mentors.

The mentors are Māori students studying internally in the COB in their second or third year, and they have passed the eight core BBS papers. The mentoring programme supervisor made the initial contact with them and, if the student was interested in becoming a mentor, they were invited to attend the 2014 end-of-year thank-you function for the previous mentors. This event provided an opportunity for prospective mentors to talk with current mentors, the supervisor, and the facilitator of the programme to get a better understanding of the mentoring role.

The mentors for 2015 were selected and confirmed in January. In February they undertook an initial introduction and orientation session where they met each other and Māori staff involved in the programme. They were introduced to the manner in which each mentoring session would be conducted: mihi whakatau (introductions), karakia (blessings), kai (food), whanaungatanga (relationships), and the use of te reo Māori (the Māori language). Following this, the new mentors were given training on the systems they would use in the role and in the processes they should use when contacting mentees. Role plays were used as part of the training process, allowing mentors the opportunity to practice initiating a conversation with someone they hadn't met. The debriefing sessions that were part of programme were also explained.

Mentors began phoning their mentees (allocated by the programme facilitator) 2 weeks before the start of semester. Calls were made on Wednesday and Thursday evenings.

A typical mentoring session is:

5:00–5:45 p.m.	Shared kai and whakawhanaungatanga
5:45–6:00 p.m.	Facilitator provides updates about processes and systems.
6:00–6:15 p.m.	Discussion about important dates for mentees in the next 2weeks e.g. assignment due dates or reminder about a test.
6:15–8:00 p.m.	Calling mentees

The primary role of the mentors was to provide a link between the university and the mentees. Mentors provided advice and assistance to students in a variety of areas, including navigating the university systems such as the library and Stream (MU's Moodle learning platform). They also helped mentees with their time management skills, provided reminders for assignment due dates, and gave information about learning support services.

Mentors chose when they would work, depending on their study timetables and personal demands so, although every effort was made to 'assign' a specific mentor to each mentee, this

was not always possible. If a mentee asked to be contacted in the future, the mentor explained that someone else might call them, and made a note on the student record to ensure that a follow-up call was made.

The MMP has now been operating in the COB for 3 years (six semesters) and will continue in 2018.

Mentoring

A western perspective

Western literature provides many different definitions and descriptions of what mentoring is or might be. Mentor–mentee pairs can be found in almost every profession—mentoring is evident from academic disciplines to entertainment and popular culture (Eby, 2007).

Interest in mentoring as a scholarly pursuit is often traced to Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, and McKee's study of human development (1978). In their work a mentor is described as a guide, a teacher, a counsellor, and someone who develops skills in another. Levinson et al. also note the influential role that a mentor has in the mentor–mentee relationship—likening it to a parent–child relationship. Ainsworth (1989) comments on the role of emotional attachments beyond childhood and the critical nature these play in adult development. Other studies focused on the importance that mentoring could play in adult development (Eby, Rhodes, & Allen, 2007); and Kram's (1985) in-depth qualitative study of mentoring in the workplace described a number of key aspects of mentoring relationships, including their functions and phases.

Educational research during this same time period focused on the interactions and relationships between non-familial adults. Chickering (1969) looked at the influence of staff on students' academic and affective outcomes when the relationships were outside the classroom. Other researchers (such as Wilson, Gaff, Dienst, Wood, & Bavry, 1975; Astin, 1977; Pascarella, 1980) supported the view that student–staff interaction had a positive influence on a wide range of academic, personal, and career outcomes.

In their review of the mentoring literature, Eby et al. (2007) highlight the differences and similarities in how people define mentoring. They suggest that, because there are several commonalities among the definitions that can serve as a reference for discussing mentoring, the lack of consensus is not necessarily as problematic as it first appears. These commonalities include that a mentoring relationship is unique; for example, it can be short-lived or last a lifetime. Second, mentoring is a learning partnership—although the goals may differ they usually involve the acquisition of knowledge. Third, mentoring is a process, and is characterised according to the type of support and functions that are part of the relationship (e.g., coaching, support, and advocacy). Fourth, mentoring is reciprocal. Although the relationship is not usually equal and the mentor may gain some benefit, the primary goal is to help the mentee in their development.

Mentoring models can be formal or informal, and the mentoring activity can occur one-to-one or in small or larger groups (Tahau-Hodges, 2010). In educational institutions mentoring relationships may take any of these forms. They may include students (both undergraduate and postgraduate) and staff. Student-to-student mentoring relationships (i.e., peer mentoring) are effective in helping learners to feel they belong in an educational institution (Prebble et al., 2004) and these relationships are a particularly important feature for those studying via distance (Boyle et al., 2010).

A Māori perspective

Kaupapa Māori is a way of life—the thinking and practice of being Māori. One of the main principles of kaupapa Māori theory is self-determination; that is, Māori achieving their aspirations for development and advancement in a manner anchored in Māori values, knowledge, and cultural practices (Tahau-Hodges, 2010).

Research has suggested that cultural identity plays a significant role in determining the educational achievement of Māori students, and that by strengthening identity it might be possible to mitigate the effect of external issues on academic performance (Bennett & Flett, 2001; Durie, 1998; Selby, 1996). Mentoring is one strategy that has been posited to increase the educational success of students, particularly if it is based on or informed by kaupapa Māori theory (Clarke, 1998; Ratima & Grant, 2007; Rua & Nikora, 1999).

The theoretical framework on which our mentoring programme is based is informed by Graham Smith's (1990) initial ideas and principles of a model of kaupapa Māori (within an educational context). Since the 1990s other kaupapa Māori theorists including Pihama (2001), Pohatu (2004), and Bishop (2005) have expanded and contributed to the development and growth of the methodology. In a similar manner to Kensington-Miller and Ratima (2015), we included the six key elements of kaupapa Māori articulated by Smith (1990) in our mentoring programme.

1. Tino rangatiratanga
The principle of self-determination provides the foundation for our mentoring programme, which was specifically designed, facilitated and delivered by Māori for Māori students studying via distance.

2. Taonga tuku iho
Cultural aspiration is a living principle. It is embodied in the mentoring sessions, which are conducted according to tikanga Māori with karakia to open and close and to bless our shared kai, and mihi whakatau when we have visitors.

3. Ako Māori
The principle of culturally preferred pedagogy is evident in our use of more experienced internal students (tuakana) as mentors for our first-year students studying via distance (teina). Although our mentors and mentees have been unable to meet kanohi ki te kanohi (due to geographical distance), regular phone and email contact is maintained throughout the semester. Other methods of contact will be trialled as the programme becomes more established (e.g., Zoom or Skype could enable kanohi ki te kanohi meetings).

4. Kia piki ake i ngā raruraru o te kainga
The principle of socio-economic mediation is important in the programme as some Māori students studying via distance face obstacles and barriers such as financial issues and isolation (e.g., geographical, or being the only one in a whānau doing tertiary study). The mentoring programme, while not alleviating the financial difficulties, provides an opportunity for the mentees to be connected with, and encouraged and strengthened by the mentors so they feel part of the university as a whole.

5. Whānau
The principle of extended family structure is a foundational concept for Māori and, for students studying via distance in particular, whānau (in its many forms, as described by Durie, 1994; Metge, 1995) plays an integral part in their learning experience. From those living at home with and supporting the students, through to the mentors in the programme, there is a shared purpose in working towards a successful outcome for mentees. The mentors also have their whānau groups with whom they collaborate to ensure they too are not isolated—one being the 'mentoring

whānau' comprising not just the other mentors, but the supervisors and the programme facilitator.

6. Kaupapa

The principle of collective philosophy is also foundational to our programme and, as outlined above, our purpose is to increase Māori student success at university. In providing Māori students studying at a distance with a peer-mentoring strategy, we aim to help both the mentees and mentors to work towards the best possible collegial, personal, cultural, academic, and career outcomes (Durie, 2009).

We have also taken into account two further elements that have added to a kaupapa Māori methodology.

7. Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Pihama, 2001)

The spirit of the Treaty of Waitangi is demonstrated in that our mentoring programme is conducted by Māori for Māori, and goes some way to affirming Māori rights.

8. Āta (Pohatu, 2004)

The principle of growing respectful relationships has emerged as mentors from each semester have returned to the programme and are able to provide mentoring to both the student mentees and the new mentors.

These principles informed the development and implementation of the MMP. However, it is Durie's (2009) Best Outcomes for Māori Students model that provides a relevant basis from which to discuss our research with the mentors. According to this model, Māori student success must be considered within appropriate frameworks. Figure 1 outlines a set of attributes that students might acquire during their studies in order to be equipped with the requisite skills, academic insights, networks, experience, and cultural competencies to begin or further develop their careers, and prepare to take a lead in achieving a positive future for their whānau. Implicit in Durie's model is the notion of 'leadership' which, very broadly, is the ability to lead or guide individuals or groups.
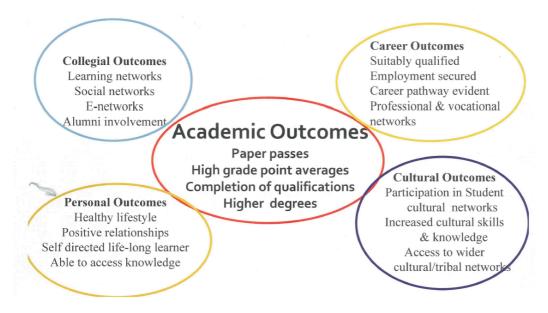

Figure 1 Best outcomes for Māori students (Durie, 2009)
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Study design

In September 2015 a mixed-methods research study focusing on the Māori mentoring programme in the COB was proposed, and ethics approval was sought from and granted by the University. The mentoring programme was piloted in Semester 2, 2014, and implemented more formally in 2015. Therefore, only mentors, mentees, and staff involved in Semesters 1 and 2, 2015, were involved in this study, which involved three phases. These comprised, firstly, kanohi ki te kanohi interviews and discussions with the mentors; secondly, an online survey questionnaire for the mentees; and thirdly, interviews with the programme supervisor and facilitator.

In this paper we present and discuss the findings from the interviews and discussions with seven mentors who participated in 2015. We privilege the voices of the mentors by using quotes to show their experiences and perceptions of the programme. To protect the anonymity of the mentors, names and other identifying information have not been included.

Findings and discussion

The COB is in a good position to contribute to enhancing the Māori workforce, whether it is in the financial, economic, health, education or other sectors, particularly as Māori contribution to the economy was approximately $11 billion in 2013 and continues to grow (Nana, Khan, & Schulze, 2015 in Ruwhiu & Awatere, 2016). The MMP has shown some positive outcomes for Māori distance students and statistical evidence suggests there was a slight increase in the number of Māori students passing their core BBS papers in 2015; however, we cannot say with any certainty that this was solely because of the MMP.

Less easy to assess is the second goal of the MMP—to develop leadership skills and abilities among the Māori student mentors. The comments made by mentors in the kanohi ki te kanohi interviews and discussions are considered in relation to Durie's (2009) Best Outcomes for Māori Students model (Fig. 1). Most of the comments made by the mentors fit into three of the five outcomes outlined by Durie: these are collegial, personal, and cultural outcomes.

Emerging leaders in te ao Māori[1] and te ao Pākehā[2]

Figure 2 is an adaptation of Durie's model. It shows the outcomes that are discussed in this paper and explicitly links the outcomes to leadership development.
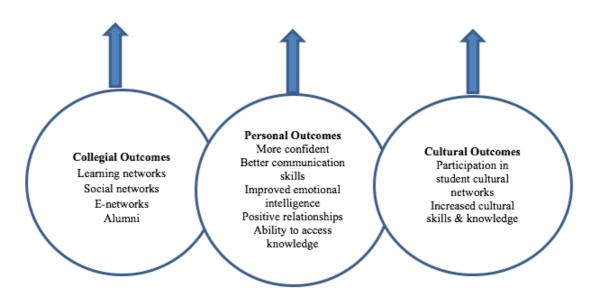

Figure 2 Māori mentor outcomes (Durie, 2009)
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Specific academic outcomes (e.g., paper passes and grade-point averages) were not available to the researchers; however, two mentors graduated with their Bachelor degrees at the end of 2015. Two others switched to distance mode and completed their degrees in 2016. The other three continued their studies and worked as mentors in 2016, completing their degrees and graduating in 2017. At the time of writing, career outcomes could not be discussed as the first cohort of mentors were still studying or in the very early stages of employment.

Collegial outcomes

All seven mentors commented on collegial outcomes, with most focused on interactions with the Māori students studying via distance and how they could help them to succeed with their study at MU. The programme also enabled social and e-networks in the mentor cohort—they developed an informal mentoring circle to support each other with their study and their learning about kawa and tikanga.

Some mentors identified that they wanted to be involved with the programme so they could help others and give something back.

Specific reasons included:

> . . . good to help others try to achieve . . .

> . . . be able to help and make the studying experience easier and more enjoyable . . .

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[1] The Māori world

[2] The European world

… help people cope with university life…

I have been both an internal student and extramural [distance] and being 'mature' am aware of the struggles that our Māori students face . . . for me it is a matter of giving back . . .

When asked: "What kinds of benefits do you believe mentoring provides to students?" the mentors' comments fell into two main categories of support/help and confidence. In terms of support/help, comments included:

. . . motivator and keeping people on track . . .

. . . providing support and advice to students . . .

. . . help to develop study skills . . .

. . . help students to learn and grow . . .

. . . it removes the sense of isolation and creates the feeling of community . . .

. . . students become more aware of services available to help with study . . .

and

. . . HELP.

Some mentors felt they had been successful in helping students become more confident with their study, and commented:

. . . provide an internal confidence boost for the student . . .

. . . help students become more confident with their study . . .

I mentored a student who was whakama [shy] and did not want to contact the paper coordinator and struggled with the paper terminology and what was actually required. With mentoring support this student submitted her assignment, if we didn't help she was going to fail and not submit the assignment.

The mentors also benefited from their relationship with the mentees. Three comments showed how some felt about their interactions with mentees:

Most of the positive interactions I had with students where I really felt I was helping them out would have been when the students had personal issues that were interfering with their study and I would give them advice on how to manage their studies in the face of those issues.

I felt I was able to inform students of little details [like withdrawing before a certain date in order to avoid financial and academic penalties] that went a long way in terms of saving them money and giving them an option to withhold their study if it was too difficult at this time.

Having been a kaiako [teacher] before I was aware of the good feeling that came from helping others . . . the 'buzz' is seeing or sensing the growth of the individual in who they are, growing in confidence, so that the place their feet stand is stronger.

The mentors themselves developed an informal 'mentoring circle' in which they supported each other with their study. The format of the mentoring session (shared kai and whakawhanaungatanga) also enabled social networks to develop. A Facebook page was set up to facilitate communication between the mentors, supervisor, and facilitator, and the four students

who are no longer mentors have chosen to stay connected with the programme through this e-network. The two mentors who have graduated are now university alumni and, as others graduate, they will also become part of this university network.

Personal outcomes

The three circles in the model are not totally separate and some of mentor comments relating to collegial outcomes could also relate to personal outcomes (e.g., positive relationships). It could be argued that all good collegial outcomes are based on positive relationships and the choice about where to put individual comments from the mentors was not made lightly. However, the attributes that the students acquired from being mentors all led to the development of their leadership skills.

When asked why they decided to become mentors, replies included:

> . . . looks good on CV . . .

> . . . able to learn more and add something different to my skill set . . .

> . . . develop leadership skills . . .

> . . . develop confidence . . .

> . . . learn better communication skills . . .

Mentors were asked: "What are some of the **personal** positives that you will take away from the programme?"

Responses included:

> I would definitely say the satisfaction of knowing that you helped someone with something whether it be their study or letting them know that there's someone out there to help them.

> I gained a lot of confidence from being part of the mentoring programme. It has definitely helped me a lot with not only my interactions with students but people in general.

> The comradeship with those in the team and seeing them develop, and also the positive differences we made.

When the mentors were asked specifically about their emotional intelligence (EI), no specific answers were provided. However, in a later discussion, one mentor described an initial conversation with a mentee who was quite emotional and unsure about her study and her ability to do the work required. The mentor asked the facilitator if she could be allocated this particular student in future weeks so that she could keep up the conversation and reassure and help the student whenever possible. This mentor obviously recognised the student's need to have one contact person and decided to provide this support—showing a high level of emotional intelligence. This statement also demonstrates the mentor's ability to build a positive and personal relationship with the mentee.

During the interviews mentors revealed their ability to build positive relationships with mentees as they became more proficient in the mentoring role.

One stated:

> After the first few weeks I was sweet. I had learnt the ins and outs of the mentoring and I was making more and more phone calls as the weeks went by. I kind of developed my own sort of approach to mentoring as well to make the mentoring more personal to me.

By the end of 2015 all of the mentors were using their own personal scripts and building on the relationships that they had developed with individual mentees. Mentors were using different forms of greeting with mentees and discussed different topics depending on the demographic of the mentee. For example, they might start one phone call with "Yo bro", but start another phone call with "Kia ora whaea"—demonstrating their ability to adapt the training to best suit them, thus improving the relationship with the mentee. How the mentors greeted mentees differently, acknowledging their status in the whanau, also shows development of their emotional intelligence.

The mentors had to learn new computer systems so they could update student records and make notes about the phone calls. This showed their ability to access knowledge. One mentor commented:

> … gaining more knowledge about the university systems and I didn't need to check with the facilitator all the time.

Mentors also had to develop the skill of concise writing as the relevant points from the phone call needed to be written succinctly so that anyone following the student's record would have all the relevant information.

Mentors' comments about cultural aspects of the programme are now discussed as part of the third outcome in Durie's model.

Cultural outcomes

An integral part of the mentors' training was the principle of taonga tuku iho (cultural aspiration) and the mentoring sessions were conducted according to tikanga Māori kaupapa (framework based on Māori protocols). The supervisor and facilitator both worked on the initial training session and used te ao Māori examples to explain the students' journey when they began their study.

One mentor commented:

> Any journey starts with the first steps, so there was a sense of whānau and shared kaupapa of making a difference. At the initial meeting [the supervisor's] approach created a very good mauri [life principle] for the mentors.

Talking about the same training session, another mentor said:

> I liked the analogy of moving from Te Kore, through to Te Pō then Te Ao Marama which charts the journal of the individual.[3]

The training information given to the mentors at the initial session included copies of karakia (to start and end meetings, and for kai) and a template for a pepeha (personal introduction) which is used at mihi whakatau to introduce yourself through your whakapapa and thereby develop whanaungatanga links with others in the room. Some of the mentors had strong links to their whakapapa but others struggled to write a pepeha and had to conduct research with whānaumembers.

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[3] Based on the whakapapa of creation. See http://maaori.com/whakapapa/creation.htm

The facilitator was present at all of the mentoring sessions and ensured that karakia were said at the beginning and end of all sessions and before kai. If guests had been invited there was mihi whakatau and the use of te reo Māori was encouraged among the mentors. Whakawhanaungatanga was implicit in all sessions and formed the basis of how the mentors developed relationships with each other and the mentees.

Some of the mentors had strong links to their whakapapa and whānau as a result of being brought up close to their marae (home place) and hapū (extended family). For others, using te reo Māori was intimidating and the tuakana–teina (more experienced–less experienced) model was used in the mentoring sessions to support and encourage those with less knowledge.

Comments included:

> I was too scared to read the karakia as I didn't know how to pronounce the Māori words.

> I liked the use of ako [learning] through the tuakana–teina model.

By the end of the first few mentoring sessions all mentors knew a suitable karakia to start, finish, and to bless food. Mentors were encouraged to learn and recite karakia but there was no time limit and initially most read from the prepared karakia and began to learn them as their knowledge of te reo Māori improved.

Comments included:

> I didn't feel forced to learn the karakia—wanted to do it so that I could feel part of the whanau.

> It felt good when I went to a hui and I knew a karakia to say for kai.

For most of the mentors, learning new skills through a te ao Māori lens was a revelation as they hadn't attended a kohanga reo (Māori pre-school) or studied papers specifically related to Māori. Concepts such as the creation story were new to these mentors. The pepeha was also new to some of them, and they were encouraged to contact whānauto find out their whakapapa and include it into their personal pepeha. Given the research involved, there was no pressure on the mentors to fully complete their pepeha but they were encouraged to use part of it (either read or learned) whenever they had to introduce themselves. Again this was done in the tuakana–teina environment to lessen anxiety and build whakawhanaungatanga relationships between the mentors.

Some mentors went back to their marae and hapū to find out about their whakapapa and this enabled them to re-establish contact with whanau:

> I didn't realise what I didn't know. I grew up by the marae until I was 12 but hadn't taken any notice of the tikanga and things.

> Learning my whakapapa gave me an opportunity to visit some older whānauthat I hadn't seen in years.

There were no specific comments about learning their pepeha; however, at the end-of-year function to thank the mentors for their work during 2015, two mentors used their full pepeha to introduce themselves. They hadn't been able to do this at the beginning of 2015 (F. Palmer, personal communication, 20 November, 2015).

At this function the mentors also spoke confidently about the programme, what it meant to them, and how they believed they had helped Māori students studying via distance. Some mentors

spoke specifically about the mentoring outcomes that would enable them to follow a leadership path in the future, including having more confidence operating in te ao Māori and te ao Pākehā; building relationships (tuakana–teina); developing social and e-networks with other mentors; and their increased knowledge of pepeha, mihi, karakia, kawa, and tikanga.

Summary and conclusion

The MMP discussed in this paper had two goals: first, to increase the completion and pass rates of Māori students studying via distance; and second, to develop the Māori mentors' leadership skills and abilities, to enable them to become future leaders in te ao Pākehā and/or te ao Māori. We used Durie's 2009 model to discuss the collegial, personal, and cultural outcomes expressed by the mentors.

There is ample evidence to show that tuakana–teina mentoring can be of significant value to mentors and mentees if implemented in a culturally appropriate manner. However, success depends on adequate resourcing, appropriate staffing, and a framework conducive to Māori values and beliefs.

Further research on Māori mentoring in the tertiary education sector would be worthwhile. This could include exploring mentors' and mentees' perceptions throughout their student journey and beyond graduation. This additional research will enrich the growing body of literature relating to peer mentoring generally but, more importantly, it will provide much-needed data about Māori mentors and mentoring in the tertiary education sector in Aotearoa New Zealand.

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