

Tūrou Hawaiki: Morning karakia and waiata as culturally responsive pedagogy

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This article presents the findings of a qualitative case study on voluntary participation in morning *karakia* (incantation, prayer) and *waiata* (song) sessions, led by a group of teacher educators. This study is informed by a selective review of literature from three relevant sources: the impact of music therapy practices, culturally responsive pedagogy, and the normalisation of *te reo Māori* (Māori language) and *tikanga Māori* (Māori protocols and customs). This approach to the literature review was necessary given the paucity of research on the impact of indigenous cultural practices such as *karakia* and *waiata* in mainstream cultural contexts. Through thematic analysis of a survey questionnaire ($N = 65$) and semi-structured interviews ($n = 9$), findings showed that participants experienced an improved sense of wellbeing, an increased feeling of *whanaungatanga* (relationships and belonging) and greater confidence in engaging with Māori culture. This study could be considered a catalyst for additional research into the practice of daily *karakia* and *waiata* in educational or professional contexts to better understand the long-term effects on wellbeing and on cultural competence and confidence.

Keywords: karakia, waiata, wellbeing, culturally responsive practice, te reo Māori, tikanga

Introduction

The University of Canterbury (UC), School of Teacher Education, began running daily morning *karakia* and *waiata* sessions in 2019.¹ This was to provide staff and students with opportunities to enhance wellbeing, build cohesion and to “walk the talk” of culturally responsive practice within the teaching profession.² This daily practice became known as “Tūrou Hawaiki!”. These words were used to sign off each morning session, and essentially mean “may the force be with you!”. Despite the distinct documentation in literature of the physiological, psychological and social benefits of singing together

¹ While the Māori language terms “*karakia*” and “*waiata*” can be roughly translated as “prayer” and “song” respectively, they are not to be considered equivalent terms or literal translations. Instead, they are culturally located terms with meanings that are embedded in Māori worldviews and cultural practice. It is a Māori cultural convention to begin a meeting with a *karakia* and for it to be accompanied by a *waiata*, hence, it is not appropriate to study one or the other in isolation.

² This work aligns with two core policy documents which set the bicultural agenda in New Zealand for teacher professional conduct and standards: *Tātaiako* (<https://teachingcouncil.nz/assets/Files/Code-and-Standards/Tataiako-cultural-competencies-for-teachers-of-Maori-learners.pdf>) and *Our Code Our Standards* (<https://teachingcouncil.nz/assets/Files/Code-and-Standards/Our-Code-Our-Standards-Nga-Tikanga-Matatika-Nga-Paerewa.pdf>). It supports the University of Canterbury’s Bicultural Competence and Confidence Framework (<https://www.canterbury.ac.nz/about/leadership/senior-leadership-team/avc-maori/bicultural-competence-and-confidence-framework/>).

(Batt-Rawden & Anderson, 2019; Clift & Morrison, 2011; Daykin et al., 2018; Glew et al., 2021; Stewart & Lonsdale, 2016), little research has been done in Aotearoa New Zealand settings pertaining to karakia or waiata within mainstream schooling. Practice-based research in teacher education encourages the use of karakia and waiata as a method of culturally responsive practice (Rātima et al., 2020). However, few studies have explored, empirically, the potential for *tikanga Māori* (Māori protocols and customs) to help build understanding and cohesion, and to develop the cultural competence of learners and teachers. Tūrou Hawaiki quickly manifested as an uplifting and empowering routine. It soon attracted regular attendees in the physical location of Rehua (a faculty building on the UC campus), an online following through livestreaming (Karakia Live InSTED, 2020), and transient additions from visiting groups, meeting attendees or passers-by. This article seeks to better understand and evidence these anecdotal experiences. The following section is a select review of literature specific to these issues.

Literature review

The indigenous cultural practice of karakia and waiata in the Aotearoa New Zealand school context are widely un-researched. Given the significant gap in the literature, researchers explored adjacent research from relevant contexts, weaving together Māori and Western knowledge streams. Therefore, the literature review focuses on holistic practices to enhance wellbeing and culturally responsive practice, and the normalisation of *te reo Māori* (Māori language) and *tikanga Māori*. The researchers purposively targeted this literature because of its relevance within the teaching profession.

Holistic practices to enhance wellbeing

The Te Whare Tapa Whā model of health (Durie, 1994) is well known and widely used in Aotearoa New Zealand to position health and wellbeing beyond a physical or medical dimension. Te Whare Tapa Whā includes the psychological, spiritual, physical and social dimensions of health, in conjunction with the land (*whenua*) to which one belongs. This deepening and broadening of “the definition of health” has not only directly affected policy and practice across Aotearoa, it has seen the validation and respect for *te ao Māori* (Māori worldview) frameworks, practices, protocols and wisdom to be used in health and education environments. Karakia and waiata are examples of enacting *tikanga Māori* in everyday settings to enhance wellbeing. For example, there are links between the strategic use of karakia and waiata and the enhancement of individual wellbeing in the context of music therapy (Clift & Morrison, 2011; Rollo, 2013). Furthermore, Thom et al. (2018) investigated the association between the therapeutic use of karakia and social cohesion. Findings showed that karakia can unite the surrounding individuals present in that moment and this unity can have lingering positive effects on cohesion (Thom et al., 2018).

Mark and Lyons (2010) explored traditional Māori healers’ perceptions of karakia. They found that the application of karakia within the contemporary context led to beneficial wellbeing impacts on *whānau* (family) and *whakapapa* (genealogy) (Mark & Lyons, 2010). Likewise, Ferguson et al. (2010) examined the use of prayer as a stress-relieving coping mechanism in a randomised group. The study found physiological effects linked to therapeutic practices, including changes in breathing, relaxation, improved posture, reduced fatigue and stress relief (Ferguson et al., 2010). Collectively, these findings suggest the spiritual, social, physiological and psychological effects of karakia on wellbeing are not only possible, they could contribute to holistic healing, with both individual and collective wellbeing benefits (Ferguson et al., 2010; Mark & Lyons, 2010; Thom et al., 2018).

Prior to European contact, karakia was widely used as a protective methodology (Rollo, 2013). It was used for natural, holistic healing beyond the physical, invoking a spiritual and mental cloak of wellness

on those who practiced it. Rollo's (2013) study also examined the influences of Māori cultural renaissance, cosmology and culture on music therapy practice in Aotearoa New Zealand, through traditional musical therapy methodologies. Rollo (2013) found that waiata bear similar calming effects to karakia, via the melodies, rhythms and tones. The influence of traditional karakia and waiata on music therapy practices proved beneficial to the wellbeing of Māori (Rollo, 2013). Both practices have become more prominent within public health practices and organisations throughout Aotearoa New Zealand. Te Rūnanga o Kirikiriroa (The Council Board of Hamilton) Health Wellness Centre, known as Te Kōhao Health, is one of many Māori health providers that have adopted the therapeutic uses of karakia as a healing methodology in their *rongoā Māori* (Māori medicine, remedies) sessions (Te Kōhao Health, n.d.).

Like karakia, group singing is a widespread human phenomenon, with an increasing body of research suggesting that singing can enhance wellbeing. Batt-Rawden and Anderson (2019) identified evidence of a connection between collective choral singing and individuals' health and wellbeing in the Norwegian community. Participants reported an awareness of the positive effects of choral singing on their self-perceived measures of wellbeing (Batt-Rawden & Anderson, 2019). The study observed four distinct effects: an improved feeling of joy, choral singing being a necessary part of the participant's lifestyle, enhancement of self-esteem and self-confidence, and a sense of social inclusion and belonging (Batt-Rawden & Anderson, 2019). The participants reported no detrimental effects of engaging in choral singing together.

Similarly, Clift and Morrison (2011) found a positive relationship between a community singing initiative and individuals' health and wellbeing. Their research explored the influence of an innovative community singing initiative for mental health services users and supporters in an East Kent community. Findings indicated significant clinical improvements and advantages when aiding individuals with a long history of mental health problems (Clift & Morrison, 2011). Emotional, psychological and social benefits were present. While Clift and Morrison (2011) focused on psychological wellbeing rather than identity and belonging, both these studies provide empirical evidence of the positive impacts of singing together on self-reported measures of individual wellbeing.

In another study connecting psychological wellbeing and singing, Stewart and Lonsdale (2016) invited participants ($N = 375$) to complete a survey on their choral singing experiences. Overall, participants experienced a boost in their psychological wellbeing, and, additionally, the study found two distinct observations: an improvement in motivation, along with a reduction in competition and a subsequent improvement in self-reflection. Similar to Batt-Rawden and Anderson's (2019) work, the research found that choral singers made social connections within their groups, leading to greater cohesion (Stewart & Lonsdale, 2016). These two studies could suggest that group singing may contribute to or satisfy an individual's need for connectedness.

Furthermore, the increase in subjective wellbeing using the likes of music, art or singing does not seem restricted to a specific age or culture. Glew et al. (2021) reviewed the effectiveness of group singing on the wellbeing outcomes specifically for children and youth up to 18 years of age. A systematic integrative review illustrated that group singing enhanced children's and young people's wellbeing through social connectivity and self-confidence (Glew et al., 2021). Key findings were the development of social cohesion to reduce loneliness and mental health issues, which were similar to that in Clift and Morrison's (2011) study on adults.

Whitinui (2008) and Hindle (2002) conducted research into *kapa haka* (Māori performing arts) as a culturally responsive teaching methodology to engage in Māori culture, language and traditions for wellbeing. Whitinui (2008) found that kapa haka students experienced a decrease in their learning

anxiety, isolation and stress. Comparable to Daykin et al. (2018), Whitinui (2008) found the use of kapa haka as a pedagogical tool enabled students to make positive changes towards an improved quality of life. Evidence also suggested that students engaging in kapa haka positively affected their participation at school, their creativity and their self-expression (Hindle, 2002).

Daykin et al. (2018) examined the role of music and arts in enhancing subjective wellbeing in elderly adults ($N = 278$). Utilising the GRADE and CERQual schema, they determined that music and singing contributed to a decrease in anxiety, an enhancement of mood, increased quality of life and better self-awareness for individuals with diagnosed health conditions. Consequently, music and singing enhanced morale and decreased the risk of depression (Daykin et al., 2018).

The relatively limited pool of research in the context of karakia and waiata provides an impetus for a research agenda to extend upon this growing but nascent body of work. Notwithstanding the limited research to date, the body of work generally connecting music and wellbeing suggests significant psychological, social and cultural benefits for people. Local research in the context of kapa haka, karakia and waiata (Hindle, 2002; Rollo, 2013; Whitinui, 2008) supports these findings, but adds a thread of benefits pertaining to the creative self, cultural identity, spirituality and group expression. While this section has shown evidence that the practice of karakia and waiata in our teaching environments may support wellbeing, the following section will consider these practices within the context of culturally responsive teaching.

Culturally responsive practice

Familiarity with and understanding of te reo Māori and tikanga Māori is essential to cultural competence in helping to navigate the culturally diverse learning environments student-teachers and teacher educators operate in (Karaka-Clarke et al., 2021; Rātima et al., 2020). Researchers have created frameworks for understanding and guiding the development of culturally responsive practice (CRP) (Barr & Seals, 2018; Britt et al., 2019; Cross, 1989; Kerr & Averill, 2021; Torepe et al., 2018; Webber, 2012). Cross (1989) developed a framework for a continuum of cultural inclusion, ranging from cultural destructiveness to cultural competence. Though other tools exist, this continuum is a useful indicator of the stages taken to attain cultural competence. One thing all these frameworks share is that they are fundamentally relational. That is to say, they all emphasise dimensions of *whakawhanaungatanga* (relationships) and *kotahitanga* (cohort unity) as foundations of CRP. Karakia and waiata are concrete examples of cultural practices which build whakawhanaungatanga and kotahitanga.

One major point of difference in “home-grown” New Zealand frameworks of CRP compared with overseas ones is that the definitions for success for indigenous Māori students are to be determined by the students and their whānau (see, for example, Webber, 2012, and Rātima et al., 2020). This is an important part of what is referred to as “Māori succeeding as Māori” (Berryman & Eley, 2017). At the heart of the matter, frameworks built on Māori cultural concepts and practices challenge colonised perceptions of education. They may also hold the potential to revive indigenous cultures and *mana* (status, dignity). Consequently, Kerr and Averill (2021) argue that teachers play an impactful role in upholding this revitalisation in classroom environments. More specifically, in Aotearoa New Zealand, teachers are *required* to use culturally sustaining pedagogies.³ Most teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand

³ See Our Code Our Standards – Code of Professional Responsibility and Standards for the Teaching Profession, specifically clauses 1.4, 2.4, 3.3, 4.2 (<https://teachingcouncil.nz/assets/Files/Code-and-Standards/Our-Code-Our-Standards-Nga-Tikanga-Matatika-Nga-Paerewa.pdf>).

are Pākehā (non-Māori). Thus, understanding, respecting and engaging in te ao Māori practices is essential for teacher effectiveness (Kerr & Averill, 2021).

In recent years some very good sector-specific resources to support teacher cultural competency have been developed, and they are available to teachers to help assist with the normalisation of cultural practices like karakia and waiata (see, for example, Rātima et al., 2020, and Karaka-Clarke et al., 2021). However, despite practical tools such as these existing, pre-service teachers require much more than systemic tools (such as those provided by Britt et al., 2019, Torepe et al., 2018, Kerr and Averill, 2021, and Highfield and Webber, 2021). The limitation of these frameworks is that they may reduce CRP to being seen as a set of cultural tools – which, in reality, does very little for the longevity of indigenous student success. In fact, Britt et al. (2019) and Kerr and Averill (2021) recommend that CRP should be seen as a journey. This requires fewer “cultural” tools, but more opportunities to build confidence and competence, and tackle cultural inequities (Britt et al., 2019; Kerr & Averill, 2021). CRP is a skill that requires numerous, and progressive, opportunities (Britt et al., 2019). Though significant and powerful if practiced with dignity and understanding, morning karakia and waiata are but one piece of the mosaic of the potential of CRP.

Culturally responsive practice requires all teachers to take responsibility in teaching environments (Bishop & Glynn, 2003; Britt et al., 2019; Kerr & Averill, 2021; O’Neill, 2017). How non-Māori teachers gain competence and confidence in te ao Māori is contested (Britt et al., 2019; Highfield & Webber, 2021; Kerr & Averill, 2021; O’Neill, 2017). On the one hand, Highfield and Webber (2021) argue that non-Māori teachers need to be given ongoing support and upskilling from Māori in order to increase their knowledge and understanding of te ao Māori. On the other hand, Britt et al. (2019) and Torepe et al. (2018) argue the need to ensure cultural taxation does not occur for those Māori teachers and support staff providing such cultural support. Torepe et al. (2018) researched the experiences of Māori teachers in English-medium schools. They found that many of the Māori participants experienced difficulties and distress in their experiences of attempting to maintain professional development programs to upskill their non-Māori colleagues. Thus, they concluded that people should be responsible for upskilling themselves in cultural competence and responsive practice (Torepe et al., 2018).

Barr and Seals (2018) claim that identity, ability and attitude play a part in non-Māori teachers utilising te reo Māori in their teaching environments. They concluded that non-Māori often saw themselves as “borrowers” of the Māori language. Therefore, Barr and Seals (2018) concluded that if non-Māori could see themselves in this respectful space as “access providers” rather than “owners”, then non-Māori teachers could become agents to support the shift in attitudes and perspectives of their fellow non-Māori teachers. A significant part of culturally responsive pedagogy is the normalisation of te reo and tikanga Māori.

Normalising te reo Māori and tikanga Māori

The core reasoning to explore normalising literature pertaining to te reo Māori in the teaching environment is to honour Aotearoa New Zealand’s founding treaty document, Te Tiriti o Waitangi.⁴ Article 2 of Te Tiriti includes the importance of valuing and upholding *taonga* (roughly translated to mean

⁴ Te Tiriti o Waitangi (The Treaty of Waitangi) is a contested treaty of cession. It consisted of three articles and was rendered as a Māori version and a separate English version. It was first signed on 6 February 1840 by Māori and the British Crown at Waitangi. Most Māori representatives signed the Māori version. However, the two versions were not equal, with the English version implying that Māori would cede their sovereignty to the Crown, while the Māori version implied the acknowledgement of Māori sovereignty and its protection by the Crown. The current legal status of the Treaty is not settled. There are numerous and growing numbers of statutes which refer to the Treaty and therefore make it legally enforceable (including the *Education and Training Act 2020*), but the Treaty by itself currently is not generally considered legally enforceable.

treasure, something of great worth). For Māori, language and customs are a taonga (Britt et al., 2019; O'Neill, 2017; Te Huia, 2022). This is not a forgotten or missed aspect of educational facilities, and is discussed across numerous literature sources and the institutes they explore (Britt et al., 2019; O'Neill, 2017; Te Huia, 2022). Thus, honouring Te Tiriti is a responsibility of both Māori and non-Māori in educational environments (Britt et al., 2019; Te Huia, 2022). Te reo Māori and tikanga Māori are important for educators to sustain culturally responsive teaching environments in Aotearoa New Zealand (Britt et al., 2019; Highfield & Webber, 2021; O'Neill, 2017; Te Huia, 2022; Torepe et al., 2018; Webber, 2012). Research has found there are benefits to normalising Māori culture for the sake of Māori students (Highfield & Webber, 2021; Webber, 2012). For Māori, success in education is built upon both academic support and acknowledgement of their cultural identity (Webber, 2012). It is not only vital to ensure Māori students feel capable and assured in their language and culture, they also need to know they do not need to forsake their Māori identity in order to attain academic success (Highfield & Webber, 2021).

Webber (2012) found that for many Māori, their culture was their favourite outcome of schooling, and the most significant factor in their success. Kapa haka, the use of language and other cultural traditions were all contributors. Webber (2012) concluded that language and traditions were fundamental in helping Māori feel a sense of belonging to their cultural and school communities. In this regard, the normalisation of te reo Māori and *mātauranga Māori* (Māori knowledge) in education is not just for the sake of teacher competence; it is for student identity and their sense of belonging in school environments (Highfield & Webber, 2021). Put simply, we support Māori success by normalising te reo Māori and mātauranga Māori.

Te reo Māori as a tool for teacher effectiveness is a collective responsibility in a bicultural country. Normalising te reo Māori and tikanga Māori has, in recent decades, become a political, economic and educational imperative in Aotearoa New Zealand organisations (Lee-Morgan et al., 2019). Due to the prolific movement seen within the education sector towards “normalisation”, ways of measuring or witnessing this change have become increasingly paramount. A critical framework developed to understand the normalisation of te reo Māori at an individual level is the ZePA model (Britt et al., 2019; Higgins & Rewi, 2014). This model moves from Zero to Passive, then to Active – all levels considering an individual’s attitudinal and psychological positioning towards te reo Māori. Zero indicates that the individual is not receptive to the language. Those positioned at the Passive stage are receptive to the language, but are not actively learning or using the language. Those positioned in the Active stage are receptive to the language, and learn or use it frequently and regularly (Britt et al., 2019). These types of models can be helpful to organisations that are seeking to observe and understand the progression in the normalisation of te reo Māori, including in teacher education. However, as we know from the literature on CRP, the normalisation of using te reo Māori is multifaceted – just because we may come to know, as a general population, that although learning te reo Māori is a constructive enactment of Te Tiriti, it does not equate to having the confidence or competence to do so.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, the education of teachers includes the importance of te reo Māori, and there are institutional and governmental strategies that encourage the normalisation of te reo Māori and tikanga Māori to be utilised in educational environments (Barr & Seals, 2018). These are macro-policies instilled from national government and local school levels. However, these macro-policies may be filtered through teachers’ micro-policies, and only there is it decided if they will be applied. This can be conscious or subconscious (Barr & Seals, 2018). Therefore, teachers’ identities, attitudes and personal beliefs must mirror the normalisation of te reo Māori and tikanga Māori. For this to happen, adequate support to feel confident and competent in using te reo Māori in daily teaching is fundamental (Barr & Seals, 2018). Anxiety that is felt by Māori language learners (both Māori and Pākehā reo learners) is

documented (Te Huia, 2022), and is an identified barrier to learning. Safe spaces for learning te reo Māori are required for continuation of learning, regardless of skill level; moreover, learners could mitigate their anxiety by redirecting their focus away from their perceptions of how others viewed their language attempts (Te Huia, 2022).

When we combine the literature on holistic practices to enhance wellbeing, culturally responsive practice, and the normalisation of te reo Māori and tikanga Māori, we can see how plausible daily karakia and waiata sessions could be for advancing cultural competency and wellbeing in safe, supportive environments for both Māori and non-Māori. The potential of morning karakia and waiata lies in its potential to unify (kotahitanga) people of all levels and differences to practice karakia and waiata together—without a hierarchy of power. This structure could minimise language anxiety, produce greater opportunities to engage in te reo and tikanga Māori, and foster wellbeing.

Methodology and methods

A total of 65 participants filled out the Qualtrics survey. Of those 65 participants, 24 identified as Māori, 1 identified as Pacifica, 47 identified as New Zealand European and 6 identified as other ethnic groups (participants could select one or more ethnic identity). Of the 65 participants, 8 were male, 56 were female and 1 was non-binary. Further, of the 65 participants, 7 were UC student-teachers, 18 were UC teacher educators, 30 were UC staff (but not teacher educators) and 4 were from outside of UC (see Appendix A).

He Awa Whiria, a methodological framework known as “the braided rivers” (Macfarlane & Macfarlane, 2019; Macfarlane et al., 2015), was used to draw upon Western and Māori approaches to (streams of) knowledge. This allowed Māori and non-Māori participants to participate and have their mana protected. The framework valued the inclusion of a *kaupapa Māori* (Māori philosophical) approach in data collection and analysis. The research method specifically encompasses *mana tangata* (human rights), *mana ūkaipō* (belonging) and *ira manaaki* (an ethic of care) (Macfarlane & Macfarlane, 2019), and models kaupapa Māori research for and by Māori. Therefore, in this case study, the research leaders were Māori, who adopted kaupapa Māori research practices. The research team also included non-Māori researchers.

The questions that the research sought to answer were:

- What are the impacts of morning karakia and waiata on teachers and students of initial teacher education?
- What impacts have there been on student-teachers in their studies and their teaching placements in the community?
- What impacts have there been on teacher educators and their practice as teachers and researchers?

Recruitment consisted of a brief project description and a link to an online survey on the morning karakia and waiata Facebook group (Karakia Live InSTED, 2020). A QR code to the survey was available in the atrium in Rehua on the UC campus (the location of morning karakia and waiata), highlighted with a verbal invitation to participate in an interview. The data collection occurred via a Qualtrics survey, and a series of qualitative interviews were undertaken. The survey captured anonymous participant experiences of Tūrou Hawaiki, but invited respondents to include their details if they wished to undertake an interview. The survey design consisted of 12 questions, with various multi-choice, Likert-

scale and long answer options. The recruitment process resulted in nine interview participants: five teaching staff from the Teachers Education College at UC, two student-teachers, one staff member from a different department at UC and one community member.

The interviews were semi-structured, and undertaken via Zoom. For consistency, two researchers completed the interviews with the same question schedule to test the clarity and function of the questionnaire. One of the interviewers was fluent in te reo Māori, and, therefore, participants were invited to *kōrero* (speak) Māori if they desired. Interviews were approximately one hour, and were transcribed and confirmed with the interviewees. Once transcription checking was complete, NVivo software was utilised to create a thematic analysis of the findings across the interview and qualitative survey data. The thematic analysis used coding systems targeting recurring discussion points and phrasing in the transcriptions of the interviews to generate themes (Macfarlane & Macfarlane, 2019).

Data analysis and discussion

The Qualtrics survey results found that regular attendance in morning karakia and waiata had helped 59 of the 65 participants to maintain a strong sense of physical, emotional, mental and spiritual wellbeing. A similarly high number of participants, 58, felt their participation helped build a stronger sense of connection to fellow students, teachers and the wider UC community. Of the 65 participants, 49 felt their participation gave them real-life experiences to help better their understanding of Māori cultural concepts, which in turn helped their practice as students, student-teachers, lecturers, teacher educators and as professional staff at UC. Furthermore, the survey found that 47 of the 65 morning karakia and waiata participants felt more confident and competent to participate in Māori cultural practices due to regular attendance. Of the 65 participants of morning karakia and waiata, 37 felt more confident in taking the lead in Māori cultural practices. Finally, of those 65 participants, 35 expressed a greater understanding of themselves and their own identity through regular attendance. Participants remarked how their experiences at morning karakia and waiata had shaped their overall wellbeing, engagement in te ao Māori and a more profound sense of their own identity as Māori or as non-Māori New Zealanders. Three core themes emerged through semi-structured interviews and the survey analysis. These themes were *whanaungatanga* (relationships and belonging), the engagement with te ao Māori and *tuakiri* (identity).

Whanaungatanga / relationships and belonging

An essential element of the initiation and permanence of Tūrou Hawaiki is its welcoming ability to unify participants. Throughout the data analysis, this was a prominent discussion topic. Whanaungatanga, a significant concept in te ao Māori, can be defined as a relationship through shared experiences and working collectively, providing people with a sense of belonging. Several participants found morning karakia and waiata played a critical role in their social wellbeing. Through regular interactions, participants found the nature of this initiative brought about new and existing social connections. When asked about the benefits of participation, James (non-Māori teacher educator) replied “a greater sense of community; clears the *wairua* [spiritual] ahead of a workday; and confidence with the pronunciation”.⁵ Other teachers also described the morning karakia and waiata initiative as a space that brought about a sense of community. Findings indicated that, for some students, the initiative had mitigated intimidation factors associated with lecturers, thus helping to form more personal lecturer–student relationships. To

⁵ All names given for participants are pseudonyms.

that extent, teachers and students were able to see that both groups had a shared understanding of the academic pressures in a university setting. This was especially important for first-year students. This echoes literature that claims that establishing meaningful relationships benefits the wellbeing of teachers and students (Glew et al., 2021). A UC pre-service teacher explained morning karakia and waiata as a “nice communal way to start the day and build those relationships with yourself and your community” (Dannielle, non-Māori). Teachers, in particular, commented that they found the morning karakia and waiata environment offered students an opportunity to view their lecturers as an ally, and not someone “above” them. From a student perspective, morning karakia and waiata mitigated the intimidation sometimes felt in a classroom setting, and allowed their lecturers to model humility. This humility (*whakaiti*) is pivotal for the wellbeing of teachers, teacher educators and pre-service teachers. This shows a strong connection to Whitinui’s (2008) findings that show how contemporary Māori communities (such as Tūrou Hawaiki), can allow *kaiako* (teacher) and *tauirā* (student) to be a part of one community.

Students expressed that morning karakia and waiata was held in an open space, and this promulgated the idea that “anyone is welcome” (Logan, student). Logan further stated it was the core reason they continued to participate in the initiative, describing it as “one thing that’s been really inspiring for me”. Morning karakia and waiata is a safe space where teachers, teacher educators and students can come together and build personal relationships and unite as a community. Heeni (Māori student, educator) viewed the initiative as a *whānau*, and commented that “[we] are all there as one ... all sharing the same thing”. These findings correlate with Thom et al. (2018) and with Stewart and Lonsdale (2016), who found that the members of their studies valued the communal feeling of singing, with group members experiencing profound influence on their psychological, social and spiritual wellbeing through belonging. Instead of starting the day in a classroom setting, these UC affiliates have established a foundation to build meaningful relationships with fellow teachers, teacher educators and student-teachers. The preconditions for a strong sense of community are set in place.

For some participants, these preconditions have a very definite spiritual dimension. “[Morning karakia is] a *wairua* pick me up for the start of a working day,” Hone commented. Stevie commented that it “supports *taha wairua* [the spiritual dimension], starting *i runga i te tika me te pono* [in the correct and faithful way]”. This use of karakia and waiata to engage their *taha wairua*, and uplift overall wellbeing was identified by many participants. Several teachers commented that there was a lack of opportunity to engage in *taha wairua* in most other parts of their academic and professional lives, but they needed this. Thus, morning karakia and waiata present an encouraging space for teachers, teacher educators and pre-service teachers to strengthen their spiritual and cultural links. Something also seen in the research of Daykin et al. (2018). There are links here to the combination of incantation or recitation and music as stress relief or as spiritual rejuvenation to mitigate the effects of a potentially stressful context or life.

A sense of belonging was noticeable in the reports of feelings of acceptance and difference. Participants reported a stronger sense of cultural belonging from participating in morning karakia and waiata. “A stronger sense of pride and belonging to our amazing culture” is how Khyllie described it. Elaine shared a similar experience, and claimed that morning karakia and waiata “gives [her] a huge amount of confidence”. These findings resonate with Batt-Rawden and Anderson (2019), who also found evidence of a boost in confidence attributed to participating in choral singing. The data also showed that morning karakia and waiata provided a safe space where teachers, teacher educators and pre-service teachers could express their inner creativity. This was because pre-service teachers were often chosen or volunteered to lead the morning sessions, and they had relative freedom to choose what waiata or karakia they wanted to use, and talk to the gathering about whatever was timely or important to them

about those decisions. This acceptance, high trust and removal of hierarchy supported pre-service teachers to step in to leadership roles and uniquely express themselves in the group setting.

Engagement with te ao Māori

An important feature of morning karakia and waiata is to support participants to engage with te ao Māori. The data showed that participants had increased and better engagement with te ao Māori, and this was achieved through practicing tikanga, speaking te reo Māori and normalising te ao Māori in their everyday lives.

Dannielle, a pre-service teacher, commented, “I’m Ngāti Pākehā [of Pākehā descent], so I don’t have the same connections to te ao Māori ... One of the hardest things for someone who is Pākehā is to know where it is appropriate to walk into a Māori space.” Dannielle expressed reticence in not wanting to “use up resources that are better used for somebody that needs to learn te reo Māori for their own whakapapa”. Anna shared similar experiences of being Pākehā and navigating tikanga in te ao Māori. She appeared to feel somewhat disconnected from te ao Māori due to her prior experiences in education, where she says she learned “what it meant to have that whakapapa ... it was about your relationship to the whenua”.

Conversely, Natalie, a Māori teacher, was encouraged at morning karakia and waiata, as “Pākehā staff are coming because they genuinely care and engage, and they actually want to normalise and want to learn”. Additionally, Natalie commented that “while morning karakia and waiata decolonise a space, I think they re-indigenise the space also”. The data showed that participants felt that morning karakia and waiata gave them an entry point to learn about Māori culture and understand tikanga processes. Stevie articulated “that little daily dose of tikanga, and, hopefully, especially for the training teachers, will strengthen their understanding of tikanga at *kura* [school] and, hopefully, if they are unsure, [they] will start to ask questions”.

Some participants in this research highlighted the direct impacts of morning karakia and waiata on their engagement in te ao Māori, through te reo Māori. For example, 13 out of 65 survey participants reported that morning karakia and waiata increased their confidence with, and the pronunciation of, te reo Māori. Natalie had observed this at the morning sessions: “People come, and you observe their reo and pronunciation improving when they’re talking, and they start to introduce more reo in.” Dannielle commented that engaging in morning karakia and waiata had increased overall confidence when speaking te reo Māori. This was achieved through an authentic connection with their teaching subject, Japanese. They had noted the similarities between the importance of Japanese proverbs and Māori karakia and *whakataukī* (proverbs). Both had historical and cultural significance, and it was essential to emphasise culture and language simultaneously.

Five interview participants described morning karakia and waiata as a space where they could engage with te reo Māori in a casual format. They shared that they had heard Māori spoken in *pōhiri* (a ritual of encounter, welcome) settings, but the morning karakia and waiata space allowed speaking in te reo Māori, and a chance to “work on it”. For instance, Logan shared that they were in the early stages of learning te reo Māori and shared their difficulties about this: “I felt like if I don’t say it right, I’m disrespecting Māori culture, and that was the one thing that sort of held me back to start with.” Through regular participation, Logan reported, “I really enjoy it. It just helps me because it allows me to speak te reo more and just work on it casually.” Some participants shared that their only other exposure to te ao Māori was not frequent or available. For example, Elaine said she had “some exposure to the marae but

not much else". However, she really loved and wanted to be around tikanga Māori and kapa haka more often, saying, "it's just lovely because otherwise you sort of have to go to a more formal setting for it".

Visibility and accessibility are a vital part of normalisation. Dannielle described the impacts of witnessing other students at morning karakia and waiata becoming more familiar with te ao Māori, recalling students who would stand at the back of morning karakia and waiata but then "at the end of the year they were in front, being proud of their heritage". Another example of normalisation of tikanga was the acceptance and value of being spiritual in an everyday context. Anna commented:

A huge debt of gratitude to [facilitator] and also to Māori who are, I feel, culturally more comfortable with integrating spirituality with everyday life ... I feel like tikanga Māori actually gives us a framework for that. A way to do it. It's not excluding, and it's not evangelising. This is an opportunity to engage in your spiritual life and to nurture yourself spiritually.

Tuakiri / identity

The final theme generated by the data was the positive effects of morning karakia and waiata on tuakiri. Tuakiri can be understood as a sense of identity, and it can be impacted and reflected in one's self-perceived personal mana and confidence. While all the respondents reported enjoyment and pleasure when participating in morning karakia and waiata, some in particular felt their confidence increased through participation. For example, Elaine shared:

Singing and joining in waiata at marae and *tangi* [funeral] isn't so daunting for me anymore because I may not know all the words but the words I do know, I feel I can sing confidently, and they're not gonna go "who's that person at the back that's got such bad pronunciation?".

Many participants shared the positive impact of their experiences engaging with the staff who led karakia and waiata. In particular, Logan stated that being in morning karakia and waiata gave them "real mana" when they saw the pride the facilitators carried. One participant, initially apprehensive, as they had expected "this whole hierarchy type thing", was pleasantly surprised when they engaged with the leaders in morning karakia and waiata. They felt welcomed and on the same level as everyone else, empowering them to ask questions about te reo and tikanga Māori when needed. Subsequently, for Logan, there was strong evidence of a feeling of enhancement of personal mana.

It was these types of experiences of mana enhancing and confidence building that fed into the participants' tuakiri—their sense of identity. Diane shared how morning karakia and waiata "helps me realise who I am in society". Anna, a staff member at UC, said that, for her, it was a time of self-connection: "You actually get a minute in between. Just to connect with yourself, like, as a separate person. That's not a [parent], or that's not a worker." Anna saw Tūrou Hawaiki as a support for the transition from time with her children to her occupation at the university. Lastly, Dannielle emphasised the importance of morning karakia and waiata to identity, stating, "It's made my own relationship with myself as someone from New Zealand stronger. It's made my empathy stronger." Their sense of identity as Pākehā had been strengthened in a Māori space. It allowed them to explore identity both as a collective and individual self-concept.

The data showed that the individual growth through increased use of te reo Māori and tikanga Māori was valued. Additionally, participants shared that this space was a consistent and fun place to grow their understanding of te ao Māori. For example, the pre-service teacher participants described morning

karakia and waiata being an extension of their learning of te ao Māori in lectures. Logan detailed the importance of creating teachable moments in classrooms and utilising the space as an opportunity for “filling your *kete* [metaphorically, your basket of knowledge] with karakia and waiata ... you can use them at an appropriate time to teach something”. Ilet elaborated on this idea of karakia and waiata as modelling effective pedagogy:

Finding a safe place to take risks where the valuable place of errors is modelled with good humour. Those who are fluent and confident [in te reo Māori] have opened up opportunities for those who are far further back on their journey, to lead on occasion, with support and without pressure.

These three key themes and findings suggest that Tūrou Hawaiki has succeeded in creating a non-judgemental, supportive, fun, challenging and invigorating space where participants felt safe to take the risk of growing in their knowledge and application of te reo and tikanga Māori.

Conclusion

While the findings of this study are limited to this particular case study, they uncover the potential that culturally responsive teaching practice in the form of daily karakia and waiata has to influence educational environments in Aotearoa New Zealand. Future research might extend to explore the impacts of karakia and waiata in schools, workplaces or other sectors. In any case, this research project has extended the knowledge base of an under-researched *kaupapa* (topic): the impacts of morning karakia and waiata on pre-service teachers, teachers and teacher educators as a community of learners. Within the parameters of this study, it has been shown that a daily karakia and waiata practice can, and does, enhance participants' lived experiences of whanaungatanga, engagement with te ao Māori, and tuakiri. These are core aspects of the professional tool-kit of teachers within the profession, and are fundamental to CRP.

Participants reported the sense of belonging they experienced when singing waiata and practicing karakia alongside their lecturers and professional staff – whanaungatanga. While there was evidence of the expected benefits of increased confidence in the knowledge and application of te reo, there were also benefits which extended well beyond this. Morning karakia and waiata for some facilitated their first lived experience with te ao Māori. This experience dispelled low or false expectations previously held for what engagement in te ao Māori might be like. Instead, some participants reported deep and transformational understandings of the way engagement in morning karakia and waiata embodies culturally appropriate and effective pedagogy. For example, the democratisation of the process where everyone is treated as on the same level. Another example was the modelling of mistake-making as a part of the process of learning and growth.

Finally, personal growth of tuakiri was evidenced by the encouragement for students to periodically take the lead and step into the facilitator's role in morning karakia and waiata. While not all of the student-teachers took up this opportunity, many did and many others observed the way that taking the lead in a te reo and tikanga process meant taking ownership of te reo and tikanga on a level that they had never previously experienced. Many reported the impact this experience had on their personal and group mana, and on their understanding of te reo Māori and tikanga as a part of their own identity as New Zealanders.

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Glossary

āwhinatia – build connections

huataki – begin affirmatively

i runga i te tika me te pono – fair and true

ihi – demonstrate assertiveness

ira manaaki – caring for people, engender care

kaiako – teacher/s

kapa haka – Māori performing arts group

karakia – ritual chant, incantation

kete – basket

kotahitanga – establishing inclusion

kura – school

mana – authority

mana tangata – cultural forms of respect

mana ūkaipō – working with communities

mātauranga Māori – Māori knowledge and understandings

Ngāti Pākehā – of Pākehā descent

oranga – the pulse

rangatiratanga – enhance meaning

rongoā – Māori medicine, remedies

tangi – funeral

taonga – treasure

tauirā – students

te ao Māori – the Māori world, or worldview

te reo Māori – the Māori language

Te Rūnanga o Kirikiriroa – a Māori council in Hamilton

te taha wairua – the spiritual realm

tikanga – Māori protocols and customs

tuakiri – identity

waiata – song, to sing

wairua – spiritual, spirituality

whakapapa – genealogy

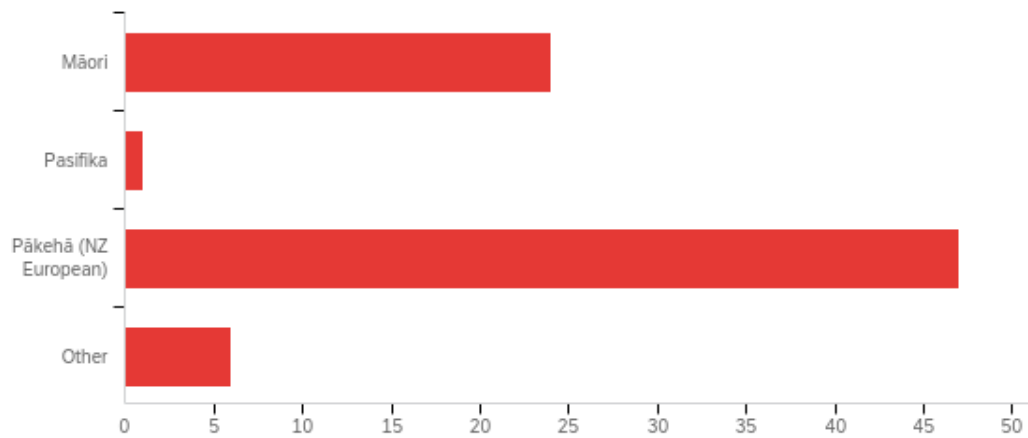
whakataukī – proverb

whānau – family

whanaungatanga – relationship, kinship, connectivity

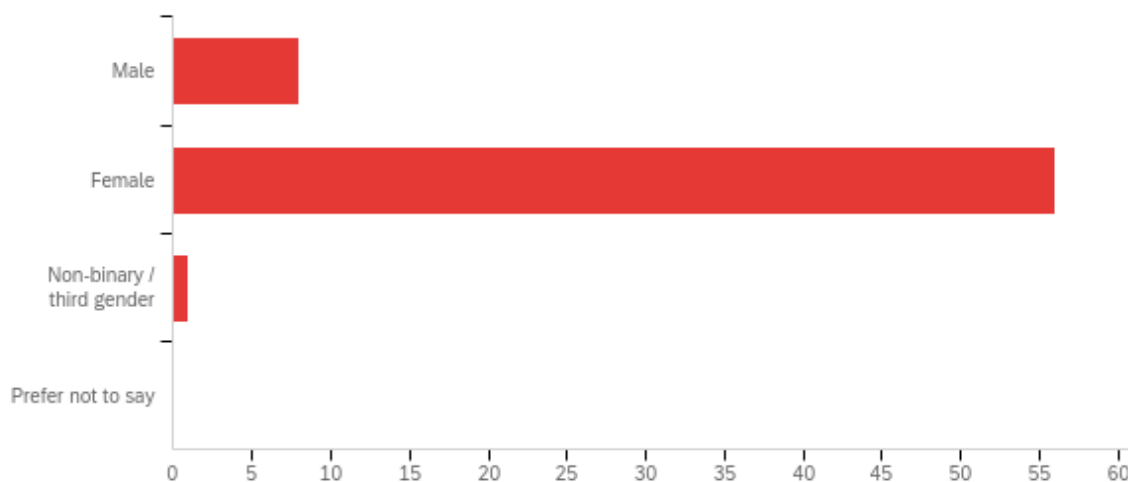
Appendix A – Selection of online survey responses (covered in the Discussion section)

Q1. Please select one or more ethnic identity.



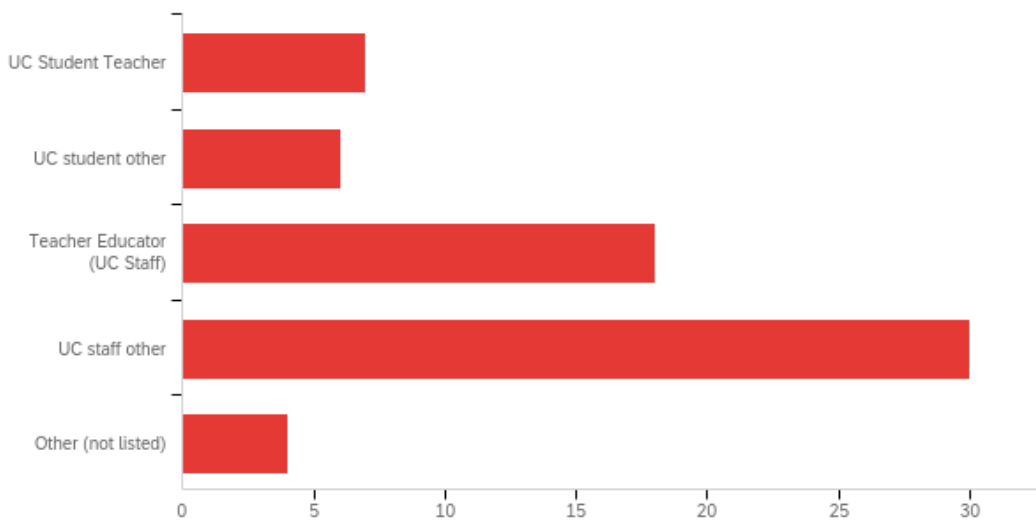
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Māori	30.77%	24
2	Pasifika	1.28%	1
3	Pākehā (NZ European)	60.26%	47
4	Other	7.69%	6
	Total	100%	78

Q2. To which gender identity do you most affiliate with?



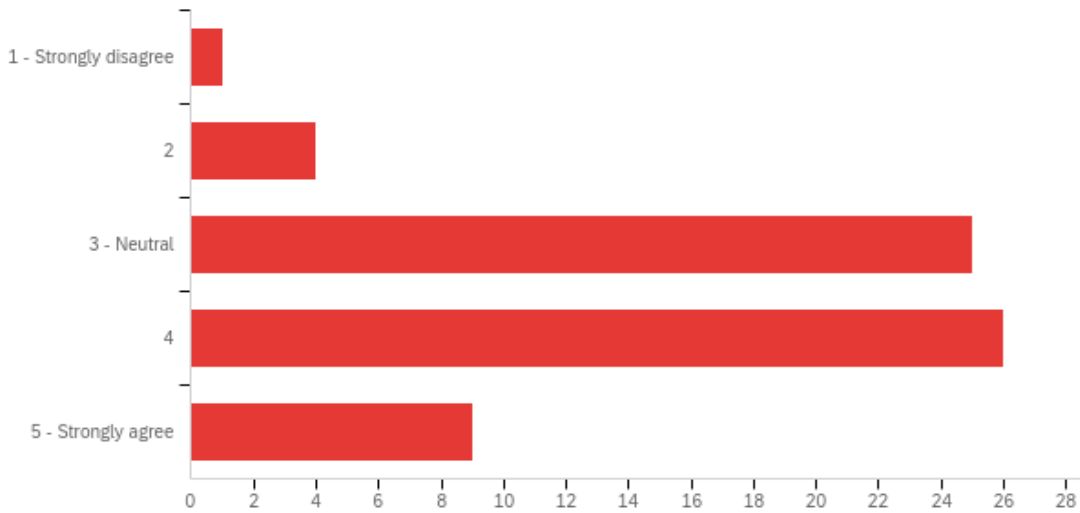
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Male	12.31%	8
2	Female	86.15%	56
3	Non-binary / third gender	1.54%	1
4	Prefer not to say	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	65

Q3. Please indicate one work-related role.



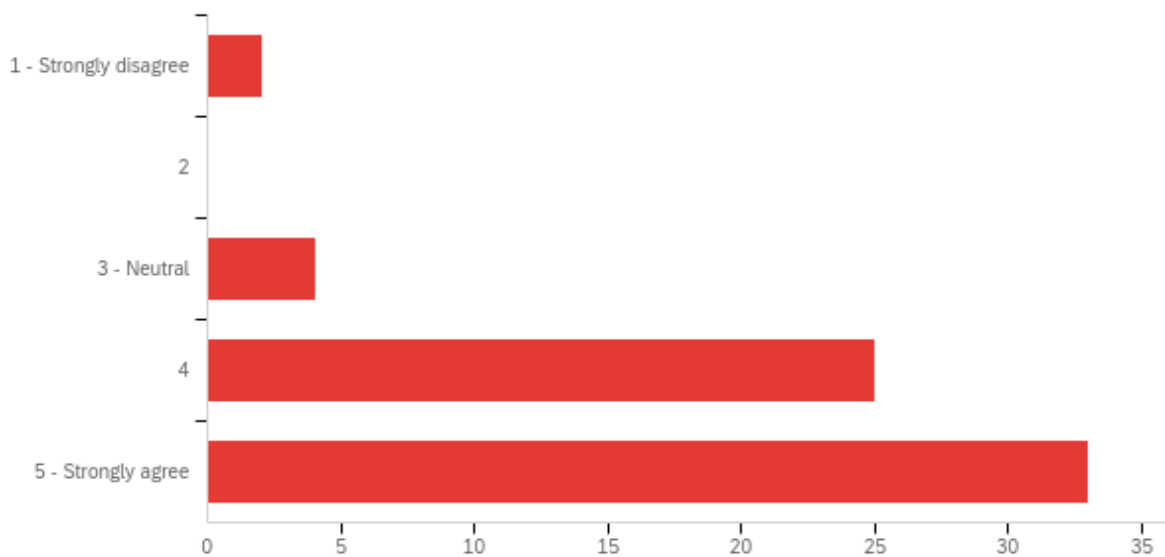
#	Answer	%	Count
1	UC student-teacher	10.77%	7
2	UC student other	9.23%	6
3	Teacher educator (UC staff)	27.69%	18
4	UC staff other	46.15%	30
5	Other (not listed)	6.15%	4
	Total	100%	65

Q4. Morning karakia and waiata has helped me to better understand myself and my own identity.



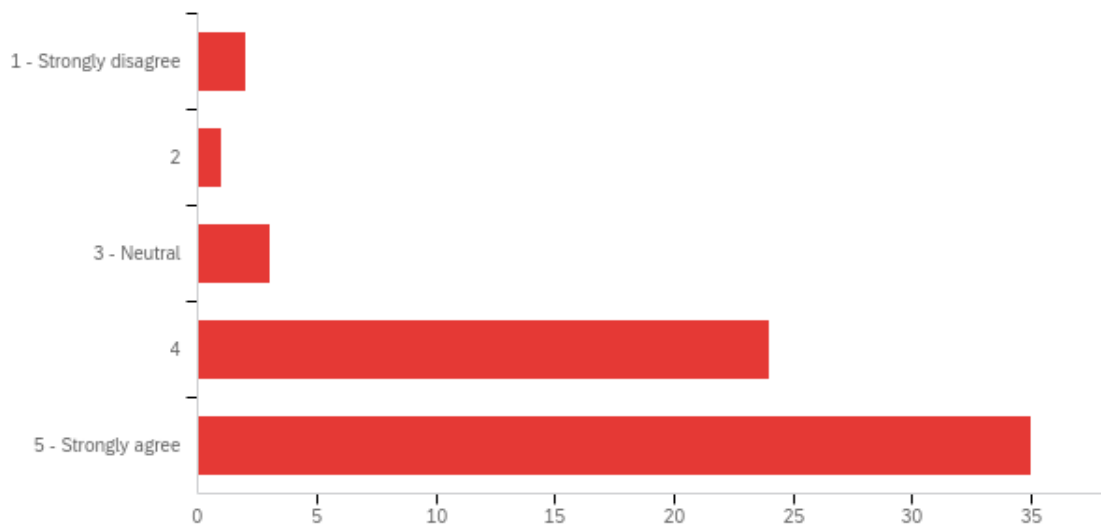
#	Answer	%	Count
1	1 - Strongly disagree	1.54%	1
2	2	6.15%	4
3	3 - Neutral	38.46%	25
4	4	40.00%	26
5	5 - Strongly agree	13.85%	9
	Total	100%	65

Q7. Morning karakia and waiata has helped me build a stronger sense of connection to my fellow students and to my teachers and the wider UC community.



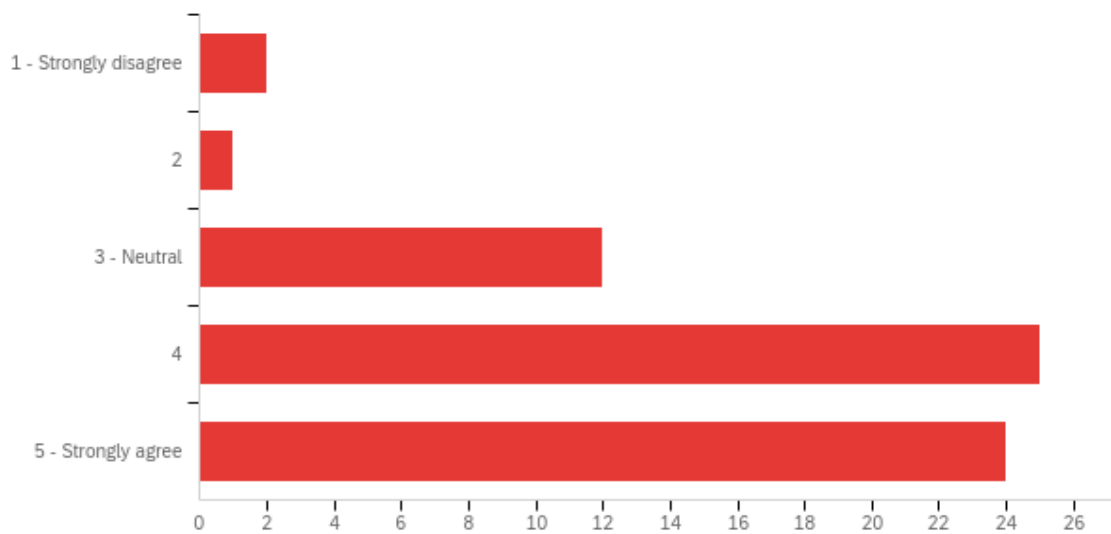
#	Answer	%	Count
1	1 - Strongly disagree	3.13%	2
2	2	0.00%	0
3	3 - Neutral	6.25%	4
4	4	39.06%	25
5	5 - Strongly agree	51.56%	33
	Total	100%	64

Q8. Morning karakia and waiata has helped me maintain a strong sense of wellbeing (physical / emotional / mental / spiritual).



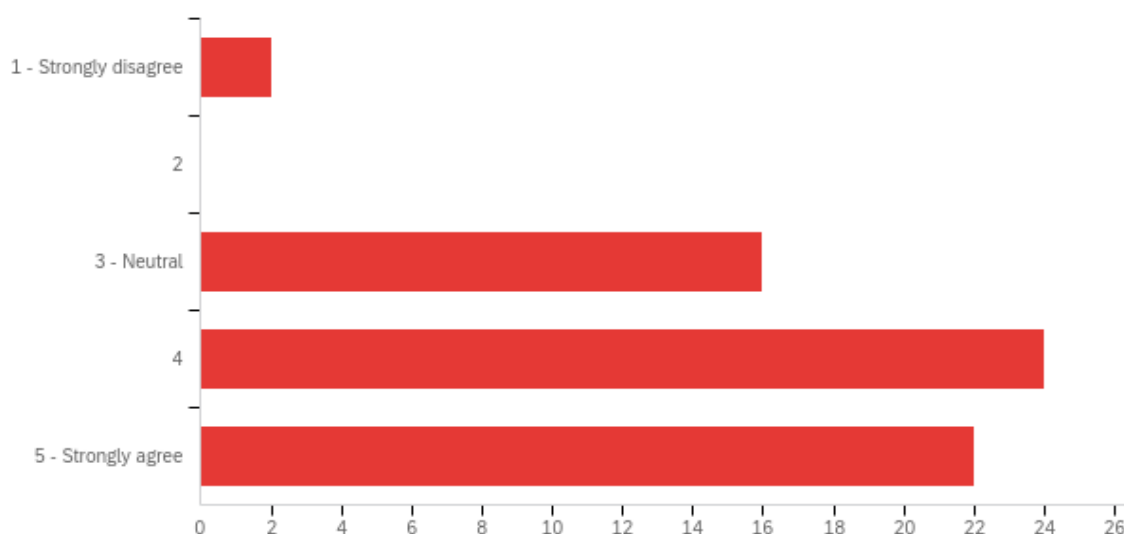
#	Answer	%	Count
1	1 - Strongly disagree	3.08%	2
2	2	1.54%	1
3	3 - Neutral	4.62%	3
4	4	36.92%	24
5	5 - Strongly agree	53.85%	35
	Total	100%	65

Q12. Participation in morning karakia and waiata has helped to provide a real-life experience for understanding the meaning of Māori cultural concepts I have read about or learned about through my work/studies at UC.



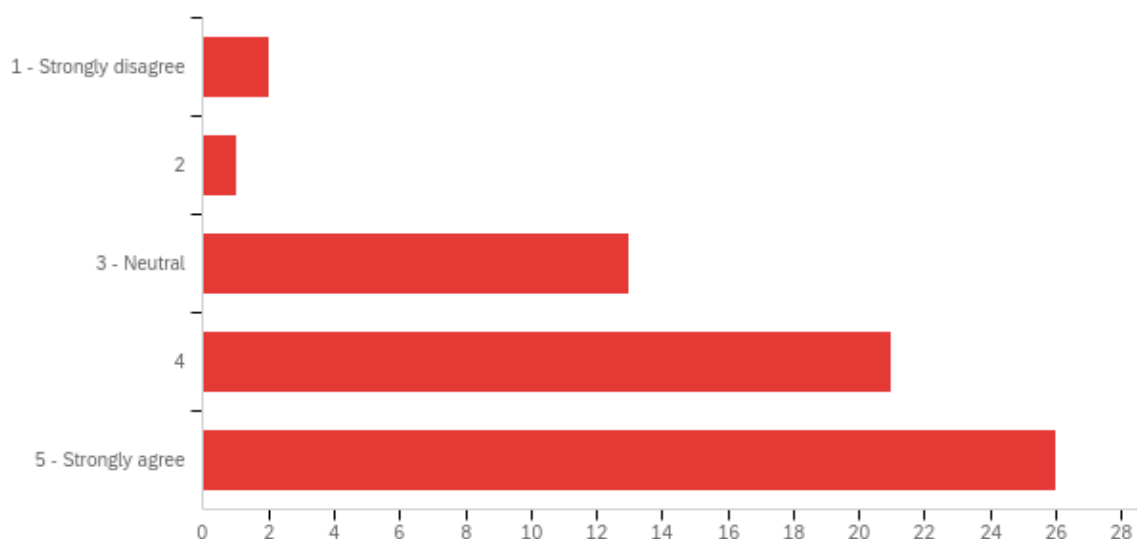
#	Answer	%	Count
1	1 - Strongly disagree	3.13%	2
2	2	1.56%	1
3	3 - Neutral	18.75%	12
4	4	39.06%	25
5	5 - Strongly agree	37.50%	24
	Total	100%	64

Q13. Morning karakia and waiata has helped me to develop my practice as a student, a student-teacher, a researcher, a teacher educator, or other in a more meaningful way.



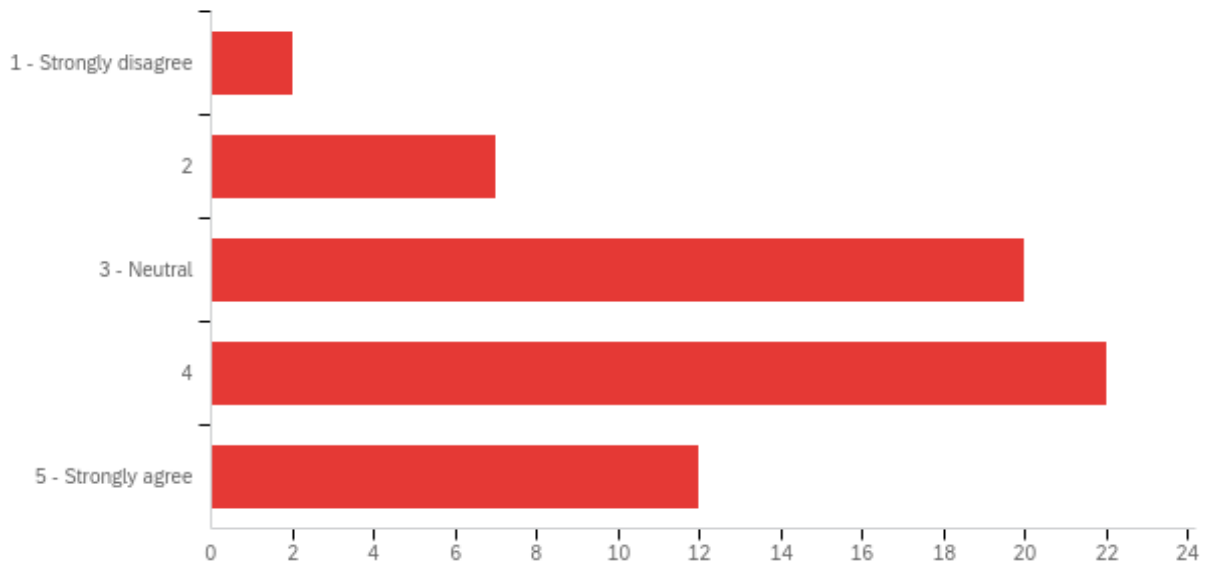
#	Answer	%	Count
1	1 - Strongly disagree	3.13%	2
2	2	0.00%	0
3	3 - Neutral	25.00%	16
4	4	37.50%	24
5	5 - Strongly agree	34.38%	22
	Total	100%	64

Q14. I feel more confident and competent to participate in Māori cultural practices generally as a result of regular participation in morning karakia and waiata.



#	Answer	%	Count
1	1 - Strongly disagree	3.17%	2
2	2	1.59%	1
3	3 - Neutral	20.63%	13
4	4	33.33%	21
5	5 - Strongly agree	41.27%	26
	Total	100%	63

Q15. I feel more confident and competent to take the lead in Māori cultural practices generally as a result of participation in morning karakia and waiata.



#	Answer	%	Count
1	1 - Strongly disagree	3.17%	2
2	2	11.11%	7
3	3 - Neutral	31.75%	20
4	4	34.92%	22
5	5 - Strongly agree	19.05%	12
	Total	100%	63

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Erani Motu is a postgraduate student at Massey University. She has just completed her Bachelor of Arts (Honours), majoring in Psychology. At Massey University, she will also start her Doctor of Clinical Psychology (DClinPsych) in 2023. She is of Māori and Kuki Airani descent. She has Ngāpuhi (Kaikohe) whakapapa from her father's Rakete whānau. On her mother's side, she has Kuki Airani whakapapa from her Teapaku anau. Erani contributed to this research as a part of her internship with the Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga New Horizon summer internship of 2021/2022. She is new to kaupapa Māori research but was honoured to learn from the other expert authors. She hopes to continue engaging in kaupapa

Māori research approaches, especially in qualitative projects. Her current research interest is the cultural appropriateness of risk assessment tools used with Rangatahi Māori and Pasifika Talavou.

Maioha Watson is a graduate of Te Tumu, the School of Māori, Pacific and Indigenous Studies at the University of Otago. He is of Waikato Tainui, Ngāi Tūhoe, Ngāti Manawa and Te Āti Awa descent. Maioha was raised in Hamilton and grew up immersed in te ao Māori, attending Te Kōhanga Reo, Kura Kaupapa Māori and Wharekura. Maioha's passions include te reo, tikanga and mātauranga Māori. In 2022, Maioha graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Māori Studies and a Bachelor of Health Sciences in Māori Health. Maioha was also a teaching fellow in Te Tumu, the School of Māori, Pacific and Indigenous Studies, where he taught a third-year Māori performing arts course. Maioha wants to integrate his passion for te reo, tikanga and mātauranga Māori in his future studies.

Dr Matiu Tai Rātima (Whakatōhea/Ngāti Pūkeko) is a Senior Lecturer in Māori education at University of Canterbury in the School of Teacher Education. Matiu is a former secondary school teacher and a father of three Māori/Samoan young men. He is a staunch advocate for te reo Māori and culturally responsive teaching in New Zealand schools. He is the co-chair of Te Rū Rangahau (The Māori Research Laboratory) and publishes on culturally responsive teaching and learning and on the teaching and learning of te reo Māori. He is a keen surfer and all-round waterman and an active student and coach of Brazilian jujitsu.

Dr Te Hurinui Karaka-Clarke is a Senior Lecturer and the Deputy Head of School of the School of Teacher Education, the College of Education at the University of Canterbury. He is of Te Arawa and Ngāi Tahu descent. He has Tūhourangi/Ngāti Wāhiao, Ngāti Whakaue and Ngāti Pīkiao whakapapa through his mother. On his father's side, he has Ngāti Rangiwewehi, Waitaha and Ngāi Tahu whakapapa. He was born and raised in the village of Te Whakarewarewatanga o te ope tauā a Wāhiao in Rotorua. Te Hurinui has been involved in kaupapa Māori research for more than 14 years, primarily in the field of education. He has used kaupapa Māori research principles in all his research projects and is adept at mixed, qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. Of particular note is his research into maintaining student engagement in senior te reo Māori programs in secondary schools, culturally responsive pedagogies, social and emotional pedagogies, and maintaining effective online teaching and learning practices. His current research interests are the integration of mātauranga Māori into school and classroom curricula and Māori perspectives on assisted dying.

Dr Susannah Stevens (PhD, MEd, BEd, GradDPTchLn) is a Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Education and researcher in the Child Well-being Research Institute at the University of Canterbury. She is from New Zealand and Scottish decent, and is the mother of two beautiful boys. She has 20 years' experience in the fields of teaching, physical education, physical activity, child movement and wellbeing. Susie is a staunch ally to her Māori education colleagues, and has a passion for the use of mātauranga Māori in school settings, bicultural frameworks and pedagogical approaches that serve equitable teaching and learning.

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