



**ĀTA: A THEORETICAL BASE FOR
BEST PRACTICE IN TEACHING**

By
Huhana (Suzanne) Forsyth

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of**

Master of Education

Auckland University of Technology

2006



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of contents	i
Attestation of Authorship	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Dedication	viii
Abstract	ix
Glossary of Terms	xi
 Chapter one: Introduction	 1
<i>Overview</i>	1
<i>My research journey</i>	2
<i>My interest in Āta</i>	4
<i>Āta in education</i>	6
<i>Central research questions</i>	8
<i>Research audiences</i>	8
<i>Chapter overviews</i>	9
 Chapter two: The philosophy of Āta	 11
<i>Overview</i>	11
<i>Defining the philosophy of Āta</i>	11
<i>Ta te ao Māori</i>	12
<i>The meaning of Āta</i>	14
<i>Guiding principles</i>	14
<i>Āta phrases</i>	15
<i>Conclusion</i>	16
 Chapter three: Review of the literature	 18
<i>Overview</i>	18
<i>Education philosophy</i>	19
<i>Theory and practice</i>	22
<i>Reflective practice</i>	23
<i>Professional practice</i>	25
<i>Relational teaching</i>	26

<i>Best practice in teaching</i>	27
<i>Conclusion</i>	29
Chapter four: Methodology	32
<i>Overview</i>	32
<i>Rationale</i>	33
<i>Methodology</i>	34
<i>Philosophical perspective</i>	35
<i>Methods</i>	35
Case study.....	37
Collection of data.....	38
Observation notes.....	38
Researcher reflective journal.....	39
Student questionnaires.....	39
Student focus group interview.....	40
Participant selection.....	40
Analysis of data.....	41
<i>Ethical considerations</i>	41
<i>Research process</i>	42
.... <i>Strengths and limitations</i>	43
<i>Conclusion</i>	44
Chapter five: Presentation of findings	46
<i>Overview</i>	46
<i>Research assistants' observations</i>	47
<i>Student questionnaires</i>	52
<i>Student focus group interview transcript</i>	58
<i>Researcher/lecturer's reflections</i>	64
<i>Conclusion</i>	70
Chapter six: Discussion of findings	72
<i>Overview</i>	72
<i>Emergent themes</i>	73
.... <i>Links to the literature</i>	81
.... <i>Strengths</i>	84

<i>Limitations and issues arising</i>	85
<i>Conclusion</i>	88
Chapter seven: Conclusion and recommendations	90
<i>Overview</i>	90
<i>Research conclusions</i>	91
... <i>Questions arising</i>	94
<i>Future research directions</i>	94
. <i>Recommendations</i>	96
<i>Researcher reflections</i>	97
<i>Conclusion</i>	100
References	102

Appendices:

- Appendix A. *Participant information sheet for members of the B.Ed.,
ECE/Primary Mātauranga Māori class, July intake 2005*
- Appendix B. *Class consent form*
- Appendix C. *Student questionnaire*
- Appendix D. *Student consent to participation in data collection*
- Appendix E. *Interview questions for student group interview participants*



ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I hereby declare that this submission I written by me and to the best of my knowledge contains no material previously published by another person except where due acknowledgement and reference has been given.

Suzanne Mary Forsyth: _____

Date: _____



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge the following people for their support and guidance during the research, the writing of this thesis, and in years past. Most importantly, I would like to thank Taina Pohatu for introducing me to the philosophy of Āta, for being open and willing to give of his time and energy to assist me, and for his guidance and spiritual support.

I also sincerely thank the participants of the study, the students of the Mātauranga Māori class, July 2005 for allowing the research to take place in their class time and for contributing to the data collection under the ethical guidelines as set out by AUTC (05/136). Without these students the research could not have been completed and I am grateful to have had the opportunity to share this part of my journey with these people.

I acknowledge the examiners of this thesis and thank them for their wisdom, insights and informative feedback. I have taken on board some of their useful suggestions and incorporated them into my work. I express thanks for sharing their knowledge with me.

I want to acknowledge my supervisors Richard Smith and Gary Leaf without whom I believe I would have struggled to complete this research.

Richard was a friend first, then a lecturer and a colleague. I could not have chosen a better primary supervisor. His dedication to professionalism has allowed us to work together on this in a way that has not challenged our friendship, but has in effect, strengthened it. His knowledge and abilities in the area of educational research have enabled me to meet the academic standards required of such work, and although I have often complained about his perfectionist demands, I realise he has enabled me to achieve standards of excellence I would not have believed myself capable of. I would also like to openly state that his dedication to honoring the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and his genuine respect for tikanga and te wairua Māori have meant that he has supported and embraced the kaupapa of this research in a way that is truly reflective of the philosophy and of the integrity of his character.

I thank Richard for all his guidance, long hours of proofreading and patient approach. I especially thank him for keeping me motivated and constantly challenging me to do better. I was lucky to have him as my supervisor and I am blessed to have him as my friend. Richard, thank you.

Gary, in contrast to Richard, was my lecturer first, and then became a friend, although the term ‘friend’ does not adequately describe the relationship between us. As my first Te Reo tutor it was Gary who introduced me to Te Ao Māori, and there is no way to express my gratitude to him for that. It has changed my life and it has changed who I am. When Richard suggested I should think about who I might like to choose as a secondary supervisor to assist with the taha Māori of this thesis, I did not need time to consider who that might be. Gary would always be my first and only choice for such an important role. I thank Gary for all his tautoko, his effort and energy so freely given, and the way he has gently guided me, corrected me, and assisted me, not only in this work but also in many other aspects of my life. Gary, Kia ora tōku hoa ahurei, ko koe tōku ariaritanga, ko koe tōku ruruhau.

To Hana Crengle and David Giles for assisting me in the research and for their valuable comments, I say thank you, and a further thank you to David for introducing me to Appreciative Inquiry research methods, and for being the ‘voice of reason’ in the hallway of level two, AR block. I thank Leslie Whalley for generously giving of her time to format my work and to my other work colleagues and many dear friends, I also say thank you to you all.

I cannot complete this section without an acknowledgement to my two families. My first family, my sister, who has always been so open and loving and encouraged me to follow my dreams, and my children, Matthew, Ben, and Abby, and my new daughter Renee, who have each shown me love and support. You have always been my real inspiration and my greatest achievement. Your simple words of praise and recognition have given me the strength to continue when I was tired and struggling, and I thank each of you for that with all my heart.

My second family, nga taura o Te Tohu Mōhiotanga, who were there when my journey into Te Ao Māori began, who accepted and embraced me, and who have continued to be

a part of my life ever since, I thank each and every one of you. To my sisters and brothers from that course, ko tēnei te mihi atu ki a koutou katoa.

I also feel a need to acknowledge the many Māori educators and academics whose contributions to the education field have forged a path for others to follow. Of those I admire, arguably the one who has influenced us profoundly in Education is Rangimarie Rose Pere whose concept of Ako whilst not used directly in this thesis has indeed contributed to it philosophically and spiritually. I have not referred to her work directly in the literature review, nor throughout the thesis, but reference to one of her important works is included in the references under Pere.

Finally, I wish to thank all my lecturers, both undergraduate and postgraduate, without whom I would not have come to this point in my life, and especially Lovey Walsh, kai āwhina on my first Te Reo course, who has supported and encouraged me and has now become a cherished friend. To all the people who have been a part of my journey, I thank you all.



DEDICATION

Ki tōku tama mātāmua, ko Matiu. Ko ia te kaha, te tautoko hoki i a au ka mahi tēnei rangahau, tuhinga hoki.

I dedicate this thesis to my eldest son, Matthew. He has been my strength and support throughout this work. I thank him for his patience, understanding, and encouragement.



ABSTRACT

As a postgraduate student, my interest has been in teaching theory and especially holistic based relational teaching practices. As an educator, I am constantly striving to improve my practice and become the best teacher I can for my students. These factors, combined with my strong desire to bring about change in the education system that will value knowledge and beliefs outside the paradigm of the dominant pedagogy, have led to this research.

The philosophy of Āta is firmly posited within Mātauranga Māori and is not new, however, as a philosophy of teaching theory it is new and is the topic of this thesis. A case study was undertaken to observe the researcher's teaching practice based on the principles of the philosophy, and to consider the possibility of developing a theory of best practice in teaching based on the philosophy of Āta. This was a mixed method study involving the July 2005 intake of Bachelor of Education students for the Mātauranga Māori class at the School of Education Te Kura Mātauranga, AUT. Data collection methods included research assistant observations, a researcher reflective journal, student questionnaires and a student focus group interview.

The findings of the study indicated that teaching under the principles of the philosophy of Āta assists the development of respectful relationships within the classroom environment, and suggests this enhances student learning. The findings could be significant for all teachers and teacher educators as they suggest a teaching theory based on the philosophy of Āta may provide educators with a values based theory of practice that is not only humanistic but also maintains standards of professionalism.

From both the literature reviewed and from student comments, indications are that by developing a sense of belonging, a feeling of connectedness, and by demonstrating mutual respect in classroom situations, the learning environment appears to be enhanced.

The findings of the study further indicate that the positive effects of teaching under the philosophy of Āta may not be restricted to any particular classroom environment. This is an important finding in my opinion because it indicates that Āta as a teaching

philosophy may be successful in growing relationships in other environments, making it a strong, working theory of teaching. Teacher qualities identified by the students as being essential to learning can be developed through embracing the philosophy of Āta and incorporating it into teaching practice and this is the challenge I put forward to all teachers and teacher educators.

The study has potentially opened new and exciting possibilities for teacher educators searching for a teaching practice theory that is strongly values-based. Implications of the study include stronger recognition of the value of cultural knowledge in the education system, an acknowledgement of the depth of knowledge contained in te ao Māori, and an opportunity to honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi by developing a bi-cultural model of teaching based on the philosophy of Āta.



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Aroha	Love
Āwhi	Assistance
Haere	Move, travel
Hapu	Subtribe
Iwi	Tribe
Kaitiaki	Guardian
Kaupapa	Topic, subject
Kete	Basket
Korero	Speak
Mana	Authority
Mātauranga Māori	Māori knowledge
Mauri	Life force, essence
Noho	Sit, stay
Take pū	Basic principle
Taonga	Treasure
Tauiwi	European
Tautoko	Support
Te Ao Māori	Māori world views
Te Iwi Māori	Māori tribes
Te Reo Māori	Māori language
Te Tangata	Humankind
Tikanga Māori	Māori customs, protocol
Tipuna	Ancestor
Whakaaro	Thought
Whakapapa	Genealogy
Whakarongo	Listen
Whakataukī	Proverb
Whāngai	Adopt
Whānau	Family
Whanaungatanga	Relationship
Whāriki	Mat, foundation



CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, taku toa i te toa takitini.

My strength is not the strength of one, it is the strength of many.

Overview

Traditionally, Western educational theory and philosophy have been the domain of the dominant pedagogy and have formed the basis of 'our' education system. That form of education, although complimentary of the dominant culture's ideologies and philosophies did not always serve the best interests of all students. As a teaching facilitator, I have long desired a personal theory of teaching practice that would recognise and embrace my belief that 'intellect' is but one dimension of humanity. I am constantly motivated by my desire to improve my practice and to provide my students with the best learning opportunities possible.

Aotearoa/New Zealand is blessed with a unique culture, the culture of Tangata Whenua, i.e. Te Iwi Māori, who preserve and practice a form of knowledge that if treated correctly, has the potential to uplift and enlighten. It is knowledge that can bridge the distance between two cultures and although it is ancient in origin it still has the potential to provide new and innovative ways of moving forward and it can, in terms of this thesis provide innovation in the field of Education.

The philosophy of Āta is firmly posited within that source of knowledge and is an intrinsic part of Te Ao Māori. Āta offers educators an alternative, humanistic approach to teaching practices that is multidimensional and interconnected. This research set out to investigate the potential of developing a theory of teaching practice based on the philosophy of Āta.

Initially this introductory chapter outlines my journey to this point, introducing myself, positioning myself within the context of this work, and revealing how I came to be involved in this kaupapa. There is also a beginning discussion on the potential of Āta within the education arena and a brief outline of each chapter along with a presentation of the central research question and the rationale and purpose of the research.

My research journey

This is not the start of my story, nor is it the end. It is a place I have decided to pause, to put down the kete that I have been carrying and look inside to see what taonga I have gathered along the way. Some of these I shall share with you, some I shall give to you to keep, and some I shall return to my kete to carry with me further along my journey. There is a famous poem by John Frost (1969) titled *The Road Not Taken*, which talks about two paths through a wood and concludes with the lines:

Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.

That poem is in many ways the story of my journey so far. There is neither time nor space here to describe in total the path less travelled, but I will tell of the parts of the journey that are important for the purposes of this thesis.

I was born in a small rural South Island town, the third child and first daughter of a father with a strong Scottish heritage and a mother whose ancestry is unknown to me. I was raised, educated, and spiritually indoctrinated in the ways of the dominant pedagogy of this country. I cannot recall a time when I went hungry, and as far as I know my clothes were all purchased new for me. I believe I had a blessed childhood in so far as not only did my parents stay together all their lives they also loved each other and all their children. They disciplined us in a kind and non-abusive way. I grew up feeling loved, secure, and valued for who I was. Yet somehow there always seemed to be something ‘intangible’ missing and that is why I chose to follow the path less travelled, searching for that elusive ‘intangible’. Due to a certain set of circumstances, I found myself in 1999 enrolled in a year long course at the local polytechnic to learn Te Reo Māori and it was during that time I first glimpsed the elusive ‘something’ I had been searching for.

That year of study was my first introduction into Te Ao Māori; it was to shape my growth and dictate my academic and personal path over the following years. At the completion of that course I cannot say categorically that my eyes were finally wide open, but I had most definitely developed a sense that there is a way of viewing the world I had previously only sensed.

During that time, I met and forged relationships with people who were to effect change in me, who were destined to become part of my whānau, and who remain to this day a significant part of who I am.

From that course, I had discovered there existed a world of knowledge I desired to gain entrance to. In 2000, I moved to Auckland and began university undergraduate studies, a Bachelor of Māori Studies. The ‘whariki’ that had been expertly woven by my tutors at the polytechnic served me well in my university studies and the learned lecturers there all contributed to developing the strength, and enhancing the design of that ‘whariki’. All those people have been instrumental to the direction of my journey and I am indebted to each of them not just for sharing their knowledge with me, but also for doing so in a way that is truly reflective of tikanga Māori, with aroha, whanaungatanga, awhi, and manākitanga. And although humility would deter some of those people from whole-heartedly agreeing with me, I feel it is essential that they be acknowledged at this point.

In acknowledging those who have guided me on this journey, I felt it was also important to openly position myself with respect to them, and to you, the reader. While my ancestry on my mother’s side is obscure, there is still a likelihood that a Māori tipuna in fact does exist in my genealogy. Disappointingly, non-confirmation of this negates my ability to whakapapa to any iwi, hapu, or tipuna Māori in Aotearoa/New Zealand. This (in terms of the cultural nature of this thesis) actually sets me in rather an awkward position for essentially my whakapapa is of Tauīwi design. Notwithstanding that, I still possess an inexplicable affinity towards Māori culture. Furthermore, I have the utmost respect for the significance of whakapapa in determining one’s identity and for that reason I have never laid claim to a Māori heritage or an Iwi affiliated identity. While I most respectfully do not say ‘I am Māori’, as my ancestry is not confirmed, I also do not say that I am not.

Therefore, I choose to identify myself as a person who has an affinity to, and a shared heritage with, all living things. For those who take issue with my choice of identity I say that I believe I must in this issue and in all good conscience follow my heart and the voices of my spiritual guides. For me identity is about where I feel the most like me, and identity is about the physical presence of my spiritual being as an individual who is part of the many.

I must also reiterate at this point that this thesis is a collective piece of work; a combination of ideas and beliefs shared with many, hence the use of the opening whakatauki ‘Ehara taku toa... It is my personal belief that we are all interconnected as espoused by Freire (1970, p. 54) “we are not only in the world but also with the world, that is, essentially related to it”. Moreover, although ownership of this thesis is bound by institutional requirements, as the author, I still have the right to partition those people that have helped me along the way to share the mana and kaupapa that it embraces. Although as the researcher I state openly that this work is my own, I must acknowledge there are many who have contributed to its development, and the philosophy itself has been a driving force in the journey taken. Therefore I cannot claim sole ownership of this thesis; it is simply another layer in the whakapapa of the kaupapa that it embraces.

While an acknowledgement of a lack of whakapapa Māori, revealing my personal opinion, and the acknowledging of research informants and previous lecturers may be adequate in justifying my ability to write about Āta, they are perhaps not adequate to satisfy the critics. Therefore, for an informed and published opinion to support my stance I turned to Smith (1999) and Bishop (1996). In the section ‘*Negotiating new relationships with non-indigenous researchers*’, Smith considers four models under which culturally appropriate research can be undertaken by non-Māori researchers. These four models are referred to as the *tiaki* model, the *whāngai* model, the power sharing model, and the empowering outcomes model. My position in this research has links to all four models¹ espoused however most closely aligns with the empowering outcomes model. I further position myself within this model from a basis of desired cross cultural competency in education research defined by Bishop (1996, p. 237) as developing a “range of skills to participate in experience that will enable them to communicate effectively and to interact positively and comfortably within Māori and pakeha cultures”. Ultimately though, my response to criticism of me as a perceived non-Māori undertaking research that involves Māori and Māori knowledge is simply that I did not choose to work with Āta, Āta chose me to carry it into the education arena.

My interest in Āta

Taina Pohatu who was an undergraduate lecturer at the Auckland University of Technology (AUT) introduced the kaupapa of this thesis, (te take pu o Āta), as part of a paper on Māori philosophy in which I was enrolled.

¹ Researcher comment: For in-depth descriptions of the four models see Smith (1999, pp. 175-178).

However, at that point in time, I did not deem it necessary to pursue the knowledge of Āta and did not consider it further. In 2004 when I began teaching at the School of Education Te Kura Mātauranga I again crossed paths with Āta as part of one of the papers I was to deliver.

I had carried on to postgraduate studies and unlike many of my fellow students had no idea what my thesis topic was to be. With the completion of each masters paper moving me one step closer to beginning a thesis, and lecturers constantly asking what topic I had chosen, I began to be concerned that I did not have a clear direction for this thesis.

My interest had always been in the area of relational teaching, and holistic education practices, so I intended to find a topic from within this field. Then two events happened that were to shape both my choice of topic and my own teaching practice. First, one day when delivering a lecture on relational teaching practices a student asked how could teachers be relational yet maintain the solid boundaries required for a professional approach to their practice. As result of that I began looking at the philosophy of Āta as a potential theory for relational teaching practice and discovered that not only did the philosophy sit well within relational education paradigms, using the philosophy could actually enhance professional teaching practice.

The second thing that happened is a fellow lecturer approached me to co-author a paper for a Māori research conference in December 2004. We met to discuss the topic and found that our respective interests, Āta and reflective practice, could not only be combined easily, they also complimented each other well. We presented on this at a research seminar to the School of Education Te Kura Mātauranga, and began co-writing a paper titled *Āta: A philosophy for relational teaching* (see Forsyth & Kung, 2004). As work on the paper progressed and my own interest in Āta deepened, the topic for the thesis was decided, although the research question had not been defined and the exact direction of the journey was still unclear.

In order to focus I began by considering what I as a teacher require from theory, from education philosophy, and from my own values that would assist me in improving my teaching practice. I asked what were the practicalities of developing a theoretical base for my teaching practice that aligned with my own values and beliefs?

Āta in education

As I reflected on these questions and discussed them with friends and colleagues, I realised I was not alone in my quest and my desire to become a more holistic teacher. I soon became aware that in recent years there has been a growing call for teachers and teacher educators to return to and embrace values based teaching pedagogies, affirming that the profession of teaching is more than just being knowledgeable in course content and competent in teaching strategies. B. MacFarlane (2004) tells us that:

it is also about getting in touch with one's own values and the emotional drives that lie behind those attitudes ... what is required is an identification of virtues compatible with reflective professionalism. This requires that the exercise of professional judgment is based on core moral virtues and conceived as a central duty of academic life (p. 128).

Having recently moved into the profession of teacher education, I became aware that while we do inform our students of the need for a values-based approach to teaching, and offer instruction on such things as ethics, virtues, and professionalism, students are still often left floundering in an attempt to verbalise and solidify their own values-based theory of practice.

When considering the work of Ivan Snook (2003) in connection with these issues shows that although there is a wealth of information available regarding ethics, values, and professionalism in education, there is little available to assist students with forming their own teaching practice theories. I have heard lecturers tell students that 'this is something you must find for yourself'. What a disservice we do them with such comment². Indeed, Handal and Lauvas (1987) challenge us as academics to provide our students with working theories they can draw on:

In a real working situation it is necessary to make decisions about what to do all the time often with practically no time available to figure out what is the most sensible thing to do ... the task for the academic community is to search for simplicity in complex activities and situations and to develop theories which can be of help to the practitioner who does not have the same opportunity to step back from the situation (p. 5).

² Researcher comment: This is my own personal philosophy which might at times conflict with adult learning theory, which promotes self-discovery and academic 'independence'. In this instance, I personally believe we should be offering our students guidance on ways to develop their own teaching theories.

I also hold to the idea that the challenges to those working in the education arena in Aotearoa/New Zealand also include one of addressing the issues surrounding values-based teaching that may not align with the values of other cultures, and in this I challenge the educational community to be more of an ‘activist’ profession (see Sachs, 2003). As an informed academic attempting to move education in Aotearoa/New Zealand towards a truly bi-cultural approach I believe it is imperative that the values of Tangata Whenua are not only acknowledged and respected but are also included as an integral part of our teaching practice. I found that the philosophy of Āta provides opportunity to develop a values-based teaching theory that addresses the need to provide teachers with a framework to operate under. This has the potential to become a philosophy of education with multiple applications because Āta focuses on meaningful, respectful relationships, and offers teachers a strong values-base to work from and return to (Forsyth & Kung, 2004).

Effective teachers build meaningful relationships with their students through their being ‘the teaching self’. The self is constantly searching for identity and integrity through forging relationships, dialogue and deliberate reflections (Palmer, 1998). These connections are not held in teaching methods employed, but in the beliefs and principles that form the values-base of the teacher. The Āta philosophy opens a door for teaching professionals to internalise these beliefs and principles, and integrate them into their practice. Teacher’s conscious efforts to positively apply the conceptual notion of Āta result in deeper understanding and reciprocal respect within the classroom, negotiating boundaries, and working to create and hold safe space with corresponding behaviours (Forsyth & Kung, 2004).

The philosophy of Āta not only embraces the principles of holistic based relational teaching, working with the philosophy also defines and strengthens the boundaries of professional practice. Professionalism is developed in following the principles of Āta through the requirement of conscious participation and the need to maintain trust and integrity in order for the relationships to develop respectfully. Gutek (1974, p. 1) tells us, “as the moral enterprise which it is, teaching requires the careful blending of theory and practice”. I believe the philosophy of Āta provides teaching professionals with a way to do that, for Āta cannot be separated into theory and practice, it is one and the same. Āta is theory in practice.

In acknowledging this, I realised there was potential in the philosophy of Āta to develop a theoretical base for teaching practice that would provide teachers with a values-based framework that was both professional in design and holistic in nature.

Central research question

The central research question of this thesis was: Can constituents of the philosophy of Āta be integrated into the teaching/learning environment? The question focused on ways of incorporating holistic inter-relational practices into teaching through the philosophy of Āta, and how to apply Āta as a theoretical values-based framework in education. The underpinning rationale arose out of a quest for excellence in teaching practice that would enhance the learning, first and foremost of Māori students, and then of all students, especially minority group students. The desire was to explore the potential of Āta as a teaching theory that aligned with holistic relational teaching practices while maintaining standards of professionalism. The purpose of the research was to observe teaching practice based on the philosophy of Āta in an attempt to answer the central research question.

Research audiences

There are several different audiences that will derive benefit from this research. Primarily the first audience this research set out to benefit was Tangata Whenua. It is from Te Iwi Māori that the kaupapa of this research arose, and it is to Te Iwi Māori that benefits of the research must return. It is intended that the research will do this by contributing to the development of new teaching/learning theories thereby assisting teachers and teacher educators to enhance and improve their practice particularly with respect to Māori student in mainstream education settings. Further audiences of this research will hopefully be the wider academic community and the policy makers.

It is hoped that this research will contribute to their understanding of the value of new philosophies, ideologies, and methods of education, and foster a move away from traditional pedagogical practices that do not serve the learners from minority groups.

Chapter overviews

Each chapter begins with a whakatauki or a relevant quote. Ostensibly, the whakatauki encapsulates the underlying principle and content of each chapter, while maintaining a relationship with the main theme of the thesis. Each whakatauki contains profound knowledge and advice and further substantiates the depth of Māori knowledge and tikanga.

When beginning work on this thesis I realised there was a need to inform my readers of the kaupapa, therefore, the first task was to introduce you, the reader to the philosophy of Āta. There was neither time nor space to do this in any great depth but chapter two was set aside in order to give a respectful insight into the origins and attributes of Āta. The philosophy is outlined and discussed as it sits within Mātauranga Māori along with an overview of Te Ao Māori³ and a brief introduction of the guiding principles of the philosophy.

The second task was to consider how the philosophy of Āta would sit within existing education theories. This was done by reviewing relevant up-to-date literature and current research on the topic in chapter three, a review of the literature. As the concept of Āta is new to education there was little to no literature available on the subject. For this reason the general themes of relational teaching, teaching philosophy, theories of teaching, and best practice in teaching were investigated and literature reviewed in these areas was considered in regard to developing a theoretical framework for the philosophy of Āta.

In chapter four the methodology for the research is presented. In this chapter, I explain my theoretical perspective and the rationale behind the chosen methodology. There is extended discussion on the central theme of the research undertaken to develop this theoretical framework, along with a detailed overview of the research methods used, ethical considerations, and details of the research participants.

The findings are presented in chapter five and common themes to emerge from the data are identified.

³ Researcher comment: I must acknowledge that this section is both brief in context to the depth of the kaupapa and that the opinions expressed are those as I have been taught them and are therefore replicated with potential bias from a non-Māori perspective.

These themes are discussed in-depth in chapter six along with links between the various data sources and implications that arose from the study. The strengths and limitations of the study are outlined along with links to the literature.

The final chapter provides a summary, considers the findings, and explores future directions and implications that have arisen out of the study. I also provide a summary which is an examination of the potential significance of the research findings with relevance to education and educational research, and suggestions are made for future research directions.



CHAPTER TWO: THE PHILOSOPHY OF ĀTA

*Me āta titiro ki muri kia mōhio ai koe to ake āhuetanga nāianeī kia kite koe hoki te
ara tika i ngā ra e heke mai.*

Look to the past to know the present and see the correct path for the future.

Overview

In this chapter, you are introduced to the philosophy of Āta and the difficulty that was faced in attempting to describe in one language a concept that exists in another language and culture. An outline of where Āta sits within Mātauranga Māori along with an overview of Te Āo Māori is also presented here. There is a brief introduction of the phrases that reflect the guiding principles of the philosophy and how these principles might sit with in the education arena.

Defining the philosophy of Āta

When work began on this thesis the initial issue to address surrounded categorising Āta as a philosophy. Attempting to fit a Māori concept into a western paradigm is highly problematic, as is attaching a label to it for the sole purpose of providing clarity to those being introduced to it for the first time. The origins of Āta are firmly posited in Mātauranga Māori. It has been defined as a ‘*take pū*’, which is a basic principle intrinsic of Te Ao Maori (Pohatu, 1994) and is considered “a vital cultural tool created to shape and guide understandings of relationships and well-being” (p. 5). Bearing those concepts in mind, I concluded that in order to categorise Āta as a philosophy it was first necessary to look for a clear definition of the term philosophy. “In its broadest and most general terms philosophy is mans [*sic*] attempt to think most speculatively, reflectively, and systematically about the universe in which he lives” (Gutek, 1974, p. 2). From this then it would appear philosophy is about worldviews and when considering worldviews that are alternative to the dominant pedagogy it becomes imperative we strive to maintain cultural integrity in all approaches. Cultural integrity in this instance demands consideration of Āta as being intertwined with universal Māori knowledge before attempting to extract it as a separate identity.

Therefore, any investigation of Āta must accord the knowledge it conveys with respect, as Āta is part of Māori worldviews and “unique bodies of Māori cultural knowledge with their wisdoms, depths of definition and application are privileged, having being tested over generations, in the full range of human endeavour” (Pohatu, 2004, p. 1). Only by first considering Āta as a component in Māori worldviews, can its cultural integrity be maintained, allowing it then to be moved into other contexts, to re-interpret, re-articulate, and re-apply it. This serves as a reminder that considering Māori worldviews requires constantly seeking to acknowledge the integrity and respectfulness within the legacies of others. In doing this, the true cultural shape and nature of Āta is revealed.

Ta Te Ao Māori

While the generally accepted definition of Te Ao Māori is the Māori worldview, there has been some argument surrounding this, as many Māori do not see themselves as a collective whole, i.e. ‘being Māori’ but rather as being defined by their specific iwi (Rangihau, 1992). Therefore, to say one worldview applies to the collective whole may be incorrect and it should perhaps be the individual worldviews of each Iwi. For this reason I have chosen in this thesis to use the plural, “Māori worldviews”.

Central to Māori worldviews is the concept of ‘mauri’ or ‘life force’. Every living thing is deemed to have its own mauri. Pohatu (2004) states that “the underpinning philosophies to this worldview are straightforward yet act as powerful reminders of cultural purpose and obligations” (p. 7). While the concept of mauri may seem simplistic in nature, it is in truth a complex and multi-layered notion that holds definitions, explanations and directions for all actions and interactions in every activity. Acknowledging the cultural legitimacy of the concept of mauri leads to another level where each philosophical view is recognised as having its own mauri or life force, separate from worldviews as a whole while remaining inextricably interconnected with each other and with the whole. “As a result this reinforces the cultural purpose and intent of Te Ao Māori” (Pohatu, 2004, p. 3).

Acknowledging that everything has its own mauri demands the need to act with integrity and respect when considering areas of Māori knowledge and especially when doing so from a philosophical stand point.

In striving to maintain cultural integrity and legitimise Māori knowledge, perhaps the focus should move away from who has and shares the knowledge to the conditions on which the knowledge is based and rules governing how that knowledge is transmitted. Guidance for this can be found in the words of Pohatu (2004, p. 5) “*Takawehia te ara poutama, kia whakareia koe ki ngā tohu o mātauranga o te Ao Māori*” (transverse the valued pathways of learning, be transformed by potential enlightenment, through the pursuit of knowledge and wisdoms of Te Ao Māori). That was the position taken in this investigation of the philosophy of Āta.

The concept of mauri, as with all aspects of Te Ao Māori, cannot exist in isolation. There is an interconnectedness that permeates to the heart of every part of being Māori. Mauri denotes existence, and it signals obligations of each new time to its past and future. Consider the philosophy of Āta as a living concept, a knowledge base with its own mauri. In doing so acknowledgment must be made that along with a present existence, and a future direction, it has a past, a whakapapa, and a genealogical line of descent. Recognising these things creates an entirely different position to the worldview that sees a philosophical concept as simply an idea, or a theory. Along with this comes an obligation to approach it with respect and to act with integrity and sincerity at all times. It would seem from this that a journey into the realms of Māori philosophy is a complicated and difficult affair, yet each step is clearly marked, and assisted by a wealth of concepts and principles that have been created, nurtured, and applied through time.

In the investigation into the philosophy of Āta the philosophy itself guides the direction travelled and in essence the journey becomes one *with* Āta, not one *into* Āta. Each step taken, each direction turned in, contributes to the whakapapa of Āta and adds to its mauri. This in itself reiterates the existence of mauri within the philosophy, and demonstrates the inter-connectedness of Māori worldviews. The most significant aspect of this is that it does not set humankind aside. Although the dominant pedagogy may perceive there is some form of connection in existence, in general this is seen as being separate to, not inclusive of, humankind. Māori whakapapa shows that not only is te tangata a part of the world, part of the vast and unending universe, but also is essentially related to it. This belief is a guiding principle in every action, every thought, and every relationship entered into.

As one moves through the world one develops, and is constantly transformed, by relationships, relationships with the world through one's connection to all living things. This requires an acute awareness that things connected to are in turn transformed and signals a need for caution, a need act with clear and deliberate intentions. The philosophy of Āta offers a path to follow that ensures all actions are legitimate.

The meaning of Āta

While verbalisation and writing on the subject may be relatively new, the philosophy of Āta is not a new concept. A literal translation of Āta is 'with care', 'with deliberation'. Āta is about growing respectful relationships. The choice of the word growing as opposed to the word developing is both deliberate and significant, and is indicative of the gentle, holistic, nurturing aspect of the Āta philosophy. Pohatu (2004) expands on the phrase 'respectful relationships' in the following way:

Respectful relationships with its strategies and disciplines are located in understandings of the phrases, 'respect of', 'respect for', 'respect with', 'respect by', and 'respect through'. Within every context therefore, fundamental questions must be posed, such as, 'what should we have respect for?' 'why should we consider respect?', and 'how would we construct and apply respect here?'. These frame and reflect an ongoing determination to 'do our best'. As these are incorporated into our relationships and activities, so do they have the chance to become vigilant participants in our daily life (p. 8).

To assist us in answering these questions surrounding respect, a set of guiding principles can be found in the philosophy of Āta.

Guiding principles

Exercising the principles of Āta in every action undertaken strengthens and develops the integrity of both the 'self' and the 'other' in any given relationship and as Pohatu (2004, p.13) reminds us "the pursuit of integrity and respectfulness in relationships and their boundaries is fundamental." This can be achieved through diligently considering and instigating the following actions as described by Pohatu (1994, p. 8):

Kia tōtika: To be correct. To aspire towards standards of quality.

Kia tika tonu: To act responsibly, to respect the integrity of others.

Kia pai: To be careful. To be considerate and deliberate.

Kia rangatira te mahi: To act with utmost integrity, to consider the unique positions of others.

Kia tūpato: To carefully consider the consequences, to ensure integrity in all actions.

Adopting these principles into practice is relatively simple yet the very nature of Āta requires reflection, diligence, and continued effort. Āta focuses on growing respectful relationships, it accords quality space and time, and it demands effort and energy. To assist in following the principles of Āta, a set of phrases have been developed (Pohatu, 1994).

Āta phrases

There are many phrases⁴ that reflect these principles and offer guidelines to operating from a respectful basis. The following are definitions of some of the Āta phrases as set out by Pohatu (1994, p. 6):

Āta-haere: To be intentional and approach reflectively;
Āta-whakarongo: To listen with reflective deliberation;
Āta-noho: To give quality time to be with people and their issues;
Āta-whakaaro: To think with deliberation, considering possibilities;
Āta-korero: To communicate and speak with clarity.

When considering these phrases in more depth the guiding principles of Āta begin to emerge. For example, Āta-haere, to be intentional and approach reflectively, demands deep and actioned respect by all involved parties, requiring an awareness of relationships, boundaries, and cultural requirements. Āta-whakarongo, to listen with reflective deliberation, is indicative of the holistic nature of the Āta philosophy, according time, space, and validity to the speaker and allowing open communication from the heart, mind, and soul. Āta-noho guides actions and interactions and dictates quality time and space and goes hand in hand with Āta-haere. Āta-whakaaro and Āta-korero combine to ensure words are spoken that have been given careful deliberation and chosen through thoughtful reflection. Just as the philosophy of Āta is interconnected with all Māori philosophy, and is part of Te Ao Māori, so too are the individual principles of the philosophy connected to each other and to the philosophy as a whole.

Working under the philosophy of Āta one needs to develop an awareness of the different signposts of relationships outlined in the philosophy by understanding the

⁴ Researcher note: I have chosen these five phrases to use within the education arena first. There are many more that could also be developed. And indeed these should be taken up in further research.

connections that exist between the Āta phrases, the knowledge embedded in each of these phrases, and how this grounded knowledge is valued and deliberately instructed, monitored, and corrected (Āta-tohutohu).

A key point of consideration is an awareness that these separate units of Āta are cohesively integrated towards a holistic whole, interacting with other take pu with their unique filtering processes, to create further opportunities for the holistic and multi-dimensional nature of Āta to be understood and the chance to experience its ‘renewing’ possibilities (Pohatu, 1994). In so doing, our relational experiences can then explicitly flesh out the literal translation of Āta meaning ‘with care, with deliberation’, through growing respectful relationships.

To experience the transformative potentials of Āta requires a shift in both attitudes and in mind-set. It requires active, conscious, reflective deliberation to enter, maintain, and exit all levels of relationships, a push to break away from the norm, to be divorced from the acceptable status quo, and to be strong and courageous to break new ground. There is the need to consciously renew our thoughts and focus on what is pure and noble (Forsyth & Kung, 2004). The Āta philosophy underpins the development of quality relationships that can positively move us in the right direction.

Conclusion

Āta is about growing respectful relationships. Relationships are constantly changing and one must continually revisit the principles of Āta to maintain the integrity of the relationship. This revisiting is an act of reflection, a ‘pausing’ to consider the possibilities of any given situation. The Āta philosophy celebrates this notion of ‘pausing’ and standing in awe of the natural world around us (Pohatu, 1994)⁵.

The philosophy of Āta is an integral part of Te Ao Māori. To fully understand the philosophy, to consider and apply it within the parameters of education, it is essential to acknowledge the depth of knowledge contained in the philosophy and to do so with respect. Āta is a living philosophy and to embrace it is to add to its life force, to acknowledge and enhance its mauri. This thesis set out to consider the potential of

⁵ Researcher comment: Pohatu’s thesis (1994) has been used extensively throughout this thesis as the primary source. However, some of this work has been condensed into an article from 2004 (see Pohatu, 2004 in the references).

developing Āta as a base theory for best practice in teaching yet has remained ever vigilant to the belief that Āta is the guiding force in this work and must be defined, discussed, and approached with the utmost respect at all times. The potential of Āta as an education theory is immeasurable and potentially, it can be set within, and enhance, existing teaching/learning theories, and can be developed as a new theory of teaching.

The following chapter is a review of current relevant literature, research on education philosophy and theory, and definitions of best practice in teaching. Āta has been considered with relevance to this literature and conclusions drawn as to its potential as an education theory.



CHAPTER THREE: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Ka kōhi te toi, ka whai te mātauranga.

If knowledge is gathered, enlightenment will follow.

Overview

For teaching professionals working within the arena of education in Aotearoa/New Zealand, there exists opportunity to draw on philosophies and values-based beliefs, which are an intrinsic part of the culture of Tangata Whenua, to develop educational processes that are holistic and transformative. One such philosophy is the take pu of Āta (Pohatu, 1994). The humanistic and multi-dimensional nature of Āta provides educators with a values-based philosophy that is part of the wider context of Mātauranga Māori. This philosophy offers teachers an option of how to enter, engage in, and exit relationships in the teaching world, suggesting Āta could be developed as a theoretical framework for best practice in teaching. This formed the basis of the central research question for this thesis: Can the philosophy of Āta be used as a basis for best practice in teaching? From this question a review of the literature was undertaken to consider current theories and up to date research on the subjects of relational teaching, teaching practice, education philosophies, and to examine how the philosophy of Āta would sit within these paradigms.

Āta origins are posited within Mātauranga Māori and tikanga Māori, therefore in those terms it is not new. However, in terms of current teaching practices in Aotearoa/New Zealand, and as a subject of research it is new. One of the unfortunate consequences of this is that there is little to no literature or research data available on the specific subject of Āta within the education arena. To overcome that dearth of literature this review has drawn on sources from associated areas such as teaching theory and philosophies, teaching practice, and kaupapa Māori based teaching practices.

As was discussed in the previous chapter, describing Āta as a philosophy is somewhat problematic and applying Āta as an education philosophy is new and therefore, 'untested'. This literature review set out to first define philosophy as it relates to education, and then to consider the concept of Āta within those paradigms.

Theories surrounding teaching practices were also reviewed along with discussion on how and where Āta may potentially sit within these existing theories. The review also examined what is considered best practice in teaching, holistic approaches to teaching, values-based teaching, reflective practice, and the role of Āta as a working model in these areas. The review concludes with a discussion on themes to emerge from the literature and suggested future directions.

Education philosophy

Considering philosophy in education requires first, to define philosophy, and this can appear a seemingly daunting task (Burnham, 2003). Scholars offer exhaustive and sometimes confusing information on what exactly philosophy is, such as, “philosophy is a complex subject that embraces many aspects of human experience. Its more traditional areas include ethics, aesthetics, metaphysics and logic” (Carel & Gamez, 2004, p. 258). Yet philosophy is one of the oldest disciplines known to humankind and we are each of us philosophers in some way. In simple terms, “philosophy describes how things are” (Carel & Gamez, 2004, p. 1). Philosophy is recognised as having four main areas and examining these gives an indication as to where philosophy rests in relation to education (Gutek, 1974). These are:

Metaphysics- the nature of ultimate reality. Speculating on the nature of existence. Related in education to theorizing.

Epistemology- the theory of knowing and knowledge. Relates to methods of teaching and learning.

Axiology- Value theory. Relates to ethics, morals, and values.

Logic- rules and patterns of correct thinking (p. 3).

Traditionally, education philosophy surrounded the acquisition of knowledge, and what constituted knowledge, however that view is changing as stated by Gordon and White (Gordon & White, 1979):

Philosophers, of course, from the time of Plato onwards, have taken an interest in education and have dealt with education in the context of wider concerns about knowledge and the good life. But it is only quite recently ... that philosophy of education has come to be conceived as a specific branch of philosophy (p. ix).

Given that philosophy of education is quite a recent development to the Western view it is not surprising that Māori philosophy in Western education is also relatively new.

Perhaps Māori philosophy in mainstream Western education began with the introduction of Kaupapa Māori theory. “The education field provided the initial domain where Kaupapa Māori approaches were developed, trialed and deliberately ‘taken’ to the world” (Pohatu, 1994, p. 12). However, it is important to note that although ‘Kaupapa Māori’ has been labeled as a ‘theory’ it is in essence a part of the wider framework that is Mātauranga Māori. “Kaupapa Māori therefore incorporates being Māori, being connected to Māori philosophy and principle, the taken for granted validity and legitimacy of Māori thought, language and culture” (Pohatu, 2004, p. 12). To explain this from a theoretical perspective, Western ideals broadly define philosophy as a way of thinking, while for Māori, philosophy is a way of being.

While this may be a difficult concept for some theorists to grasp, it is becoming a much more accepted way of considering philosophy and of testing the validity of new and untested philosophies. A common question or discussion point has become “can this philosophy be lived?” and perhaps that is where Āta emerges the strongest as a potential education philosophy. In considering applying Āta as an education philosophy, I looked to other Māori philosophies that have made the transition into mainstream education and found that kaupapa Māori theory has opened education philosophies and education research to alternative views. “Kaupapa Māori is the name given to a methodology for research that is Māori or Māori focused” (Smith, 1999, p.125) and “Kaupapa Māori is a means of proactively promoting a Māori world view as legitimate, authoritative, and valid” (Bishop, 1996, p. 240) therefore, Kaupapa Māori theory has also assisted in developing acceptance of the possibility of new philosophies in education that are not from within the dominant pedagogy (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). This can only serve to benefit education as a whole, as suggested by Soltis (1981):

Viewing of education from a single perspective of worldviews is too narrow and cuts educators off from a richer perception of the wider field of philosophical endeavor. Cannot any person develop a philosophy of education or publicly recommend adoption of a comprehensive view of educating? Of course, making sense of the whole and developing a consistent set of educational values, beliefs, and goals is still a highly desirable and lifelong enterprise for educators (p. 5).

However, the introduction of ‘new’ philosophies in education, regardless of their origin,

must meet certain requirements in order for them to be accepted into the dominant pedagogy's worldview⁶.

In order to do this it is necessary to have some sort of framework to operate from. Gutek (1974, pp. 266-268) designed a set of questions for the initial means of creating a philosophy which, when posed against various existing philosophies, may help to create and solidify alternative philosophies. These are:

- i. What is the rationale? What is the conception of reality behind it? Is it social, political, economic based? What are the immediate and long-term effects of the rationale?
- ii. What curriculum is applicable? Does the curriculum convey reality? Does it reflect the aims and goals that emerge from the rationale?
- iii. What is the method of instruction? Does it rest on a specific concept of knowledge? Is the method appropriate to the curriculum and the rationale? Does the method unite teaching and learning?
- iv. Does the evaluation genuinely test the method of instruction?
- v. What does it require of me? Does it require me to consider my self-concept as a teacher? Does it necessitate me evaluating my teaching practice?
- vi. What about the student? What is my conception of the student under this philosophy? Is that conception consistent with my values and my worldview?

The philosophy of Āta, as it could sit, within the paradigms of education philosophy, was posited against these questions revealing the potential for developing Āta as a new and clearly defined theory of teaching practice. The rationale behind considering Āta as a philosophy of teaching is both socially and politically based arising out of a quest for excellence in teaching practice. The short-term effects of introducing this philosophy may be a marked change in the way teachers approach, manage, and develop teaching/learning relationships (Hansen, 2001). The long-term effects could see the development of a bi-cultural teaching model that will bring about social and political change (Cranton, 2001).

Statistically, Māori achievement levels in mainstream education, while perhaps recently showing a slight improvement, are still far below those on non-Māori students (Jenkins and Jones, 2000). This in turn may have an impact economically in so far as students

⁶ Researcher comment: My opinion is that this should not be the case. New knowledge should be legitimised within its own sphere and not be required to fit the dominant pedagogy to be judged valuable or acceptable. Personally, I do not think that is the case at present.

from minority groups who have historically not fared well within the education climate may relate better to teaching/learning practices conducted under the philosophy of Āta, thereby improving achievement levels and ultimately economic positioning within society.

Given that the rationale behind using the philosophy of Āta in education is to develop teaching practices that are both humanistic and culturally defined, the philosophy is not limited to any specific curriculum⁷.

A theory of best practice in teaching that encompasses growing relationships with those involved in the teaching/learning process can be applied in any area of curriculum (Giovannelli, 2003). Likewise the method of instruction, when based on the principles of the philosophy is not only appropriate to any curriculum, and any form of evaluation, it genuinely unites teaching and learning. In testing Āta as an education philosophy against the outline posed by Gutek (1974) the most significant findings were in relation to the last two questions for consideration: What does it require of me, and what about the student? Teaching under the philosophy of Āta constantly requires an awareness and re-evaluation of self-concepts and teaching practices. Under the philosophy of Āta, the conception of the student is heightened and strengthened as part of the ongoing process of growing respectful relationships and acting with deliberation and integrity.

When considering adopting Āta as a philosophical base for best practice in teaching there was also a need to examine the theoretical and practical aspects. There is an inextricable link between theory and practice as “theories do not grow ... but rather come from an attempt to understand various practices. And practice, whether the practitioner is conscious of this or not, is always at least partly embedded in theory” (Winch & Gingell, 1999, p. 234).

Theory and practice

In education, the relationship between theory and practice is complicated because the practice of teaching involves values and beliefs along with the transmission of facts (Carpenter, Dixon, Rata, & Rawlinson, 2001).

⁷ Researcher comment: I accept this is a bold and unsubstantiated claim at this point, however, it is a personal belief that both the research findings from this study and potential future studies will provide evidence to support this.

Theories provide an understanding of how and why we do what we do. In education, these are referred to as ‘theories of teaching’, yet any theory must be linked to practice. Therefore, the term ‘practical theories’ could be applied and considered in relation to teaching practice however to do so the term ‘practical theory’ requires further explanation.

The concept of practical theory is defined by Handal and Lauvas (1987) as referring to:

a persons private, integrated but ever-changing system of knowledge, experience, and values, which is relevant to teaching practice at any particular time ... every teacher possesses a ‘practical theory’ of teaching which is subjectively the strongest determining factor in her educational practice (p. 9).

Many teaching practitioners are not consciously aware of teaching from a specific theoretical base and would have difficulty in articulating their practical theory. Yet according to Handal and Lauvis (1987):

In instance [*sic*] where the role of a teacher is performed we can see that there is a very limited consciousness of the practical theory underlying teaching practice. Some will deny having such a theory and will therefore be unable to formulate important parts of it. Still some sort of theory exists in their thinking and will influence the way they teach even though this influence may be less than conscious (p. 17).

This lack of awareness of one’s practical theory of teaching is not only common it is also problematic in so far as teaching professionals need a clear theoretical base in order to change and develop within their practice. Hampton (1986) maintains a theoretical articulation would help to organise research, guide practice, and serve as an explicit aid to discussion and clarification. Teacher educators should be encouraged to assist student teachers to adopt and articulate a theoretical base to their practice. Student teachers need to adopt a practical theory of teaching that works for them, not as a separate component but as a part of the whole being of the professional teacher.

Reflective practice

When considering practical theory from a Māori perspective it must be seen as a part of the whole, inter-connected to all aspects, not separate. As Pohatu (2004, p. 10) states “theory is an integral component in the development of this worldview.

It is intervention at another level that provides additional dimensions of how and why valued knowledge and practice is chosen.” From this perspective indications are that adopting the philosophy of Āta as a base theory for best practice in teaching would provide practitioners with a clear, definable practical theory of operation. Further implications of teaching under the philosophy of Āta are the need for constant self-evaluation and reflection.

On reflection, Gutek (1974, p. 1) expressed that “as blending of theory and practice, teaching is a reflective activity which has effects beyond the immediate teaching-learning episodes that occur in the classroom”. The model of the reflective practitioner has long been recognised as an important component of best practice in teaching (Jay, 2003), yet reflective practice has moved towards the more technical aspects of teaching and “reflective practice is being deployed as a conceptual framework for preparing lecturers with the skills and knowledge needed to perform their duties” (B. MacFarlane, 2004, p. 19). Reflective practice is being set up as a tool rather than a skill and the value of reflection is diminished in the process. This suggests perhaps it is time to take a fresh look at reflective practice, to re-consider it from a different perspective (Schön, 1987).

The philosophy of Āta, with a focus on growing respectful relationships, demands that all aspects reflecting on the teaching/learning process are considered and are not confined to classroom activities. Under the philosophy of Āta, reflective practice has a deeper and more committed meaning. Rather than being a tool to assist teachers in their practice, reflection from the Āta perspective is about delving deeper into the self with the express purpose of acting with integrity. This aligns closely with ideas recently being expressed by Jay (2003, p. 17) such as, “in their reflective activities, teachers must move from surface-level descriptions of practice to significant advances in learning and growing”. For reflection to be genuine under the philosophy of Āta it must not only be careful and deliberate but must also embrace a sense of commitment to change for the better. This concept of what true reflection is parallels the ideals of Jay (2003, p. 1), who stated, “reflection means thinking about what one is doing. It entails a process of contemplation with an openness to being changed, a willingness to learn, and a sense of responsibility for doing one’s best”.

Professional practice

A sense of responsibility for doing one's best extends past the art of genuine reflection and reaches to the very heart of the professional practice of teaching. To fully understand the place of reflective practice within the paradigm of the professional practice of teaching it is important to have a clear understanding of how professional practice is defined. McGee and Fraser (2001) offer the following description:

by professional practice we mean the ideas and practices that mark teachers out as professional decision makers. These teachers inform their practice by a critical consideration of theory and knowledge (p. 11).

While this may seem a relatively clear-cut definition of professional practice, it falls short of what is truly involved in the term, for the professional practice of teaching is a deeply complex concept. Indeed, McGee and Fraser (2001, p. 9) tell us that "the professional practice of teaching is a complex and multi-faceted process." There are codes of ethics that give useful guidelines to teachers and individual values-based teaching theories that assist teachers in maintaining certain societal standards but these seldom provide clear direction in any given situation. Hall (2001) informs us of the difficulties involved for teachers stating, "while codes of ethics provide useful guidelines to practitioners they seldom provide clear answers about what to do" (p. 285).

Therefore, the professional practice of teaching may be more about what teachers actually do as they practice the act of teaching. This would suggest that professional teaching practices are more connected with individual values and morals than with pre-prescribed ethical guidelines (Hansen, 2001). I believe the professional practice of teaching is about teacher integrity. In *Teaching with Integrity* B. MacFarlane (2004) talks about a recent movement in higher education from an elite to a mass system with increased demands of quality assurance and of lecturers working as members of large course teams who are seeking to provide a consistent experience to hundreds of students. In this situation, teachers are constantly faced with moral and ethical decisions and are required to meet the rules and regulations in universities.

These rules and regulations are created to enhance the smooth running of policies and procedures and designed to create an atmosphere of fairness amongst the majority.

Yet often these very rules and regulations cause teachers to question how their values can be maintained within the system and call them to reflect on their personal integrity as a professional. Integrity in this sense refers to focuses on the character of the teacher, and how to maintain a balance between institutional regulations and personal values based teaching practice. As B. MacFarlane (2004, p. 128) states:

what is required is an identification of virtues compatible with reflective professionalism. This requires that the exercise of professional judgment is based on core moral virtues and conceived as a central duty of academic life.

This indicates that professional practice is something teaching professionals can, in a sense, design for themselves by basing their own professionalism within the bounds of their own values-base. Perhaps professional teaching practice is actually about teaching with integrity and B. MacFarlane reiterates this by saying “a personal commitment to key virtues goes to the heart of what it means to teach with integrity” (p. 147) and teaching with integrity allows teachers to define and maintain required levels of professionalism.

Relational teaching

In recent times, teaching/learning theories have moved toward a more holistic approach to teaching and evidence suggests that relational teaching practices enhance student learning. And yet the very nature of relational teaching practices can cause teachers concern with regard to maintaining professional standards. While clearly there is, and always will be, a need for professionalism within the education arena, and while values, morals, and ethics all contribute to the integrity of a teaching professional, for trainee teachers and indeed even for many experienced teachers there is difficulty in balancing the need for professionalism and the desire to be a more holistic, relational based teacher.

There is growing recognition of the perceived advantages of relational teaching practices and Palmer (1998) talks of the advantages of forming relationships with students and tells us that it is connection that opens the door to building, maintaining, and preserving meaningful, sincere relationships. Kaupapa Māori teaching pedagogy⁸

⁸ Researcher comment: It must be acknowledged here that there is a great deal of literature available on Kaupapa Māori pedagogy and Kaupapa Māori teaching practice such as Williams (2003); Smith, (1997); and Martin, McMurchy-Pilkington, & Martin, (2004) and others. However, it was considered outside the scope of this thesis to examine them in depth and still maintain the focus of the work.

has long recognised the positive effects of relational teaching practices (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Hemara, 2000; A. MacFarlane, 2004) and this has been supported by many recent studies in this area (Hattie, 2002; Hawk, Cowley, Hill & Sutherland, 2002).

Many student teachers have asked how to develop close relationships with students yet remain professional to the extent that both student and teacher are kept safe (Oakley & Cocking, 2001). B. MacFarlane (2004) agrees there is need for caution and balance and states “certainly there is considerable support for the notion of keeping an ‘appropriate’ distance between the student and the teacher” (p. 123).

Developing relationships in the learning environment require teachers to open themselves up to the students and this in itself can cause problems. “While too little personal self disclosure could be regarded as an abuse of the unequal power relationship ... the opposite is also potentially exploitive” (B. MacFarlane, 2004, p. 125). Too much personal disclosure could be seen as direct strategy too gain sympathy and or good opinion of the self from students therefore a very careful balance needs to be attained in order for the relationship to develop in a safe and respectful manner (Gardner, 1984).

This is where the philosophy of Āta can be an invaluable tool for managing that grey area between open inter-relational teaching practice and clear safe professional boundaries. Āta is about growing respectful relationships and following the guiding principles of the philosophy allows teachers a way of maintaining strong, safe, professional standards while teaching from an inter-relational, holistic base. Working under the philosophy of Āta gives teachers a theoretical base to move out from and return to, a checklist in a sense that can be used to guide and inform best practice in teaching, and this is surely what all teaching professionals aspire to.

Best practice in teaching

Best practice in teaching is a relatively new and therefore a somewhat undefined, yet highly contested term. To clearly define ‘best practice in teaching is problematic as it can often be situational and is subject to individual conceptualisation of the term⁹. In the present context, best practice is defined as what good teaching is.

⁹ Researcher comment: Best practice as defined here is not the same as best evidence. The term best practice has been used for want of another term, which would accurately define the intent of the author.

This in itself is a huge area of debate and opinions on this are as varied as the theories that support the arguments put forward. For the purpose of this review, the term best practice has been taken to mean ‘excellence in education’. Gardner (1984) wrote of excellence in education as a process of:

perpetual self-discovery, perpetual reshaping to realise one's best self, to be the person one could be. It includes not only the intellect but the emotions, character, and personality, not only surface but deeper layers of thought and action, adaptability, creativeness, and vitality ... (and) ethical and spiritual growth (p. 124).

From this it becomes clear that teaching excellence or best practice is more than just an emphasis on basic skills.

Many recent studies have highlighted areas where ‘best practice’ can be seen in evidence (Carpenter, McMurchy-Pilkington & Sutherland, 2002; Hattie, 2002; Alton-Lee, 2003). Best practice is about balancing all aspects of both teaching and learning in an attempt to provide the best learning environment possible (Collins, 1992). In most recent times, this environment has come under immense scrutiny and environment has now been extended to include classroom dynamics. Dynamics, meaning the interactions between members of a classroom, are being seen as perhaps the largest contributing factor in the success or failure of a learning situation.

Gay (2000) states clearly that:

Interactions between students and teachers as well as among students in the classroom are frequently identified as the actual sites where learning success or failure is determined (p. xv).

I believe the art of growing classroom relationships is at the heart of inter-relational holistic teaching practice. Gay (2000, p. 47) revealed that teachers who formed caring relationships with students, “demonstrated concern for the student’s emotional, physical, economic, and interpersonal conditions”. This is holistic based teaching in practice and is reinforced by B. MacFarlane (2004, p. 130) who said that “the ability of the teacher to create and maintain an environment where students feel safe enough to enter into discussion is both a pedagogic skill and an important virtue”. Teachers can do this by teaching and modelling personal values through multidimensional caring in

That is, in this instance best practice is taken to mean conducting one’s practice of teaching to the highest standard of excellence.

personal behaviours and teaching practices. Such things include patience, persistence and responsibility to self and others all of which are part of the guiding principles of the philosophy of Āta. This is the interpersonal caring based on respect, which is the implicit call of Āta. Yet, Gay (2000, pp. 48-49) also states:

there is much more to interpersonal caring than teachers merely exhibiting feelings of kindness, gentleness, and benevolence toward students, or expressing some generalized sentiments of concern. Students feel a need to have a personal connection with teachers. This happens when teachers acknowledge their presence, honour their intellect, respect them as human beings, and make them feel like they are important.

The philosophy of Āta offers teachers a safe and genuine way of connecting personally with their students and of forming respectful relationships that honour and celebrate each individual in the class and the group as a whole. The inter-relational holistic nature of Āta provides a base for forming relationships in the teaching/learning situation that can greatly enhance the learning experience.

Conclusion

This review of the literature set out to consider the central research question: Can the philosophy of Āta be used as a theoretical base for best practice in teaching? by examining existing theories of teaching and learning, and philosophies of education (Gutek, 2004). As an educator responsible for developing student teachers, I feel I need a theory of teaching that encompasses who I am and what I believe. A theory that will be a part of, and enhance, my educational practice and the education community (Trifonas, 2003). I require a living working theory to guide my practice. But in order for a theory of teaching to have life it must also be applicable to each individual who takes up the profession of teaching. This type of theory cannot be constituted into any prepositional form, it can only emerge as part of the living form of an individuals practice. This is the theory I was seeking but did not find in my review of the literature. However, what I did find was that many leading academics are also calling for the development of such a theory. Whitehead (1989) tells us we should begin to seek such a theory from asking the question how do I improve my practice, and that it is from

questions of this kind that new education theories will be constructed. In examining the work of Paulo Freire¹⁰, Darder (2002, p. 48) suggests that:

Unlike the traditional pedagogical emphasis on specific teaching methodologies, particular classroom curricula, and the use of standard texts and materials, Freire's indispensable qualities reflect human values that expand a teacher's critical and emotional capacity to enter into effective learning-teaching relationships.

I believe truly effective learning-teaching relationships are ones that acknowledge and embrace a holistic approach to teaching (Intrator, 2002). While it is true that concrete execution of teaching practice takes place within the localised boundaries of the classroom, we should not remain solely within those four walls in our analysis of ourselves as teachers or of our interaction with our students (Clair, 2004).

The literature was in many ways restrictive for this purpose in so far as theories of teaching and education philosophies discussed in the literature were confined in the main to classroom practices. While much of the literature supported a call for academics to question accepted philosophies in education and to seek out new directions in teaching and learning, there was a definite lack of literature outlining 'new' philosophies.

Furthermore, whilst there seems to be a significant swing towards more values-based, relational teaching theories, the current literature suggests that there are fundamental problems associated with the inclusion of values and logic into educational theory such as finding a balance between the accepted standards of professionalism and individual belief systems (Hansen, 2001). In other words, how can a theory of teaching be developed that meets these standards and also recognises and gives space to individual values and morals? I found nothing in the literature that suggested a way of doing this, however I believe the philosophy of Āta has the potential to fill this void.

The literature supported my belief that the quality of student learning is dependent on the quality of teacher professionalism and practice (Oakley & Cocking, 2001). Kottler and Zehm (2000) talk of teachers translating their knowledge into a form of communication that students find compelling and interesting, and much of the literature suggests this can be achieved through developing strong classroom relationships

¹⁰ Researcher comment: For details of Freire's work on education in an Aotearoa/New Zealand context see Roberts, P. (Ed.). (1999). *Paulo Freire, politics and pedagogy: Reflections from Aotearoa-New Zealand*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press.

(Carpenter et al., 2001) but again, there was nothing evident in the literature to suggest how this might best be accomplished¹¹.

I am constantly motivated by my wish to continually improve my teaching practice and I feel this is true for many educators.

I believe that educative relationships can be enhanced by learning to live our values and making them visible in our teaching practice and that through this it is possible to create living educational theories. The concepts underlying the principles of the philosophy of Āta are in effect fundamental values we all adhere to and therefore will align with any worldview. I suggest it can be argued that Āta can be developed as an emerging education philosophy which offers teachers a practical theory of teaching that will align with individual values and beliefs (Gordon & White, 1979).

In this review the philosophy of Āta has been tested against existing education theories and I believe it has emerged strongly as a possible new theory of teaching practice, although for a theory to have life it must be tested in practical terms. For this reason a case study was designed to observe the philosophy of Āta in use in a classroom. The underpinning methodology chosen for this study was Kaupapa Māori research.

According to Wilkie (2001, p. 5) “The term kaupapa Māori means Māori philosophy or agenda. When used in research it is both a world view and a methodology which is underpinned by cultural safety, and Māori ethics, beliefs, and knowledge”.

Kaupapa Māori research will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter which also considers the design of the research, along with any potential strengths and limitations, and discusses the theoretical perspectives supporting the chosen research methodology.

¹¹ Researcher comment: I am aware that Kaupapa Māori teaching has offered ways to do this and there is literature available in this area such as Pere (1988) and Bishop and Fraser (1994), however, I was looking for literature suggesting ways of becoming more relational in our teaching practice from a Western perspective in mainstream education.



CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

Ma mangu, me whero e oti ai te mahi

Cooperation is the key to achieving our goals

Overview

Emergent themes from the literature review indicated that Āta is well positioned within existing education philosophical paradigms and could be developed as a theory for best practice in teaching. However, the central research question ‘can the philosophy of Āta be used as a theoretical base for best practice in teaching?’ could only be addressed in part by reviewing the relevant literature available. It was also necessary to apply and investigate the theoretical stance taken by putting the philosophy of Āta into teaching practice.

Initially designing a research project that would do this was problematic in so far as application of the philosophy of Āta as a teaching theory is untested and such a theory is as yet not fully conceptualised. Because of my familiarity with the philosophy, I decided that I would need to be central to the research and the research would consist of observations made of my own teaching practice conducted under the philosophy of Āta. The research was of the design of a case study involving my teaching practice with a new entry class for the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) in the School of Education Te Kura Mātauranga, at the Auckland University of Technology AUT University. The research question surrounding the case study focused mainly on two areas: Can constituents of the philosophy of Āta be integrated into the teaching/learning environment and can Āta be observed in action in the teaching practice?

This chapter outlines the various stages that took place when designing the project beginning with an overview, and supporting literature behind the rationale for the research undertaken. A theoretical perspective is offered which positions me as the researcher and discusses the basis for selecting the chosen methodology. The methodology for the research is then presented and discussed in detail along with references to relevant literature and this is followed by a description of the methods used to collect and analyse the data.

A timetable for the research is outlined along with an indication of the ethical issues that needed to be addressed. The chapter concludes by considering the potential strengths and limitations of the design of the research and an indication of how the findings will be presented.

Rationale

The underpinning rationale for this research arose out of a quest for excellence in teaching practice based on honouring the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi with the utmost integrity and was in essence posited within the paradigms of a form of critical research. Crotty (1998, p. 157) defines critical forms of research as research forms that “call current ideologies into question and initiate action in the cause of social justice”. The rationale was also considered in line with the question Gutek (1974, pp. 266-268) suggested researchers ask: “what is the conception of reality behind it? Is it social, political, economic based? What are the immediate and long-term effects of the rationale?”

In recent years there has been a growing call for teachers and teacher educators to return to and embrace values-based teaching pedagogies, affirming that the profession of teaching is more than just being knowledgeable in course content and competent in teaching strategies. B. MacFarlane (2004, p. 21) informs us that “it is also about getting in touch with one’s own values and the emotional drives that lie behind those attitudes”, suggesting “what is required is an identification of virtues compatible with reflective professionalism. This requires that the exercise of professional judgment is based on core moral virtues and conceived as a central duty of academic life” (p. 128). Having recently moved into the profession of educating teachers I became aware that while we do inform our students of the need for a values-based approach to teaching, and offer instruction on such things as ethics, virtues, and professionalism, students are still often left floundering in an attempt to verbalise and solidify their own values-based theory of practice.

The challenges to those working in the education arena in Aotearoa/New Zealand also includes one of addressing the issues surrounding values-based teaching which may not align with the values of other cultures.

As we attempt to move into a truly bi-cultural society it is imperative that the values of tangata whenua are not only acknowledged and respected but are included as an integral part of mainstream teaching practice.

Methodology

The methodology of the research was Kaupapa Māori based. Kaupapa Māori is the name given to research that is Māori or is Māori-centred. The subject of the research involves the philosophy of Āta and deals with Māori knowledge therefore the methodology chosen needed to adhere to Māori principles and beliefs (Bishop, 1996). The methods reflect a respect for Māori protocol, a validation of Māori knowledge, and an acknowledgement of the tapu of Māori knowledge (Rangihau, 1992). In terms of research Kaupapa Māori is a way of structuring and recognising the way Māori think about Māori knowledge (Smith, 1999).

The chosen methodology also recognised the issue of ownership of the findings collected and this was addressed in the methods by way of returning this knowledge to the key informants of the research, with an acknowledgement that “researchers can change their position from that of controller to that of sharers of risks, mutual disclosure, and seekers of informed knowledge” (Bishop, 1996, p. 226). In accordance with this, the initial findings were reported back to the participants both orally and in written form. Kaupapa Māori research methodology informs the methods in ways that ensure the research is culturally appropriate. There are some culturally specific ideas, which are part of kaupapa Māori practices. They are not prescribed in codes of conduct for researchers but tend to be prescribed for Māori researchers in cultural terms.

Aroha ki te tangata (respect for people)
Kanohi kitea (face to face)
Titiro, whakarongo, korero (look, listen, speak)
Manaaki ki te tangata (share and host people, be generous)
Kaua e takahia te mana o te tangata (don't trample over the mana of people)
Kaua e mahaki (don't flaunt your knowledge) (Smith, 1999, p. 26).

These prescribed codes of conduct align with the philosophy of Āta and are consistent with the guiding principles of the philosophy. As the area of investigation in the research was a philosophy posited within mātauranga Māori, it was seen as according due respect to the mana of the kaupapa to adopt a Kaupapa Māori methodology for the research.

Philosophical perspective

The philosophical stance behind the chosen methodology was one of critical inquiry. Kaupapa Māori research is based on the assumption that research that involves Māori should set out to make a positive difference (Smith, 1999, p. 191). Critical inquiry is often perceived as radical although it need not be. Critical inquiry can be a search for knowledge, knowledge in the context of action, knowledge for freedom (cited in Smith & Jesson, 2005).

According to Freire (1970, p. 64) critical thinking is “thinking which discerns an indivisible solidarity between the world and men”¹². This theoretical base aligns closely to the Māori worldview reiterating the context for the choice of a Kaupapa Māori methodology for the research. Kaupapa Māori dictated the research approaches as espoused by Cram (2001, p. 14) “Kaupapa Māori within research practice therefore dictates that Māori tikanga and processes are followed throughout the research”. Kaupapa Māori research practices were also chosen out of respect for the knowledge being researched in order to maintain cultural integrity throughout the process and according to Bishop (1996) Māori practices are epistemologically validated within Māori cultural contexts, so are Kaupapa Māori research practices and texts” (p. 229). Further to this, the subject of the research, the philosophy of Āta, focuses strongly on forming respectful relationships and using the process of reflection to inform us. On reflection, Freire (1970, p. 54) stated “authentic reflection considers neither abstract man nor the world without men, but men in their relations with the world”. This is inter-connectedness and is a key principle of Kaupapa Māori theory and practice.

Methods

The framework of the research revolved around non-intrusive observation, collaborative reflection, and collection and analysis of data. A case study design was used in order to examine the practice of teaching under the philosophy of Āta as the research included several sources of information. Anderson and Arsenault (1998, p. 249) define case studies as “a qualitative form of enquiry that relies on multiple sources of information”.

¹² Researcher comment: While such quotes are sexist in their wording, I have used them verbatim while acknowledging their sexist nature.

Burns (2000) noted that case studies can be used to trace developments over time and are often used when the researcher has little control over events.

As the research was qualitative in nature, the choice of employing a case study was ultimately reflected in the following description given by Merriam (1998, p. xiii) as:

a qualitative case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon ... most case studies in education draw from disciplines for both theory and method.

The following methods were used by the researcher (myself) to collect data during the study: (i) A student focus group interview; (ii) observations; (iii) researcher reflective journal, and (iv) student questionnaires. A variety of methods for collecting data is consistent with key features of case studies as espoused by Wellington (2000, p. 100). These methods were chosen to give a variety of data collection sources in order to give validity to the study through data comparisons and were conducted under Kaupapa Māori research methodology.

The study was in the form of qualitative research (Newman, 2003) and data collection methods were underpinned using an Appreciative Inquiry approach (Bushe & Coetzer, 1995). Appreciative Inquiry was developed as an ethnographic method for examining the life of an organisation by David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva at Case Western Reserve University in the 1980s (Ryan, Soven, Smither, William, & Vanbuskirk, 1999). Appreciative Inquiry looks to reveal what is working well rather than identifying problem areas. Working under the framework of appreciative inquiry there is less resistance to providing data and all parties involved have a sense of empowerment within the process. A further benefit of Appreciative Inquiry is that through the process of the inquiry the elements that contribute to superior performance are reinforced and amplified (Bushe, 1999).

Basing the data collection methods on Appreciative Inquiry shows an awareness of the issues involved with researching Māori knowledge, such as a reluctance on behalf of Māori to participate in research due to findings often positioning Māori negatively. Smith (1999, p. 191) informs that “Kaupapa Māori research is based on the assumption that research that involves Māori people should set out to make a positive difference”, and research with a Kaupapa Māori base underpinned by an Appreciative Inquiry

approach to data collection reinforces positive aspects of the research for Māori. This is in keeping with a Kaupapa Māori approach to research where the philosophical position is one of seeking to promote positive outcomes for Māori and research should be used to identify positive aspects of Māori and Māori knowledge.

Appreciative Inquiry and Kaupapa Māori research are also strongly aligned through the principle of empowerment.

The overarching approach/method adopted in this research was a case study. The four specific data collection and analyses tools are outlined in detail below.

Case study

The project undertook a qualitative case study defined by Merriam (1998) as:

qualitative case studies can be characterized as being particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic ... particularistic, focused on particular situations, programs or phenomenon. Descriptive, end product is a rich description of the phenomenon being studied. Heuristic, case study illuminates readers understanding of phenomenon under study (pp. 29-30).

The case study was in the nature of a combination of a particularistic study that is, focused on particular situations, programmes or phenomenon and a heuristic study, being a case study which illuminates readers understanding of phenomenon under study. This was a qualitative case study defined by Merriam (1998, p. xiii) as “an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon”. Observation took place of my teaching practice conducted under the principles of Āta. The observation was in the form of passive unobtrusive observation and was included as part of the data collection process as according to Wellington (2000, p. 94) “observation, with whatever degree of participation, is clearly an important part of case study”. The observations were recorded by two research assistants who were familiar with the principles of the philosophy of Āta. The selection of the research assistants is discussed in detail in chapter six, discussion of findings. The case study also attempted to identify the various components of Āta in practice and how these assist inter-relational teaching strategies. The researcher was the focus of this study.

The study took place within the July 2005 intake of the Mātauranga Māori class, Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.), at the School of Education Te Kura Mātauranga, AUT

University. The student participants were of mixed age, ethnicity, and socio-economic status and were all first year students.

Collection of data

The data collection methods were selected to fit within the paradigms of Kaupapa Māori research and were designed to be non-intrusive and positive in their approach. The study adopted a mixed methods approach in order to gather different perspectives to support the findings. This was done in an attempt to reduce researcher bias and enhance credibility as noted by McMillan and Wergin (1998, p. 91). Data was collected in four ways: Observation notes, researcher reflective journal, student questionnaires, and a student focus group interview.

(i) Observation notes

Prior to the commencement of the study, two research assistants were invited to take part in the data collection and analysis, and were introduced to the students. The students were asked for permission for the research assistants to be present during class times. The research assistants¹³ taking part in observation took notes during all sessions. The observation notes were detailed, descriptive, and non-judgmental (May, 1997). They were to document and describe complex actions and interactions taking place in the setting. They were not designed to comment or speculate but were essentially to collect data for later analysis. Notes were time and date coded. Observation notes (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000) were critical to this study because they allowed information to emerge that was non-reflective which produced data that could be triangulated to give validity to the study through ‘combined levels of triangulation’ as described by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000, p. 236). The researcher used a form of triangulation of data by cross-checking the accuracy of similar information collected in one way with that collected in other ways (Newman, 2003). This allowed confirmation of the findings through the correlation of different perspectives provided. This also reduced researcher bias and enhanced credibility (Smith, 2002).

¹³ Researcher comment: The research assistants, David Giles and Hana Crengle, were carefully chosen for their knowledge on the kaupapa, their experience as researchers, and their identities. Their selection is further discussed in chapter six.

(ii) Researcher reflective journal

As lecturer and researcher, I kept a reflective journal of all teaching sessions during the course of the study following the principles outlined in qualitative research theories (Cohen et al., 2000; Newman, 2003).

The reflective journal was related to observations made during the teaching session and was used as a research tool rather than for personal reflection. Therefore, the format was more in the form of a working diary defined by Hinds (2003, p. 50) as a “useful method of gathering routine information relating to particular activities”.

The advantage of keeping a reflective journal as researcher was seen as being akin to keeping a research diary, in that not only was it used for my own personal reflections, it was also used as a chronological record of events and experiences (Wellington, 2000, p. 118). The underpinning rationale of the reflective component of the journal was based on the definition of reflection offered by Jay (2003, p. 1) as “thinking about what one is doing.

It entails a process of contemplation with an openness to being changed, a willingness to learn, and a sense of responsibility for doing one’s best”. The journal was used as a self-completed observation of notable instances in the teaching sessions. These included such things as feelings, intuitions, perceptions, and significant incidents. The reflective journal was written up following each session using reference to notes taken during the sessions. Journal reflections were date coded to correspond to the teaching sessions.

(iii) Student questionnaires

Students were asked on a voluntary basis to complete a questionnaire (Cohen et al., 2000). The questionnaires were constructed to comply with ethical considerations as outlined by Jenkins (1999, p. 9) and in keeping with the main principles of Kaupapa Māori research and in accordance with Te Tiriti o Waitangi Treaty principles for research, which are; partnership, participation, protection, empowerment, equity, and access as described by Wilkie (2001, p.11).

Not all members of the class were present on the day but those who were offered to take part. The questions were in the form of appreciative inquiry in so far as they were designed to allow information to grow from the data rather than to seek any specific

form of response. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in the appendices (see Appendix C)¹⁴.

(iv) Student focus group interview

A focus group interview of students was also used as a method of data collection (Davidson & Tolich, 2003). Anderson and Arsenault (1998, p. 190) define interviews as a specialised form of communication for a specific purpose. The student focus group interview was similar to a focus group as defined by Wellington (2000, p. 124) where “the synergy of the group, the interaction of its members, can add to the depth of insight of either an interview or a survey”. Those interviewed included a selection of students from the Mātauranga Māori class who had taken part in the questionnaire. The students were selected in a way which allowed for a fair representation of age, social background, and ethnicity from within the class. Informed consent was gained before the interviews took place. Information sheets and consent forms are contained in the Appendices (see Appendices D & E). The data was collected in an informal setting, and was audio taped.

Interviews were in the form of an open discussion and therefore did not rely on specific questions however indicative questions focused on Māori philosophy, Kaupapa Māori teaching and learning, and the philosophy of Āta, along with classroom experiences and student expression. An indication of indicative questions that were used can be found in the appendices (see Appendix F). The researcher transcribed the interview records herself. Interview format included formal introductions followed by informal discussion. The student focus group interviews were facilitated by David Giles rather than by me so as to avoid possible power relations issues, and feelings of obligation on behalf of the students.

Participant selection

Students were invited to consider participating in the collection of data when the case study was introduced to them. This was done at the commencement of term and was done by another researcher, (in this instance the supervisor), not the lecturer. They were then asked again at the conclusion of the case study on a voluntary basis to take part in filling out a questionnaire. A further group of students were asked to volunteer to take

¹⁴ Researcher comment: Appendix A is the class information sheet and Appendix B is the class consent form.

part in the student focus group interview. Final selection was made under criteria such as reflected a cross-section of the students in the class. Students who volunteered to participate were spoken with individually and were selected according to availability, desire to participate, and ability to meet the selection criteria of being from a specific ethnicity, socio-economic background, and age group.

Only students who had attended all lectures over the six-week course of the study were eligible for selection for the focus group interview.

Data analysis

The overall analysis consisted of identifying emergent themes from the data and making links between those themes and aspects of the philosophy of Āta as identified in the teaching practice by the research assistants and the researcher (Newman, 2003). The researcher and the research assistants were responsible for the initial analysis of their own data. The researcher and the research assistants met each week following teaching sessions to make comparative analysis of data as it was collected. At the conclusion of the study, the research assistants and the researcher met to report individual findings. Research assistants were asked to identify any emerging themes and key points revealed in the data. Student comments were analysed by the researcher and made available to the research assistants for further analysis.

The student questionnaire responses were analysed to expose significant themes and draw conclusions based on cross analysis with the other data. The initial system for analysing all data collected was open coding, whereby observations were compared and categories formed from those with similar properties (Wilkinson, 2003).

Ethical considerations

The ethical considerations for this study included that the participants of the study be guaranteed confidentiality, protection, exclusion from exposure to power dynamics, and feelings of dependency (Tolich, 2001). These issues were overcome through gaining full informed consent with an opportunity for participants to withdraw from the study at any stage. Ethical approval was sought and gained from the University's Ethics Committee AUTC (Reference number 05/136) and ethical principles were adhered to in consideration of appropriate research methodologies (Cleave, 1997). The principles

of the Te Tiriti o Waitangi were of critical ethical importance to this investigation as it revolved around undertaking Kaupapa Māori based research (Webber, 1996). Ethical considerations included the following Kaupapa Māori research guidelines as espoused by Wilkie (2001) and Bishop (1996) and guided by AUTEK Guidelines as at Section 2.5 of the Guidelines under the following:

Partnerships: Any kaupapa Māori based research needs to be a genuine process of negotiation and compromise.

The people and/or the knowledge being investigated are the primary audience for the research.

Accountability: Related to the notion of negotiation and partnership is the question of who controls the research. Under kaupapa Māori methodologies, ownership of the research primarily rests with the participants and associated Iwi.

Self-monitored research: Researching with a kaupapa Māori focus provides the opportunity for researchers to be truly reflexive about the nature of their research. The researcher therefore self-monitored the research in an ongoing manner to ensure its continual appropriateness.

Research process

The research was timed to coincide with the July 2005 intake of new students. The case study was designed to examine the developing class dynamics of a group of students new to the University, being taught under the principles of the philosophy of Āta. The case study ran for the initial six weeks of contact with the students.

At the conclusion of the case study, the students were asked to complete a questionnaire on a voluntary basis (see Appendix C), and take part in a student group interview.

The researcher and research assistants met weekly during the study and for two weeks following the study to complete analysis of the data. The research concluded with the presentation of findings nine weeks after the study commenced. The presentation of findings included a de-brief session with the research assistants, and an oral and written presentation of the preliminary findings of the study to the participants. There were several important milestone dates during the study, which included gaining ethical approval from AUTEK (reference no. 05/136) to begin the study, undertaking the student interviews, and analysing and writing up the findings.

Strengths and limitations

The main strengths of the study were that it was small, simple to manage, and provided a wealth of data collected from a variety of sources. The students were eager to participate and were readily accessible to the researcher. One of the main strengths of the study was that it added value to my teaching and allowed me to view my teaching practice from other perspectives as well as through recorded self-reflection.

Potential limitations of the case study were that the dynamics of the class could have been affected by the presence of the observers, the teaching performance of the researcher could also have been inhibited due to the presence of the observers, and that actioning the principles of a philosophy during teaching practice could have been difficult to observe physically. However, as will be shown in the findings and the discussion on the findings in chapters five and six, none of these limitations appear to have had any definitive bearing on the findings of the study. A further limitation was one that is applicable to all case studies in that the findings may only be applicable to the specific study¹⁵ and not transferable to other areas as Stenhouse (1985, p. 266) informs:

In case study the relationship between a case, or a collection of cases that may superficially resemble a sample, and any population in which similar meanings or relationships may apply, is essentially a matter of judgement.

The major potential limitation perceived was one of the environment for the study. Due to student numbers the class being studied was moved from a whānau room teaching space to a tiered lecture theatre. The whānau room environment is one where there are no desks or chairs and students can sit in a way that they are all face-to-face and in comfortable positions.

The whānau room environment promotes inter-relational teaching practices. This was of initial concern to the researcher, as a lecture theatre environment was not seen as conducive to using relational teaching practices. However, the findings from the study have indicated that teaching under the philosophy of Āta, relational teaching practices

¹⁵ Researcher comment: Further to this it was recognised that the research may have been conducted differently such as several studies with different groups and a control group with a cross comparison of data collected. However, this study was not an experimental design in terms of the type of research approach.

appear not to be dependent on the physical classroom environment. This is shown in the following section, the presentation of the findings, and considered in-depth in the chapter discussing the findings. The strengths and weaknesses of the study will be considered in more depth in chapter six, discussion of findings.

Conclusion

The research methods were considered both appropriate and functional for the research undertaken. The project was small and simple to manage.

Validity of the research was based on analysis of research assistants' observation notes, researchers' reflective journal entries, student questionnaire responses, and focus group interview transcripts (Davidson & Tolich, 2003). In this research, I used a form of Denzin's (1971 and 1978) 'triangulation method' of data analysis that is achieved by cross-checking the accuracy of similar information collected in one way with that collected in another. Keeves (1997, p. 281) described triangulation as confirmation that is commonly sought through multiple methods of investigation so that the different perspectives provide support for the findings and observed relationships. McMillan and Wergin (1998, p. 91) note that this technique reduces researcher bias and enhances credibility. In this thesis, therefore, consistent attention was paid to triangulation to enable the author to remain confident that findings reported were consistently valid and reliable.

The inclusion of two research assistants making observations and keeping notes of all teaching sessions gave the study the opportunity for a variety of data collected and ensured a 'semi-objective' view thereby minimising potential subjective bias. These processes produced a reliable set of data that may potentially be replicated in an alternative study within a different context¹⁶. Further analysis of the data could provide opportunity for future development of theories that are contextually based, which could be tested under different environments.

¹⁶ Researcher comment: It should be noted that each teacher's classroom whilst perhaps having some generic similarities, might also be different given the traits of the teacher and the class. Further to this is the consideration that there is a spiritual component to Āta which although not discussed in this thesis could potentially have a bearing on the effectiveness of using Āta as a teaching theory and may ultimately be linked to the wairua of the teacher.

The study was a case study of my own teaching practice, but as data was being collected from the students, and observers were present during class time, it was necessary to fully inform students of the study taking place and gain informed consent from them. The students were not however informed of the philosophy of Āta until the end of the study. This produced some very powerful indications that the philosophy can be influential in teaching/learning situations. This was supported by the data collected from the students, the research assistant's observation notes, and the researcher's reflective journal, and is discussed in more depth in chapter six. The following chapter presents the findings of the study gained from implementing this design in order to consider the question 'can learning be enhanced when teaching under the guiding principles of the philosophy of Āta?'.



CHAPTER FIVE: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

He aha te mea nui o te ao, he tangata, he tangata, he tangata.

What is the most important thing in the world? It is people, it is people.

Overview

This chapter presents the findings of a case study undertaken to observe my teaching practice based on the philosophy of Āta. The research is outlined, the data collection methods are discussed in brief, and emergent themes are identified. Although there are strong links between the data collected from the various sources, these links have only been discussed briefly here, as they are considered in more depth in the following chapter. Each set of data is presented separately and summarised, and recurrent themes are identified and discussed. The chapter concludes with a brief summary of the findings and the highlights that emerged from the study.

The research undertaken was in the form of a six-week case study involving my teaching practice of students from the Mātauranga Māori class on the B.Ed Primary/ECE programme at the School of Education Te Kura Mātauranga, AUT University. The students were new to the university. They were first year students and part of the July 2005 intake. Research data was collected from four separate sources: Research assistant's observations; researcher/lecturer's reflective journal; student questionnaires; and student dialogue via a focus group interview. The study yielded a large amount of valuable and interesting data¹⁷ with student responses being quite humbling to me as the lecturer involved. Emergent themes have been identified and these have been analysed in the discussion section in the following chapter.

The findings are presented in the following order:

1. Research assistants' observations.
2. Student questionnaires.
3. Focus group interview transcript.

¹⁷ Researcher comment: There was neither time nor space in this thesis to present and discuss all the findings and it was never my intention that this work would be able to relay the complete story that the study presented (see Stake, 1996). Some of the data collected was not applicable to this study and referred to experiences in other classrooms with other lecturers. To have reported those findings here would have been in breach of confidence of the students (violating ethics procedures) and furthermore, may have reflected somewhat negatively on colleagues.

4. Researcher/lecturer's reflections.

The findings are presented in this order to provide clarity of presentation and continuity of data. This was also the order in which the data was collected and analysed.

Research assistants' observations

The research assistants¹⁸ were not provided with a standardised format for collecting data as both were experienced researchers and it was felt that their different approaches would allow for different forms of data to emerge. Their findings have been reported here separately and comparisons have been drawn in the discussion section.

The data from David was transcribed verbatim as it was presented to me. David chose to collect and present his data with a coding system that linked observations to principles of the philosophy of Āta. The following is a summary of a selection of his observations and links he made to Āta components.

(David, 02/08/05) H has a relational manner with the students. H forms connections for the students with the present content to the future. H handled potentially difficult content in a manner that was easily accepted by the students. Theme of connectedness permeated content and process. Āta aspects integrated and readily observable. H had confident poise throughout.

Āta connections: Connectedness; relatedness; personal concern for students; issue of safety for the students; Āta noho; Āta whakaaro; Āta korero.

(David, 09/08/05) Introducing Ako. There is a role for students previously taught in the certificate class. Students with different languages are invited to write their words for teach and learn. Students responded. Class discussion. Called back together – what did you think? Interactive time, student with teacher. Active listening by H. Any difficult words? Explanations given. Recalled parts of the video. Student volunteering thoughts. One student said it is quite amazing – heart above the head. Related to primary and ECE.

Āta connections: Relatedness; respect of topic; student involvement; respect of language.; Āta korero; Āta haere; Āta noho; Āta whakarongo.

(David, 16/08/05) Te reo activity – get into groups of 8 – signal the way the class would end – distributed a pack of cards and demonstrated by H – students then practiced with H moving around the groups. Establishing finishing routine as a boundary. Unsure if students knew pronunciation beforehand. H seemed to trust them to form their groups and attend to the activity. Students seemed to enjoy task. H's interaction with each group brought a degree of accountability.

¹⁸ Researcher comment: Although I refer to David and Hana throughout as research assistants, they are in truth, both very accomplished and recognised researchers in their own right and I saw their roles more as collaborative researchers than research assistants. However, given this is a Master's thesis and to display research independence, for practical reasons they are referred to as research assistants.

Āta connections: Setting boundaries; respecting space and time; valuing student knowledge; Āta noho; Āta haere; Āta whakaaro.

(David, 09/08/05) Talking to each other – Move to someone you have not sat next to and talk – Students moved, while H set up PowerPoint initially and then engaged with individual students. H stands at the front to signal call to attention. Enjoy meeting someone new?

Āta connections: Connectedness; deliberate actions; personal sharing; Āta noho; Āta korero; Āta haere.

David's post comments

I felt Huhana modelled the practice of Āta in teaching out of who she is and with conviction. One student volunteered her comments to me after the lesson, "the lesson was wonderful, wasn't it?" Students have been given something to contemplate. A privilege to watch in action.

Hana chose to collect and present her data in the form of a reflective journal at the conclusion of the study with summarised observations under section headings. The following are a selection of those summaries. Hana did not provide dates for her data and I have transcribed her observations verbatim as they were presented to me.

Establishing and modelling whanaungatanga (collective belonging and responsibility)

Karakia – shared welcomes

Ethic of volunteerism generated and acclaimed (e.g. group clapping)

Offering support directly e.g. re Te Reo pronunciation by narrator.

Recognition of students' humanity alongside acknowledgement that school subject to "human" process also

Engaging in volunteerism/social capital building

Defining tikanga of mutual class consideration and care actions

Emphasis of whanaungatanga in content

Positive group organisation and delegation of tasks i.e. stating responsibilities as shared and collective

Well-planned allocation of roles re karakia

Room for students to take up cooperative actions re distributing materials etc.

Consider replenishing student understandings of consideration re coming in late.

Consider clarity/visibility of board writing for back rows

Consider the tikanga of role clarity e.g. distributor helpers/age/gender

Model the values placed on women with more respect

Providing space in relationship

Open physical stance – no barriers (e.g. desk/lectern)

Offering "reading space" (time to read instructions)

Space in language (simple, economical, uncluttered speaking)

Space in language – pauses, softness of tone, using verbal markers to attract attention Questioning tone – clear seeking of feedback

Checking in emotionally on students lives and well-being

Acknowledging your and their emotional lives e.g. 'bravery' and 'acclaim' of volunteers

Offering space for student views; asking students to consider their own experiences with topic/s

Opening acceptability of alternative experiences, meanings, versions etc

Probing to elicit evidence of understanding

Hana's personal comment

Consider how to enhance relevance of topic to their world or “the big world”
Is it possible to plan for probable questions? Reduce isolating sense that “can’t be answered”

Safety in student human needs

Willingness to repeat instructions
Seeking clarification and feedback on having received meaning
Active balancing of tikanga and practicalities (latecomers walking in front of you; no shaming; coping with problems in environment i.e. physical limitations of classroom)
Tolerance for occasional noisiness
Understandings appropriate to students level
Indicating purposes, identifying clearly concepts and principles
Not cluttering students with too much detail too early (discussed: your deliberate choice/plan)
ESL language students: consider how best to safeguard them re whakamā while enabling their access to needed language assistance
Consider how to create safe physical spaces when designing lesson components e.g. consent/comfort with physical contact with other students/proximity and touch
Engaging material at level of the “most” while stimulating leading students?
Assumed knowledge/lack?

Creating and holding responsible space for oneself

Unselfconscious about apologies/mistakes in materials
“I will take responsibility for letting you know when the text book arrives”
‘Nod or shake your heads so I will know how you feel’ – mutuality of interrelating; stating your needs
Engaging students in your technology navigation – shared moments of humanity
Arousing motivation through personal enthusiasm
Utilised whole teaching space
Conscious about teaching space and your space use

Hana's personal comment

Stating aims for components of session (for self – learning aims; knowledge aims)
Consider planning for question moments – especially your content goals
Dealing with ‘many individuals’ v class as One Being

Relational teaching technologies used

Asking clear questions – many examples of engagement and clarity of explanations
Asking for students’ recall during lesson
Use of humour
Warmth, realness
Sensitivity; modeled and emphasised when setting class ethics
Involving students in discussion and seeking their views
Clear directions about follow-up activities
Setting up positive culture to enable student group/s to work effectively
Remaining aware of (and checking in with) student progress during learning
Using various information modalities for teaching them including drama
Varying the class activities (enabling a variety of learning preferences)
Encouraging students to see their learning activities in the context of their future as teachers

Hana's personal comment

Maintaining Aata space is more difficult and stressful if not one-to-one, even if one of those ones is a collective of many. All students deserve space and safe boundaries including those in front of the pack, Maori (re pronunciation), and Asian. Instinctively worried we cater to “most”. How does Aata balance this? Te Ao Tūhura balances via creation of leadership recognitions and roles, wananga, mōkai mentoring. Women – roles – “Mrs. Tangaroa”? Overall: highly impressive teaching performance and activities supporting relationship, mutual respect, genuine investment in the students as people – very impressive modeling of relationship.

Responses seen in students

Quieten down

Relaxed comfort and intent listening

Response to linking present to their future

Willingness to participate in activity

Definite moments of consideration for each other

Supporting each other re availability of materials, arrivals of latecomers etc

Sustained attention

Open body language

A sense of comfort, genuine interest and engagement

No visible signs of discomfort except in ESL moment and re Te Reo pronunciation

No signs of boredom or disengagement or antagonism or argument. Establishing and Modeling Whanaungatanga (Collective Belonging and Responsibility)

Hana's observation notes

Opening relationship space: through open-ended questions establishing class in context of students lives – sought and/or provided space for students to raise “any problems”. Provided space to enable sharing of concerns, and included a generic “everything ok?”. Enabled life context, created opportunities for revealing and assisting resolution of ‘baggage’ that might get in the way of learning in the class. Interesting kind of ‘whakawātea’ invitation, almost. Brave in its open-endedness.

Responses not seen. Occasionally the non-response looked awkward. Invitations to share positivity or good happenings not emphasised as much as clearance/problem solving but the latter is closer to hui tikanga than the former.

Intuitive stance taken re-position of teacher relative to class, when interacting with particular students. Intuitive placing of self at apex of balanced ‘triangle’. Physical space consciousness flowed with topic and nature of interaction with questioner, but more ‘expert’ space positions than collaborative space positions. [As discussed, the lecture room doesn’t lend itself as well to using space and body position to help melt barriers for the students, but you still worked the available space really well in an energistic sense, keeping balanced.]

Choices of what information to give in response to questions were conscious and considered – keeping detail low and clarity high. Occasionally explanations on administrative course matters ‘wandered around’ verbally. Pausing in answering was excellent – “felt” like offering respect to the questioner, being considered, treating enquiry with respect.

At one point, hesitation while making inner decisions on what to share and leave out (as clarified in post class discussion) resulted in the class stilling and listening more intently – I think they picked up on “something significant is about to be said”.

Body language solid and relaxed, feet well planted, shoulders relaxed, in command of situation and class. Huhana is very strong in her energy, when intent on

information being taken on board, strong tones in voice. Relaxing body mirrored in student's bodies/stance at desks – eased open the air. Moved frequently around best space – physically unselfconscious.

Repeatedly centered 'self as human', capable of imperfection, unbothered by it. Self-tolerance led to increased sense of warmth in class and camaraderie with students but no obvious loss of authority or such – students 'heard' relaxing and breathing, satisfied with teacher's sense of humour, willingness to tolerate herself.

Class responsive and focused during anecdotes, in particular. They loved the 'stories'. Lines between story telling, fact giving, class participation exercises etc were not belaboured or unnecessarily 'explained' or elaborated. Learning woven in and given room to evolve within each student rather than 'force fed'. Teacher didn't always look comfortable in "fact telling" mode, physical/tone tension, sometimes students picked up on this by blanking out or becoming distracted.

Anytime the teacher's discomfort or resistance to a topic was perceived (eg when talking about tests), students appeared to mirror that in lack of attention, or shifting in seat, or otherwise being less focused and rapt than in other moments when the teacher's warm, deeply interested tones said "I love this". Students almost mirrored teacher's interests.

Safety consciousness (respect for students well-being) expressed directly AND reinforced/established in many small holistic ways in which students were reassured they would not be taken out of their comfort zones and could trust: willingness to make oneself vulnerable; saying material was going to be covered now, in easy to understand 'first understandings', then deepened in second semester; addressing absence of testing/assignments in first class, easing potential tensions re having to absorb 'facts', rather than listen, be open and grow with the material; willingness to open material to full view (e.g. asking them to share their own understandings, to ask questions, to offer opinions etc; Also, inviting them to know teachers debated some issues e.g. navigation and first nation identities).

Some moments of potential alienation for sections of students (especially international/Asian) – for e.g., murmured class reactions to students writing in kanji and Muslim script – teacher expressed interest and approval ("thank you!" with warmth and enthusiasm in tone) without making obvious any ecological response to the class reaction. Overall, I felt tense about whether the class was directed for and at the European students to the marginalisation of Māori, non-Euro NZ'ers, and international cohort. Was aware at least twice when the commentary made references that would not have been understandable to internationals – saw misery/embarrassment/shame on the face of one student in response. Balances in deploying lecture, commentary, "ask them questions" methods and use of other learning technologies (including class participation exercises and videos) were really good – loss of class attention was very rare when teaching.

The small group discussions didn't work as well, with some students (particularly a team of girls sitting together regularly) appearing ill-directed about the instructions, not enthusiastic or lackadaisical about what they were being asked to do. The openness of the exercise directions and amount of time made available perhaps contributed to a sense of milling about more than achieving. ALSO NOTED though that class groups were strengthening their relationships with each other through conversations and sharing of moments of identity and sometimes humour (in Te Reo exercise for e.g.).

Loved multilingual writing exercise. Beneficial – opening space for different expressions, for touch-stoning "home" cultures, gently making visible the class diversity – offset inclusion concerns! Many of the students who came up emitted "pride". Lovely.

Use of video teaching resource Rose Pere – great deal of care and reverence for the knowledge in the video expressed before showing it – clearly setting culture for class on its significance and encouraging respect to be shown – this is the energistic direction of āta as energy moving towards aroha and respect for tapu, in my opinion ie relationship not as non-directed equality, but of mutuality IN exploration, in movement towards absorbing new learning which the teacher dictates (or, rather, locates/points the direction of).

This is teacher as mauri magician, as mover of tales, opener of hearts, placer of learning. Not purveyor of fact.

Student questionnaires

The student questionnaires were handed out at the conclusion of the study (refer to Appendix C for a copy of the student questionnaire). There were five separate questions for the students to comment on and these have been presented in order as they appeared on the student questionnaire. The student responses are reported verbatim regardless of spelling and grammatical errors in order to protect the integrity of the responses. There were fifty-eight students in class when the questionnaires were handed out and all students responded. This was a very positive aspect of the study as it showed a willingness on the part of the students to participate.

There were several emergent themes, which ran through and crossed over all five questions. These were identified as significant to the learning environment by the students. The questions have been presented individually along with several examples of the types of responses given. Overall, responses to each question have been further summarised in short phrases. Significant themes for each question have been identified and presented.

Question 1:

Can you relate a time in class when you think the learning experience was exceptional? Just describe the experience please.

There was a wide range of responses to this question with each of the six different class sessions being recalled. Two sessions were strongly represented in student recollection, the lesson on whakapapa, and the lesson on the philosophy of Āta. Some responses did not pertain to specific lessons but rather to instances during lesson time that were exceptional to the student.

Responses to question 1:

“The lesson on whakapapa. I think the learning experience was exceptional when Huhana asked for class feedback and we discussed the different points of view between other cultures and other languages. This made all class members feel they were contributing to class”.

“The time we were grouped together to practice asking ‘how are you’? I found that experience helpful to me to open up. Simple things like this helps to break our outer shells and explore and learn from other people”.

“When Huhana was doing the slide show for the Āta lecture. The whole class was silent and everyone was entirely focused. There was so much respect”.

“One lesson when Huhana asked the class to discuss some questions on Māori culture. I couldn’t understand and sat quietly and Huhana came to me and asked how I am feeling. This is the first time I have seen a lecturer walk to us and talk. Now attending her class I feel so relax [sic] and I can feel the respect from her”.

“Teacher asked us to change seats to people that we never sat side by side [sic] and to talk to them, to make friends, to know different experiences and culture. We all were important in that time”.

“I remember the class on Māori history. This class was so fantastic, with everybody involved in that environment, I can understand and learn easily”.

“The way the class starts. With time for talking, saying how we are and greetings. I feel comfortable instead of nervous”.

“Huhana was exceptional and different in her approach to this class. Giving a couple of minutes to discuss whatever that was worrying the student. This is the first time I have had experience in this type of interaction.”

“When the students were asked to come forward and write words from their own language on the board. It was interesting to see all the languages and the board was soon full.”

The responses to question 1 have been further broken down to individual lessons and the main responses to each lesson summarised in brief.

Lesson 1: First welcome

Open, respectful, developed our relationship, set boundaries and goals, getting to know each other.

Lesson 2: Whakapapa

Full attention, easy to concentrate, lots of discussion, being involved, all beliefs acknowledged and valued.

Lesson 3: Migration

Other beliefs respected, theories discussed openly without judgment, opinions valued.

Lesson 4: Learning phrases and ako

Involved, working together to achieve learning, mixed groups get to know each other, time to learn, not rushed. Other languages acknowledged and valued, student involvement, student knowledge valued, individuals respected.

Lesson 5: Āta

Total focus, respect for subject, desire to integrate into own practice, explained feeling valued and respected, new understanding of respect.

Lesson 6: Conclusion, student questionnaires and interviews.

Emergent themes

The overriding themes to emerge from question one were: student involvement, feeling valued; feeling comfortable; making connections; developing relationships; and feeling respected.

Question 2:

What do you think made this an exceptional experience?

Many students also incorporated answers to this question in their response to question 1. The following are a small selection of these.

Responses to question 2:

“Huhana always does her best to make us feel a part of what’s going on”.

“It involved the students and made us active participants in what was happening in class”.

“The way she expressed her teaching made me think deeply and respectfully into the subject”.

“Being able to express your feelings and thoughts. Huhana being open and showing respect for what others believed and had to say”.

“I felt that she was able to get me interested in the subject by establishing this personal bond that motivates my interest in what she has to teach”.

“Listening to the way she expressed her respect for Āta allowed me to get a deep understanding for the subject”.

“I find each class we have is exceptional. It is made more personal by the teaching style. Her style is very effective as she will make each individual feel important and respected.”

The students clearly identified reasons why they believed the learning experience was exceptional. A selection of these have been summarised further in the following brief phrases:

- i. Knowledge gained from Āta lecture being applied in personal life
- ii. Being involved in a real and meaningful way
- iii. Feeling like I am contributing to the learning
- iv. Having my own beliefs validated
- v. Being able to compare learning with own experience
- vi. Feeling accepted
- vii. Seeing a philosophy in practice in teaching
- viii. Having fun while learning
- ix. Not feeling like being taught but still learning heaps
- x. A projection of the need for respect
- xi. Being valued as a person

Emergent themes

Many of the overriding themes to emerge from question 2 that were identified by the students as contributing to the learning experience were similar to those from question 1. They were as follows: Students being incorporated in the learning; feeling valued; having individual beliefs validated; enjoying the learning process; and feeling respected.

Question 3:

What would we need to do to make this sort of experience part of our learning all the time?

The responses to this question were generally brief with many students not answering this question at all. The following is a selection of comments from those who did respond.

“Lecturers need to adopt a committed relational style from the heart”.

“Lecturers being really involved in the subject, growing a relationship with the class”.

“Allowing time, give students time to process the information instead of racing through a class”.

“The teacher needs to value both those participating in class and value the subject they are lecturing on”.

“Include the class in the teaching. Instead of talking to the class, talk with them”.

“Respect that students can take initiative in learning not just a machine busy taking notes”.

“Respect that both teachers and students have the right to search for what they want, what kind of class they want, what kind of way you want to learn.”

“Opportunities to get students in front of the class and involved”.

“Incorporate student contribution to the learning”.

A selection of the responses to question 3 have been further summarised in the following phrases: there needs to be respect; remove passive listening, more student involvement; sincerity in subject matter; and allow more time.

Emergent themes

The overriding themes to emerge from question 3 were that students feel involvement in the learning process is critical, that there is a need for respect for both learners and subject matter, and allowing students time to process information.

Question 4:

Is there any difference between how you feel in this class compared to your other classes? If so, can you describe the difference?

This question evoked the strongest response from the students. While much of the data was focused on this class, some data emerged that was significant to other classes. Much of that data was critical in nature however because it was not pertinent to this study, it has been excluded from the findings with the exception of a few minor comments. The following is a selection of student responses to question 4.

“Yes I feel comfortable to relaxed enough to take in all I need”.

“In this class we are able to talk about anything. In most other classes we have to sit in the class and write notes and talk about assignments.”

“Yes. I feel very comfortable in Huhana’s class compared to all the other classes. She forms a big relationship with all the students”.

“She asks us for our opinion and views and asks us how we feel which makes us feel like she wants to be with us”.

“I feel really involved and welcome in this class. It feels like it’s on a more personal level”.

“Huhana makes us feel relaxed because we are all respected as individuals”.

“I feel this class is more friendly and relaxed. Most classes I go to are just a lecture, not so much a connection between teacher and student”.

“I feel at ease in this class and the respect and love she shows towards us is amazing”.

“It doesn’t feel like sitting in a lecture with 90 other students, it feels like a small group because of the relationship we have”.

“I feel more relaxed in this class than any other because I feel this teacher has a respect for her students that is visible which is not so in other classes”.

The responses from question 4 have been further summarised in the following phrases:

- i. Involved and welcomed
- ii. More comfortable, relaxed
- iii. Valued
- iv. More discussion and open communication
- v. Lecturer truly connected to subject
- vi. More fun less stress
- vii. More respect

Emergent themes

The overriding themes to emerge from question 4 mirror those from the other questions. Student responses indicated involvement, feeling comfortable, relaxed, and valued were important aspects to this class. Respect again emerged as a strong component in this section.

Question 5:

Can you explain why you feel different in this class?

Student response to this question was similar to responses to question 4 however there was a strong emphasis on respect as the reason for how the students felt. The following are a selection of responses given.

“I feel a sense of belonging, like it is my class, not the teachers”.

“I feel part of the class ethos. I feel the respect in reciprocal ways. Pace is very different but learning and thinking is very high”.

“I feel the respect because Huhana explains clearly and spends time asking questions to make sure everyone understands”.

“We can be who we are. I feel there is a good relationship between class and lecturer”.

“Huhana has a relaxing persona and doesn’t pretend that she knows everything, that she is sometimes learning with us”.

“Because I believe this teacher really does care about her students as people”.

“I guess it makes me feel more comfortable knowing that there is someone who generally cares about us and how we feel even though it is not related to academic learning”.

“I think everyone enjoys this class because we are treated with respect”.

“The care and time she gives us. I don’t feel pressured or stressed but I am learning heaps. There is a sense of belonging and being accepted”.

“Although the class is so big I felt I was coming each Tuesday morning to visit a special friend that had something very important to tell me and someone that will stop everything no matter how important it was to listen to me”.

Student responses to question 5 have been summarised in the following phrases: comfortable and friendly; relaxed atmosphere; more personal interactions; relationship focused; and reciprocal respect

Emergent themes

The overriding themes to emerge from student responses to question 5 are: feeling comfortable; relationship focused; and respect.

Student focus group interview: transcript

The interview was conducted in the postgraduate room in the AUT Library, Akoranga campus on Tuesday the 30th of August at 10am and took about 50 minutes. Students were selected on a voluntary basis under the criteria that they had to have been present at all six classes during the course of the study. A volunteer was asked for from each of

the ethnic groups in class and each of the age groups (under 20, 20-30, 30-40, 40-50, and over 50). Student selection was based on attaining a balanced representation of the students in the class not all of these groups were represented by those who came forward but it was decided that there was enough of a cross section of students to conduct the interview.

Some of the volunteers represented more than one of the groups for selection. David Giles was asked to facilitate the interview process for ethical reasons such as power dynamics that may have been an issue for students and potential feelings of obligation on behalf of the students, which may have restricted their responses. Six students took part in the focus group. The audiotape of the interview was transcribed by myself and is presented here verbatim. For ethical reasons and to protect the student's anonymity the students were given a pseudonym and a random gender identity.

Question: How do you feel in this class?

Amy: Comfortable, interested.

Ben: Definitely more relaxed for a lecture the atmosphere is very relaxed.

Andy: But focused as well.

Cara: I feel warmth and a sense of belonging.

Amy: You feel like you are supposed to be there.

All: Yes definitely, very much so.

Question: Why do you say that?

Dan: I think it's just, um, Huhana makes you feel comfortable and really captivates your interest and you are, like, you're supposed to be there. The subject is irrelevant to her style of teaching so it always strikes a chord.

Question: Is it like a sense of belonging? Is it the same for you all?

Cara: Yes, but more. There is an inner radiance for me when I am in that class and an expectation that it flows from mutual respect and I feel like I belong. Long before Āta was introduced as a subject it was depicted, so that was notable for me.

Eve: Because Huhana portrays herself not as a teacher. She's more like part of the group, part of the discussions, part of the learning. You don't really see her as a lecturer.

Amy: Yea, more like a peer.

Eve: That's what brings that more relaxed environment. I always look forward to going to that class.

Cara: It is more like a collective, you feel like you are learning as a collective, learning collectively. She stands among us even tho sometimes in a proxemic sense she's at the front it still feels like she is among us.

Amy: Yea, she's not talking at us, she's talking to us, with us.

Fay: I feel comfortable in a sense that I come with an expectation of being able to learn something and because she's so interesting but also very clear and precise in the things she says I am never disappointed.

Ben: She's very passionate too.

Amy: Yes there's passion in the subject eh?

Cara: It comes from deep down and it's real. You don't feel like there is a huge data transfer going on but I come away from that class more reflective, learning more, thinking more, reflecting more, and there is even a desire to go out and find resources that go beyond what's recommended so that I find I've got ideas going on what has come out of class. I haven't been crammed. I feel expanded, developed.

Question: Grown?

All: Yes, definitely.

Ben: We don't have to take any notes in the class and that's great, that way she has our full attention. Because she is so interesting and clear in the way she explains and is real, totally different than other lecturers.

Question: Can you give me an example of one difference?

Eve: I think of a different class is where there is no relationship, where we are sitting taking notes throughout the whole lecture and you are focusing on getting your notes down and you are missing the whole lecture, you're not taking it in.

Question: So not taking notes is really important to the practicing of relationships in class?

All: Yes.

Amy: Yes it's more oral.

Ben: And we have eye contact with her that you are supposed to have so we can give feedback on what she says and ask questions when you don't understand where as normally we have to take notes and you don't really understand.

Cara: Its that do and don't do in some classes and how the focus is on children which is critically important to our training, but you are developing people who are going to impact on children and they need to be developed. This class somehow facilitates that development in a nice subtle way.

Question: So you are saying that you are not involved in early childhood education as such, you are involved in adult education, you are adults?

Cara: Yes and we need developing.

Question: So you feel sometimes we focus so much on children we forget you are adults?

Cara: Yes, it becomes scary. I've learnt enough now to be really concerned.

All: Laughing and agreeing.

Eve: But Huhana is more relaxed about being, understanding our being and what being here is about for us.

Cara: That's right, it's that respect thing.

Question: In a strange way you are answering all the questions at once, you are already in a descriptive mode but can you now talk specifically about the idea of Āta. Can you understand Āta? H teaching under Āta is an art you are learning. Yes?

Ben: Definitely, because she practices what she preaches.

Amy: Yes, you can see it when she is teaching, she's respectful of the subject and of us. What I gathered from the philosophy is respect and you can feel she teaches with that respect.

Ben: Yes it comes over. When she teaches something you can see she spends a lot of time preparing for the topic and has it solid before she explains it to us and that's like Āta. Did I say that right? She spends a lot of care to do it properly in respect of us.

Question: So it does come from a different place then. It is not from the head only?

All: No it's more.

Amy: You sense she cares about what we are learning.

Ben: She does. She spends a lot of time presenting her lectures and shows that she cares.

Cara: It definitely goes beyond the classroom. Um, Huhana will come out after class and roll a smoke with you afterwards. It's not the smoke, it's the relational time, you reflect together and you can see her interest in you and your developing ideas.

Amy: And she is very approachable.

Ben: Yeah, she approaches you not by your name, but for instance she'll say how can I help you sweetheart? Or, make sure you have a lovely day babe.

Amy: You can see her walking round campus and she'll say hey how's your day going love? And its like wow, you remember me, whereas other lecturers just walk on past. She always has time for you.

Cara: The fact that she made apologies and even felt to explain her absence today, when it could have been confused with the strike, and so on, it says something to me and that was important so thank you for relaying that.

Question: Interestingly Huhana is a union member and could have been on strike but intended to break that and would have been here for you, if she could and that says something doesn't it?

Cara: Yes. I was expecting her in a personal sense to make some presence today and I feel she did that through you.

Ben: She can still make her presence known even when she's not here.

Cara: That is because she shows she cares. That's where the respect thing shows through.

All: Yes, definitely.

Question: How does she do that?

Eve: You know how kids know when you are genuine, and when you are not, they will ignore your instruction or whatever, they know when you are kidding or serious, we are the message and you see that with H. She is our message, she is authentic, yes.

Question: How does Āta influence your learning? For instance how often have you experienced that time when you are asked how you are going with your assignments, how things are for you out of class. Do you feel that sort of thing is wasting class time or is it important to you?

Ben: Oh yes, it shows that she respects us and how we are doing and has a genuine interest in us.

Amy: That's what makes the relationship so special because she is interested in us, each of us individually. And it helps to have that respect for her because she shows it to us.

Eve: Absolutely. Very important.

Cara: Because it flows automatically. If you are shown that mana, that respect it flows back automatically.

Dan: It comes back to what we are learning about the philosophy because I think she is actually living it, and you can just see it, you know in everything she does and the way she speaks. And just looking at Āta last week, it's everything you know, and if you can take it on board, grasp it, it definitely gives you a sense of identity of yourself.

Fay: Yeah, and her commitment came through for me last week when she came and she was really ill, that is very genuine.

Amy: She still came in because she wanted to be there for us.

Fay: Well I have a nursing background, so I saw a lot more than others. Just how much it cost her physically eh. I really appreciated that.

Question: When you had last week's session on Āta Huhana talked to you about it but in a way you had all been living it.

All: Yes that's right.

Question: When you had that lecture did you immediately go back over the lessons and say 'of course'?

Amy: Oh yes, it was like a light bulb went off¹⁹ and it was like oh this is where it is all coming from.

Ben: It all made sense to me in a way. So if somebody like me for example likes the way she does things, I will probably when I go out on my teaching experience I can see the way she does things under Āta and how it works and I will try and do it the same way.

Dan: It's because it is part of your everyday life really and if you focus on some of the kaupapa of the philosophy it's bettering yourself its being a positive person.

Eve: It's being respectful before you speak and before you do, so.

Ben: It's about being considerate.

Dan: It makes you a better person if you follow Āta. It might be a struggle for me sometimes but ...

Amy: H admitted that herself which is awesome. She said sometimes its hard work and you slip up and it's ok to slip up because it's about considering this. That's part of the philosophy and is ok. That's what makes it all very real.

Question: So we all have our values and beliefs and we seek to live them. We don't always get it right but that's ok yes?

Cara: And you feel like that's ok with her. She's very real in that respect.

Eve: For me, I've shared this in my survey part, it made me think of my parents I don't know why. It makes you appreciate the struggles before, the hard work they went through so my generation could be here and learn so it hit me in a real sentimental way, or if not sentimental then deep.

¹⁹ Researcher comment: I am assuming she meant *on* here instead of *off*.

Question: I'm interested in your comment, you made a link between moving Āta from just being about teacher education to being about life. Have I got you right, you see Āta as being about more than just teaching?

Eve: For me like I said before, it's about finding your identity, your values base, your beliefs, not just a way of life and Āta states that in the philosophy. It's about affirming what you think and what you believe.

Cara: You know we all carry an ambience with us, call it an aura or whatever you want, um, and she seems to value or understand that we all bring something distinct, unique to the learning experience. She respects that so respects who we are. Respect for the individual, as well as the whole, so it's about us all bringing a piece to the collective to make it whole and so on.

Fay: The big learning outcome for me was that I went back to work and in the middle of the sandpit I asked my colleague "have you heard of the concept of Āta?" and she said no and I said "well if I say ata mārie to you what am I really saying? I am saying have a serene morning amid all the clutter and noise of the children around you as you are teaching." And straight away she said "like ata haere, so that you move through your day in the same way" and so that was the outcome for me.

Question: So are you saying it gave it perspective for you, brought connections?

Fay: Yes absolutely.

Question: Any last minute comments?

Eve: Well last week one of the things that stuck to me was when Huhana asked in our morning korero you know how we were and it was mentioned that our essays were due and she said "oh that sucks!" And you know for a lecturer, who we hold in high esteem to be involved enough to speak our language, you know gives us identification, it legitimises us, and that is the sort of respect we get in that class.

Researcher/lecturer's reflections

The reflective journal I kept had in-depth reflections for each weekly teaching session, and a weekly summary. I have presented here my weekly summaries. Many of the reflections had strong connections with observations made by the research assistants and with student responses. These connections have been identified at the conclusion of this chapter and discussed in-depth in the following chapter.

Week 1: Reflective summary 26/07/05

Although this was basically just an introductory lesson I found intentionally integrating the principles of Āta contributed positively to both the development of beginning classroom relationships and to the delivery of the lesson.

On past occasions the first lesson has traditionally been brief and information based. Introductions are generally formal, students are given the paper booklet for the course and this is outlined. Questions are addressed and students are often dismissed early. The inclusion of the principles of Āta transformed this first lesson from one of simply delivering the required information, to one of initiating open exchanges to begin the formation of relationships. The students in this group appeared comfortable and relaxed and much more open to communicate and relate to each other and to me than other groups I have taught without the philosophy of Āta as a basis for my practice.

Week 2: Reflective summary 02/08/05

I felt the lesson went well, and that the students are already feeling comfortable and safe within the environment being created. I noticed students were seated in the same places as week one, and I have decided to introduce my strategy to move them around earlier in the course than I would normally do. The intent is to develop a feeling of interconnectedness amongst the students and develop a whānau²⁰ type relationship in the classroom. These students seem comfortable enough for me to do this much sooner than I have with other groups.

When looking for isolated examples of Āta in the teaching practice today, I noticed that while at times individual components could be noted, there were also many instances when a combination of all, or some, of the components showed through. One such instance was noted as I made a strong conscious choice to follow the principles of Āta. A student asked a question that is often asked in this lecture and is difficult to answer. Rather than giving the standard response, I thought carefully as to how I could best answer, then chose my words very deliberately and spoke carefully (Āta whakaaro and Āta korero). I found the response from the student differed from past instances. The student verbalised an understanding and acknowledged the information given in a respectful manner. "I appreciate the way you have explained this. It doesn't really fit

²⁰ Researcher comment: Whānau in this context is defined as being grounded in a values base which centres around a culture of care and collective vision (Heta-Lensen, 2005, p. 24).

with my belief structure but I can understand and respect it, thank you for that.” I feel while the study is still in its early stages there is an indication that identifying the presence of Āta in my teaching practice can be done. Measuring the effectiveness of this may however be more difficult.

Following the lesson, I met with the research assistants to discuss the progress of the study. They had been able to identify more instances where Āta principles had been used than I was. On reflection, this may be because I have been working with the philosophy for some time and while this is the first time I have made conscious effort to include it as a base for my teaching practice, it may be that I have been using it in ways that I am not conscious of.

Week 3: Reflective summary 09/08/05

I am surprised at how fast the relationships are developing with this group of students. They seem to be at a stage of comfort, acceptance, and respect that usually does not happen until the end of the first semester with other groups. I also feel this is directly impacting on the learning as the students are much more comfortable with potentially controversial course content than other groups have been at the beginning of this paper. This gives me confidence to take them slightly ‘deeper’ in content than I normally would at this early stage of the course.

One of the most significant instances where this level of comfort and acceptance can be seen is that today, after only three weeks together. I was confident the students would react well to a strategy I have used before for forming relationships, but which is not normally done until much later in the sessions. When I asked the students to move from their normal seating position to sit next to someone they would not normally sit next to, and allowed them time to begin conversation with their ‘new’ neighbour, I was surprised by the enthusiasm with which they embraced this exercise. Normally this exercise works reasonably well, but is followed by very short conversation time. With this group, I needed to interrupt their ‘chatting’ after a full ten minutes. This indicated to me their willingness to form new relationships within the dynamics of the class setting and that they felt safe to do so.

Another significant observation I made is that I feel today the students demonstrated many of the principles of Āta without yet having any specific knowledge of the

philosophy. I am not clear if this is a result of my modelling the philosophy or if it is just a natural response to being treated with respect. Perhaps both are the same thing²¹. I have chosen to view the data and comments of the observers on a weekly basis because I feel the study will be deepened by this information being available to me as it progresses.

My decision in this was based on the philosophy of Āta. I reflected that teaching under this philosophy is not just about a series of do's and don'ts in class time but that there are much wider implications involved. Basing my teaching practice on the philosophy of Āta demands effort, energy, and adopting the philosophy in its entirety, and implicit in Āta are the notions of planning, strategising, and reflection.

Another question that arose from the meeting with the observers has caused me to consider deeply when the initial forming of relationships begins. Is it as soon as I enter the room, or when the actual lesson begins, or some other time? Again, I turned to the philosophy for answers and have found that it is more complex than one might first think. I believe that in making a conscious choice to base teaching practice on the Āta philosophy brings with it a responsibility to grow respectful relationships in all areas, often outside what would be the recognised 'norms'. With Āta, there is no start/stop time or limitations to the depth of the growing relationships once the initial commitment has been made. When I reflect on my time physically present with the students, under the philosophy of Āta I must do so with care and deliberation. When I prepare a lesson I do so according to the principles of the philosophy choosing my wording, course content, and delivery style etc as to accord true respect to all the students both individually and collectively and to the relationships we are growing. Midway through the study I am feeling more confident in both my understanding and application of the philosophy of Āta.

Week 4: Reflective summary 16/08/05

This is an interesting lesson for reflection as the bulk of the time was taken up watching a video. Prior to the lesson I had thought there would be little opportunity to use the principles of Āta during the session. Yet, while most of the time was taken watching the video, on reflection, I feel the use of the components of Āta were visible more so

²¹ Researcher comment: In this reflection I am noting a version of the 'observer' effect, as well as my consciousness to try and relate to Āta concepts wherever I observe them reciprocated in the classroom environment.

today, than in previous lessons. The introduction of Ako was especially well received by the students and having each write on the board in their own language demonstrated Āta-noho, giving quality space and time. Therefore Āta-noho was obviously present, and Āta-haere, and Āta-whakaaro were also strongly evident in today's lesson.

I noticed that students are now displaying the principle of Āta increasingly each week in their communication and action.

I also noted that I am becoming more confident applying the principles in my teaching practice, and much of the time it is becoming less of a conscious effort. It appears the more I use the philosophy of Āta the more easily it is becoming an integrated part of my teaching practice.

The most significant reflection to come from today's session is an observation that there is a rapid deepening of the relationships within the classroom. Students openly communicate intimate feelings without fear or embarrassment and some have expressed a change of attitude beginning to take place on a personal level. This seems connected to teaching under the philosophy of Āta although the overall effect of this is still very difficult to measure.

Week 5: Reflective summary 23/08/05

This was a very interesting lesson in so far as it was the first time the students have been physically introduced to the philosophy of Āta. I noticed the attention levels were very different to other times when I have delivered this lecture and the students were quiet and fully focused throughout the entire lecture. I think in part this is due to them having been made aware of the link between Āta, the subject of the lecture, and the case study looking at Āta in teaching practice. I observed positive, open body language during the lecture with many students nodding their heads at parts, and sitting in open receptive positions.

Following the lecture the students contributed well to discussions and their comments indicated they had understood the lecture. I also noticed during the discussion that many students were able to make links between the classroom environment and the philosophy. I will be most interested to analyse the data that is to be collected from the students.

Following the lesson, I met with the research assistants and we had an in-depth discussion regarding the language I use during the lecture. In particular we considered my having referred to the philosophy as ‘it’ on several occasions. We looked at this perhaps inferring that Āta is an ‘object’ something that can be ‘possessed’ and how this might change the perception of the philosophy.

Week 6: Reflective summary 30/08/05

As I was not physically present for this session, I have chosen to reflect here on the overall observations I have made during the study. Reflections based on similar classes I have taught where I have not used the philosophy of Āta indicate there is definitely a difference in the development of class relationships and learning environment when teaching practice is based on the principles of Āta.

However, as there has been no comparative study undertaken there is no supporting evidence for this, therefore these observations are based on my own reflections and intuitions as an educator.

There is a strong sense of involvement from the students in this group and they appear relaxed and comfortable in the classroom environment. There have been instances during the course of the study where the principles of Āta have been clearly visible and acknowledged by the students. The classroom environment reflects this in the level of respect students portray to each other, to me as a lecturer, to any guests present, and to the content of each session. There is a class ethos developing which reflects the relational style teaching/learning environment.

From the aspect of teaching under the philosophy of Āta, I found a deeper understanding of the philosophy and the confidence to apply it consciously, increased with each session. The most significant observation I have made from the study is that it is more about the humanistic nature of the student/teacher relationship and less about the teaching as such. In following the principles of Āta and integrating them into my teaching practice, I also found myself extending this outside the classroom. The strongest response from students were when the principles of Āta were applied to areas

not directly related to their learning, yet with the establishment of respectful relationships in this way, the student learning appears to have been enhanced²².

Conclusion

From analysis of the data collected, there are some very significant emerging themes. While many of these revolve around students feeling comfortable and relaxed in the learning environment, having a sense of belonging, and having a form of ownership of their learning, the overriding theme to emerge is one of respect.

Student responses indicated that forming relationships are important to them as learners and that those relationships grow out of mutual respect. This appears to support the original intent of the philosophy of Āta (growing respectful relationships) as having been achieved in this instance.

Although the research assistants approached the collection and presentation of data in different ways, there are many comparisons that can be made between them. Both have identified instances of relational teaching and learning that clearly relate to the philosophy of Āta. Respect in action has been noted by both observers on several occasions, and instances that demonstrate the use of the philosophy of Āta in the teaching practice were also noted by both observers.

Further consideration of the data suggests that teaching under the philosophy of Āta has developed an inter-relational classroom environment that is based on respect. In making connections between the different data sources, specific instances of teaching under the philosophy of Āta can be aligned with both observations made by the research assistants and my own reflections. These can also be linked directly to student responses and positive effects of the teaching practice can be demonstrated. The most significant finding from the study was that many of the positive aspects of teaching under the philosophy of Āta are clear and easily identifiable, and are reflected in the student responses.

²² Researcher comment: This is ‘as yet’ unproven and is based on my own observations and student comments.

Having two research assistants observing and collecting different forms of data, along with my own reflections, plus the student questionnaire responses, has allowed for a triangulation of data, which validates the findings. This is further supported by the student responses in the group interview. In the following chapter, the links between the data²³ collected from the various sources are presented along with discussion on the emerging themes, potential limitations of the study, and recommendations for further research.

²³ Researcher comment: I find it difficult to use the word ‘data’ in relation to the real life experiences and recollections of the participants in this study. Whilst it is a legitimate form of language for research, it somehow seems to demean, and depersonalise the information gathered from what I consider are not participants as such, but are academic-practitioner collaborators.



CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Many a researcher would like to tell the whole story but of course cannot,
the whole story exceeds anyone's knowing and anyone's telling.

(Stake, 1996, p. 240)

Overview

The study undertaken was designed to answer the specific questions: Can constituents of the philosophy of Āta be integrated into the teaching/learning environment, and does teaching under the philosophy of Āta enhance student learning? Initial consideration of the findings gave strong indications that the answers may be yes, however, the data needed to be analysed fully and links made back to the literature before definitive answers could be found. The data produced several areas that required consideration first individually and then in context of the overall findings.

The quote chosen for this chapter is an indication that the findings of this study and the following discussion are relevant only to the aspects of this study that were under consideration, and are therefore not the complete story. Further analysis of the data may produce findings of interest to other aspects of teaching/learning environments, or other areas not of interest to this study.

The findings from the case study as presented in the previous chapter generally tended to suggest that teaching under the philosophy of Āta may enhance student learning. This was not always directly visible from the raw data and only became clear after analysis and links were drawn between the various data sources. In this chapter these have been described, clear examples given and key findings have been linked back to the literature reviewed earlier. The findings have been discussed in the following way. Themes arising from the research assistants' observations, my own reflections, and findings drawn from the data collected from the students are discussed. Links between these have then been shown and key findings have been identified. These have then been linked back to the literature. The strengths and limitations of the study have been considered along with issues arising from the findings. The chapter concludes with a summary of how the key findings have provided a response to the theoretical issues posed earlier, and answers to the main research question.

Emergent themes

One of the questions posed when going into the study was *can teaching under the philosophy of Āta be physically observed?* Considering the data gathered from the research assistant's observations along with my own personal reflections of the study it is clear that it is possible to observe Āta physically in action. After analysing the data I was able to clearly identify many instances of using the philosophy to underpin my teaching practice and these same instances were present in the research assistants' observations. The emergent themes from the research assistant's observations and from my own reflections were connectedness, relatedness, student validity, and respect. These themes were linked to the descriptive components of Āta through the action verbs Āta-noho, Āta-korero, Āta-whakaaro, Āta-whakarongo, and Āta-haere, which were all clearly observable in my teaching practice. Findings from the study indicated the relationships that had been developed contributed significantly to the success of the group. The inter-relational holistic teaching and learning that developed within the group was exceptional. Āta-korero, Āta-whakarongo, Āta-haere, and Āta-noho were prioritised and became a part of the ritual of the group. This accorded respect to each member of the group and placed equitable values on all participants. Students reflected they appreciated the ritual of allowing time in each lesson for personal considerations, as is demonstrated in the following student quotes:

"The way the class starts. With time for talking, saying how we are and greetings. I feel comfortable instead of nervous"(Student questionnaire response).

"In this class we are able to talk about anything. In most other classes we have to sit in the class and write notes and talk about assignments"(Student questionnaire response).

There was less separation between teacher and student and the group functioned as a whole while still allowing for individual recognition and validation. Student responses confirmed this with comments such as:

"Because Huhana portrays herself not as a teacher. She's more like part of the group, part of the discussions, part of the learning. You don't really see her as a lecturer"(Student focus group comment).

"I feel really involved and welcome in this class. It feels like it's on a more personal level"(Student questionnaire response).

Teaching under the principles of Āta combined with reflective practice allowed the group to develop and bond as a unit much faster and intensified the level of respect within the group.

Once operating under the philosophy of Āta, viewpoints were exchanged openly and without fear, and this is clearly demonstrated in the following quote:

“Being able to express your feelings and thoughts. Huhana being open and showing respect for what others believed and had to say” (Student questionnaire response).

The integrity of each member was fully maintained at all times and mutual respect was strongly evident within the group. This is reflected in responses from the students such as:

“I think everyone enjoys this class because we are treated with respect” (Student questionnaire response).

“Huhana makes us feel relaxed because we are all respected as individuals” (Student questionnaire response).

While many of the emergent themes revolved around students feeling comfortable and relaxed in the learning environment, having a sense of belonging, and having a form of ownership of their learning was also seen as important to the students as is expressed in the following:

“I feel a sense of belonging, like it is my class, not the teachers” (Student questionnaire response).

Student responses also indicated that forming relationships are seen as important to them as learners and that those relationships grow out of mutual respect. Deeper analysis of student comments revealed that being valued as individuals, having a sense of belonging and experiencing mutual respect was seen as significant to the learning process:

“That’s what makes the relationship so special because she is interested in us, each of us individually. And it helps to have that respect for her because she shows it to us” (Student focus group comment).

“I feel part of the class ethos. I feel the respect in reciprocal ways. Pace is very different but learning and thinking is very high” (Student questionnaire response).

The study also indicated the need for teachers to pause and reflect during their lessons. The importance of careful consideration, critical reflection, and deliberate action are underlined in the need for constant ‘pausing’, a notion that is implicit in Āta (Pohatu, 1994). This notion calls for our hearts to be still, our spirits to be quiet, and to deliberate with care and gentleness as we develop relationships. As the heart listens with reflective deliberation, it signals the elements of trust, integrity and respectfulness of what is being shared. It is Āta-whakarongo (Forsyth & Kung, 2004).

This notion of pausing was also evident on many occasions and emerged as one of the main themes identified in the research assistants' observation notes.

Pausing in answering was excellent – “felt” like offering respect to the questioner, being considered, treating the enquiry with respect. At one point, hesitation while making inner decisions on what to share and leave out (as clarified in post-class discussion) resulted in the class stilling and listening more intently – I think they picked up on “something significant is about to be said” (Hana’s observation notes).

The students also indicated awareness for this notion of pausing. Their responses indicated that they valued ‘pausing’ and linked it to an expression of respect as can be found in the following comments;

“I feel the respect because Huhana explains clearly and spends time asking questions to make sure everyone understands” (Student questionnaire response).

“Allowing time, give students time to process the information instead of racing through a class” (Student questionnaire response).

From the observations made by the research assistants and from my own reflections, the practicalities of teaching under the philosophy of Āta became visible. The data gave instances where the effect of Āta in action was clearly observable. Linking these instances observed by the researchers and reflected on by me to comments drawn from both the student questionnaires and the student focus group interview transcript validated the initial analysis of the data. These findings indicate the potential of Āta as a teaching theory, and this is reinforced by the literature, which suggests there must be a strong link between theory and practice (Handal & Lauvas, 1987). Winch and Gingell (1999) also remind us that teaching theory must come from an attempt to understand various practices, and the findings of the study show that not only does teaching under the philosophy of Āta demonstrate beneficial teaching practices, it is also clearly observable and comes from the teaching practice.

To support that claim I give the example of the instance where a student asked a question commonly asked during the session on whakapapa and the story of creation. This topic can be challenging to some students, as there is often a conflict of beliefs with the session content, therefore I tend to try not to get into philosophical discussions on it with students at this stage of the paper. To deal with issues that arise during this session, I have some ‘set responses’ to the ‘standard’ questions that are generally asked.

On this occasion, I realised that teaching under the philosophy of Āta required more of me than my usual ‘set response’.

This time, in answering the student’s question I turned to the principles of Āta and consciously applied these. Initially I followed Āta-whakarongo, Āta-whakaaro, and Āta-korero. I did this by first listening carefully to the question, then had the student rephrase the question and clarified with the student what exactly was being asked. Once the knowledge being sought was clear I carefully considered how best to answer the question in a way that validated both the question and the response, and respected the student, my own beliefs, and the subject matter. Finally I spoke very carefully and deliberately as I responded.

Further to this, I then followed Āta-noho and Āta-haere by allowing time for the student to consider the response, to raise any further issues associated with both the original question and the response, and ensuring that the student was comfortable and able to accept the response without feeling I had challenged any personal boundaries. This was a significant change for me to my usual teaching style and I noted the instance in some detail in my journal of personal reflections. On analysis of the data collected during the study, I found that both research assistants had noted an observation linked to this same instance, and one had clearly identified the components of Āta present. This instance reiterates the fundamentals of inter-relational teaching based on the principles of the philosophy of Āta and the necessity for the pursuit of cultural integrity that is required to grow respectful relationships. Indeed, Pohatu (2004, p. 13) reminds us that “pursuit of integrity and respectfulness in relationships and their boundaries is fundamental.” Several of the student questionnaires referred to questions being addressed in a clear and respectful manner, and this was also mentioned in the focus group interview where a student commented:

“she’s so interesting but also very clear and precise in the things she says” (Student focus group comment).

The emergent theme from this instance was the enduring and overriding one of respect. Therefore, the notion of respect was recurrent throughout the findings and became the central theme to emerge. I believe this to be strong evidence of the positive effects of teaching under the philosophy of Āta, as the philosophy is based around growing respectful relationships. The recurrent theme of respect indicates that teacher’s

conscious efforts to positively apply the conceptual notion of Āta can result in deeper understanding and reciprocal respect within the classroom. This is possibly due to the focus of Āta on relationships, negotiating boundaries, and working to create and hold safe space with corresponding behaviours (Pohatu, 1994).

Initial analysis of the student questionnaires and student focus group interview transcript allowed for the emergence of several categories that at first seemed unrelated to the possible effects of teaching under the philosophy of Āta. Students overwhelmingly related that a sense of belonging in class was what made their learning experiences exceptional, along with feeling comfortable and relaxed in the environment. A further comment, common here, was the importance of feeling valued and this falls under the realm of respect and is directly related to Āta conceptions. Analysis revealed that students were able to identify the reasons they felt comfortable in class, why they felt they belonged and were valued, as being due to the respect they were shown in that class. Students also commented that the respect developed out of the relationship they felt, and that there was a sense of connectedness between themselves, the teacher, and each other as the following response shows:

“It is more like a collective, you feel like you are learning as a collective, learning collectively. She stands among us even tho sometimes in a proxemic sense she’s at the front it still feels like she is among us” (Student focus group comment).

This reflects the theory identified in the review of the literature surrounding best practice in teaching where Gay (2000) stated:

Interactions between students and teachers as well as among students in the classroom are frequently identified as the actual sites where learning success or failure is determined (p. xv).

The literature reviewed considered that best practice in teaching, or striving for teaching excellence could be based around forming relationships in the classroom and that the interaction that took place in classrooms was a potential determinant of the success of enhanced learning (Darder, 2002). The findings of the study appear to concur with this, however only in so far as the students felt this to be the case. Student responses did indicate that they felt their learning was enhanced as the following quote demonstrates:

“I come away from that class more reflective, learning more, thinking more, reflecting more, and there is even a desire to go out and find resources that go beyond what’s recommended so that I find I’ve got ideas going on what has come

out of class. I haven't been crammed. I feel expanded, developed" (Student focus group comment).

"The care and time she gives us. I don't feel pressured or stressed but I am learning heaps. There is a sense of belonging and being accepted" (Student questionnaire response).

Although student responses suggest the learning was enhanced, the study was not specifically designed to produce conclusive evidence of this, only to give a theoretical perspective.

A further finding of the study that was not part of the original conceptualisation was the connectedness of the philosophy of Āta to many intrinsic elements central to Māori cultural actions such as whanaungatanga, aroha, wairua, and awhi. These elements are clearly demonstrated in the observations made by Hana and are reinforced by the student comment:

"Although the class is so big I felt I was coming each Tuesday morning to visit a special friend" (Student questionnaire response).

Finding these elements present in the data contributed to the key findings of the study by confirming the original belief that the philosophy of Āta is inter-connected in all aspects of te Ao Māori, that incorporating Āta into teaching practice forms a basis for a holistic and humanistic teaching theory and that such a theory acknowledges and validates Mātauranga Māori and Māori world views. This also enhances and supports a personal belief that Āta is a living theory, that the philosophy has life and energy, energy that is moving towards aroha and respect for tapu, towards opening hearts as well as minds, further proof of the dignity of the philosophy of Āta and the cultural integrity that must be maintained when considering Āta in any given context. I am reminded here of the writings of Pohatu (2004, p. 9.) which inform us of "the need to always seek the integrity and respectfulness within the legacies of others." This clearly demonstrates an obligation to honour and maintain the cultural integrity of Mātauranga Māori and Māori worldviews in all aspects and contexts, and to acknowledge the existence and value of these within the philosophy of Āta.

The various data sources gave depth to the study and allowed comparisons to be made between them. The research assistants' observations often identified instances of relational teaching and learning that clearly relate to the philosophy of Āta. Both

observers have also noted respect in action on several occasions, and instances that demonstrate the use of the philosophy of Āta in the teaching practice, as can be seen in the following examples:

Choices of what information to give in response to questions were conscious and considered – keeping detail low and clarity high. Pausing in answering was excellent – “felt” like offering respect to the questioner, being considered, treating enquiry with respect (Hana’s observation notes).

H handled potentially difficult content in a manner that was easily accepted by the students. Theme of connectedness permeated content and process. Āta aspects integrated and readily observable (David’s observation notes).

Further to this the same instances observed by the research assistants were noted by me in my own reflections and also appeared in the student responses:

The inclusion of the principles of Āta transformed this lesson from one of simply delivering the required information, to one of initiating open exchanges to begin the formation of relationships (Researcher reflective journal).

“The way she expressed her teaching made me think deeply and respectfully into the subject” (Student questionnaire response).

This cross comparison of data supported the emergent themes and the observations and comments that surrounded the lesson on ako give a clear example of the strong links that were found between the various data sources:

Introducing Ako. There is a role for students previously taught in the certificate class. Students with different languages are invited to write their words for teach and learn. Students responded. Āta connections: Relatedness; respect of topic; student involvement; respect of language.; Āta korero; Āta haere; Āta noho; Āta whakarongo (Hana’s observation notes).

Loved multilingual writing exercise. Beneficial – opening space for different expressions, for touch-stoning “home” cultures, gently making visible the class diversity – offset inclusion concerns! Many of the students who came up emitted “pride”. Lovely (David’s observation notes).

The introduction of Ako was especially well received by the students and having each write on the board in their own language demonstrated Āta-noho, giving quality space and time (Researcher reflective journal entry).

“When the students were asked to come forward and write words from their own language on the board. It was interesting to see all the languages and the board was soon full” (Student questionnaire response).

“It involved the students and made us active participants in what was happening in class” (Student focus group comment).

This indicates not only that teaching under the philosophy of Āta was observable and could be documented but also that the positive effects of this were recalled by the students themselves.

From the literature reviewed it was also clear that when considering any practical theory of teaching from a Māori perspective it must be seen as part of the whole, interconnected in all aspects, not separate, and the findings of the study show this to be evident within the philosophy of Āta. Many of the emergent themes were interconnected.

At times it was impossible to separate instances into single Āta components and there were indications that many of the emergent themes were also connected with other aspects of Mātauranga Māori outside the confines of the philosophy itself. The findings of the study further demonstrated that teaching under the philosophy of Āta was not confined to the classroom, to the curriculum being taught, or to the composition of the students, and that the learning was enhanced by using the philosophy both within and outside the classroom. An example of this is the following comment from the student focus group:

“It definitely goes beyond the classroom. Um, Huhana will come out after class and roll a smoke with you afterwards. It’s not the smoke, it’s the relational time, you reflect together and you can see her interest in you and your developing ideas”
(Student focus group comment).

The concept of a teaching philosophy incorporating more than just what takes place inside the classroom is still quite novel to prevailing education philosophy within the dominant pedagogical paradigm. That is to say, that from the literature reviewed it was evident that education theories to date have focused on the best ways to transfer knowledge within the classroom, focusing on the learning process rather than the importance of the relationship between the parties involved in the learning process (Trifonas, 2003). This is where I bravely state that the findings of the study show the philosophy of Āta offers an alternative theory for potentially enriching student’s experiences within mainstream education. The findings of the study indicate that teaching under the philosophy of Āta moves teaching theory away from the area of the transference of knowledge and considers the value of the relationship between teaching and learning.

One very interesting finding of the study was an indication that teaching under the philosophy of Āta may potentially allow for the development of strong connections and respectful relationships in any teaching environment and with large groups of students. This is an important finding because although much of the literature reviewed discussed enhanced learning through relational teaching practices, there was no literature proposing a theory of relational teaching which supported this taking place in any environment, especially in lecture-type situations with large groups of students. Both within my own work environment and at recent national education conferences I have heard fellow lecturers comment that a call for more holistic relational based teaching is good, but not possible without the correct environment.

I believe this study has shown that in this instance at least it is possible to develop relational teaching practices in an environment not thought of as conducive. The comments of the students verify this as the following demonstrates;

“It doesn’t feel like sitting in a lecture with 90 other students, it feels like a small group because of the relationship we have”.

This is key to the central research question surrounding developing Āta as a base theory for best teaching practice, as it demonstrates the possibility of positive effects from teaching under the philosophy of Āta in any teaching environment.

Links to the literature

The key indications of the study were that the development of respectful relationships in the teaching/learning environment is seen by students as beneficial to their learning, that inter-relational teaching practices can be developed under the guiding principles of the philosophy of Āta, and may potentially be applicable in any teaching environment. These findings have strong links to the literature reviewed either supporting the literature or highlighting gaps that exist in several areas.

In relation to the literature on education philosophy, the findings of the study have indicated that not only is it potentially possible to introduce the philosophy of Āta into the education arena it may also be possible to develop Āta as a theory of teaching practice. When posited against the questions posed by Gutek (1974) regarding the

development of new philosophies (Chapter 2, p. 21) the findings of the study show that Āta sits well within the paradigms of education philosophy. Further to this, the study has indicated that the philosophy of Āta may offer an alternative perspective from which to view education philosophy as was promoted by Soltis (1981) and discussed in the literature review (p. 20).

Both the theoretical and practical aspects of teaching under the philosophy of Āta were considered in chapter two, and the findings of the study support the suggestion from the literature that there is a strong link between theory and practice.

The practical application of the philosophy of Āta in the teaching situation under study has helped to further develop my own theory of teaching and allowed me to connect that theory to my values-base teaching practices. The findings suggest that the philosophy of Āta may potentially be developed as a practical theory of teaching and could assist teachers in setting their own theoretical base of teaching practice. This is an important aspect of the findings as although the literature reviewed indicated a need for a practical theory of teaching practice, there appeared to be a distinct lack of literary evidence of such a theory. The findings of this study, and further research into the application of the philosophy of Āta in the education arena, may begin to contribute to the literature in that area.

During the course of the research, I became aware of a deepening understanding of reflective practice and that teaching under the philosophy of Āta required a committed approach from me to be more deeply reflective both during and after teaching sessions. There has been considerable debate recently as to the current understanding of reflective practice and this was evident in the literature reviewed (Gutek, 2004; Jay, 2003; B. MacFarlane, 2004; Schön, 1987). Jay (2003) expressed the idea that teachers should move to deeper levels of reflection in their practice and the study has shown that this is a fundamental requirement of teaching under the philosophy of Āta. This deeper level of reflection seemed to develop automatically as the study progressed and there is an indication that teaching under the philosophy of Āta may enhance a teacher's ability to reflect on both the self and the teaching practice.

One area of considerable interest that arose from the study was the question of balancing professional practice with holistic inter-relational teaching practices. Much of the literature reviewed on this topic centred on ethics and virtues (Hansen, 2001; B. MacFarlane, 2004), and considered personal integrity as an important component of professional practice. The literature also suggested that governing rules and regulations were the normal boundary markers for professionalism, yet called for alternative ways of defining and maintaining professional standards. Again, there was little in the literature to inform teacher practitioners how this might be achieved.

Working under the philosophy of Āta gave clear indications of the boundary markers that define professionalism in teaching practice.

The findings of the study suggest that the guiding principles of the philosophy of Āta not only assist in developing relationships of value in the teaching/learning environment, but also provide safety and integrity to those relationships. There may be potential here for a new approach to professionalism that is grounded in holistic based inter-relational teaching practices. This is an area that requires further research to consider the possible links between teaching under the philosophy of Āta and professional practice.

Best practice in teaching is an area where there was considerable up to date literature available. However, finding a clear definition on best practice was difficult. For the purposes of this study best practice was taken as being excellence in teaching. Much of the literature on best practice centred on relational teaching practices (Collins, 1992; Gay, 2000; A. MacFarlane, 2004) and suggested that teaching excellence was connected to holistic based practice. Further to this Gay (2000) clearly stated that it is the interactions in the classroom that support learning success. The findings of the study strongly support this. One of the main themes to emerge from the data gathered from the students indicated they perceive relationships of respect in the classroom to be a contributing factor in their learning. Best practice for me is balancing all aspects of both teaching and learning in an attempt to provide the best learning environment possible. Further to that I feel I have an obligation to my students to be the best I can

and teaching under the philosophy of Āta has allowed me to develop both my teaching skills and my relationship with my students.

Strengths

As mentioned in the chapter on methodology, the main strengths of the study were that it was small, simple to manage, and provided a wealth of data collected from a variety of sources. The students were eager to participate and were readily accessible to the researcher. Another strength of the research was that the study was not deigned to identify and/or highlight problem areas therefore was in keeping with the Kaupapa Māori philosophy of producing positive results. Basing the data collections methods on an Appreciative Inquiry approach was also seen as a strength due to the positive data that was gathered from the students and the students seemed more open to responding to the questions.

The participants in the study were also seen as a strength. The students are developing teacher educators themselves and as such added valuable reflections that contributed to high quality data. Many of the responses given by the students were deeply reflective and the student focus group interview participants gave some insightful comments relevant to education in general and particularly to the kaupapa of the study. Further to this, the students approached the research with a level of professionalism that was reflective of their position as developing educators.

A major strength was the calibre of the research assistants involved in the study. Both David and Hana are very experienced researchers in their own right and their observations were of exceptional quality. David was selected for his knowledge and experience in the field of relational teaching practice and also because he is a friend and a colleague whose opinion I value greatly. Hana was approached for the same reasons as well as for her expertise as a researcher. Further to this I deemed it essential to have an assistant with Māori whakapapa involved in the research to guide and advise me and to ensure that the principles of Kaupapa Māori research were followed. Hana is also a friend and colleague and I had ultimate trust in her as my assistant. Having two research assistants who were familiar with the subject matter, experienced as researchers and who I could feel comfortable with observing my practice was seen as a major strength of this study. Overall, undoubtedly the main strength of the study was

that it added value to my teaching and allowed me to view my teaching practice from other perspectives as well as through recorded self-reflection.

Limitations and issues arising

Research involving case studies can be limited in so far as the findings may often not be generalisable. According to Wellington (2000) findings are only provable for the specific case being studied and cannot be seen as typical or representative. This was true of this study as it is for most case studies. However, the potential limitations specific to this study, as discussed in chapter four, were that the classroom dynamics as well as the performance of the teacher could have been affected by the presence of observers, and that actioning the principles of a philosophy during teaching practice could have been difficult to observe physically. Despite the possibility of those limitations, the data seemed to show that actioning the philosophy could be readily observed.

My own personal reflections indicated that while the presence of the research assistants making observations did inevitably have some small effect on my teaching practice, it did not essentially detract from the study. Neither did their presence appear to adversely effect the development of the classroom dynamics. This was due in the most part to actioning the principles of the philosophy of Āta in respect to the situation. The observers were fully acknowledged and valued for their contribution to the learning environment and were included as part of the initial and developing dynamics of the group. This is in accordance with Kaupapa Māori research methodologies and in keeping with the underlying concepts of the philosophy of Āta, demonstrating careful considered actions and respectful relationship development.

When conceptualising and implementing the study the major potential limitation perceived was one of the environment. Due to student numbers the class being studied was moved from a whānau²⁴ room teaching space to a tiered lecture theatre. This was of initial concern to the researcher, as a lecture theatre environment and the large class numbers were not thought to be conducive to using relational teaching practices.

²⁴ Researcher note: The whānau room is an open space without desks or chairs. Students sit on the floor and can be positioned in a way that means teaching takes place face-to-face, students are face to face, and the environment is much less formal.

Despite these initial reservations, the findings from the study have indicated that teaching under the philosophy of Āta, relational teaching practices did not seem to be adversely affected by classroom environment. While the students expressed a concern that the environment was not one they desired to learn in, they also commented that they felt comfortable and relaxed in the class. It is important to cautiously note here that although the environment was not seen as restrictive to growing relationships in the class, it remains unknown if this will be able to be replicated outside this specific study.

However, this finding is important when discussing teaching/learning theories and in particular inter-relational teaching practice in so far as there are initial indications that teaching under the philosophy of Āta may potentially overcome many reservations teachers have regarding inter-relational teaching practices. Many lecturers consider it impossible to have relationships with their students in a lecture theatre environment.

Large student numbers are seen as detrimental to relationship building and holistic teaching practices, yet student responses in the questionnaires, and observations made during the study, indicate two points, first that this class has developed strong relationships despite the large numbers and environment, and second, that despite the presence of undesirable elements, good teaching practices, based on a sound theory, and practiced appropriately can produce results that are educationally constructive and positive for students and teachers.

While there were some limitations to this study, many of the perceived limitations did not appear or did not adversely affect the study. However, it must be acknowledged that all case studies have limitations and these can be addressed. Wellington (2000, p. 100) suggests we:

Need to recognise and acknowledge difficulties of case study (which are also problems for other forms of research). This can be achieved by a reflective approach, and the degree of openness essential in allowing interpretation to be critically examined.

One of the issues arising from the study was one that is common to all case studies and revolves around the question: Would the findings be similar in different environments? That is the central question to emerge from this research. The findings indicated

potential benefits of developing a teaching theory based on the philosophy of Āta, yet there remained many variables which ultimately may have had an effect on the findings.

Each new group of students is unique and classroom dynamics will be different for every group. Each teacher brings with them to the classroom his or her own individual personality, beliefs, and values, and this will also affect the relationships that develop in the teaching/learning environment. Class sizes, room settings and curriculum may all impact on the type of learning that takes place. Perhaps most importantly, each member of the group, teachers and learners, have their own individual position, which is based on their identity, ethnicity, age, socio-economic background, life experience, and most significantly their own worldview. Can teaching under the philosophy of Āta produce the same positive results in other teaching/learning environments as it did in this study? Through further research and testing perhaps that question and others, which may arise, can be answered.

The main issue to arise from the study was one of cultural integrity. I am constantly reminding myself of the origins of the philosophy of Āta and the need to approach all aspects of Mātauranga Māori with respect and cultural integrity. The findings of the study and general observations at my university show that the philosophy of Āta is moving into my immediate education community quite quickly. Āta is emerging as a topic in student essays, and students are already attempting to adopt the principles of the philosophy into their own teaching practice. Lecturers who are working with students from the study are noticing how bonded and relational they are as a group and are asking how they can learn to teach under the philosophy of Āta. These are all strong indicators that the philosophy has the potential to become an integral part of educational teaching philosophy and theory, yet I believe there is an issue of ‘ownership’ here that must be addressed. While I have stated earlier that in many ways I do not see the philosophy of Āta as ‘belonging’ to any one person or group of people, I do believe that there is a question of ‘guardianship’ that must be addressed along with an acknowledgement that Te Iwi Māori has the right of authority over all things Māori. My challenge then is to Te Iwi Māori, and specifically to Māori academics to consider the road forward for the philosophy of Āta.

Conclusion

In practical terms, by applying Āta to my teaching practice, the study revealed many singular instances supporting a positive response to the central research question: Can Āta be developed as a base theory for best practice in teaching? There were some compelling indications from the findings of the study that potentially Āta can be developed as a teaching theory, and it clearly enables the development of relationships, and enhances classroom dynamics.

From the literature reviewed and from student comments, indications are that by developing a sense of belonging, a feeling of connectedness, and by demonstrating mutual respect, the learning environment is greatly improved and that learning itself is enhanced. The findings further indicate that it was actioning the philosophy not the environment that contributed to the students' feelings of well being in the class. This is an important finding in my opinion because as stated earlier, it indicates that Āta as a teaching philosophy has the potential to be successful even in a cold and austere environment, which indicates that there is no particular need for customised venues (e.g. marae, whānau rooms etc.). The findings suggest that the philosophy of Āta can be used in any environment and that potentially makes it a living theory that can be applied in any teaching situation. There is still a gap in the literature regarding teaching theories that are applicable in any given situation and future research into the potential benefits of teaching under the philosophy of Āta will contribute to the literature in this area. Another notable finding was in connection to student comments regarding me as a teacher. While for many students my teaching attributes were seen as being part of my own personal make up, I was still able to link these with specific components of the philosophy of Āta rather than to my own personality²⁵.

An example of student perceptions of me as a teacher is evident in the student comment:

"I find each class we have is exceptional. It is made more personal by the teaching style. Her style is very effective as she will make each individual feel important and respected."

²⁵ Researcher comment: In keeping with the concept of whakaiti I feel I must say here that I was overwhelmed and humbled by the positive feedback from the students in relation to both my teaching style and to the person they perceive me to be.

While this is in essence a comment on my teaching style, my personality as a teacher, I believe this to be a direct result of initiating the principles of the philosophy of Āta into my teaching practice. The use of the components of Āta, such as careful deliberate actions, thoughts, and words contributed to the type of teaching that took place. This then suggests that the teacher qualities as identified by the students as being essential to learning could possibly be developed through embracing the philosophy of Āta and incorporating this into teaching practice. However, I would caution that development of a deep understanding of, and culturally sensitive approach to, the philosophy of Āta is critical and that this must occur over a sustained period of time such as my own experience.

The study also opened many areas for further consideration such as can teaching under the philosophy of Āta be taught, would it be as effective with other teachers in other environments, and if so what contribution can this make to education and educational research in Aotearoa/New Zealand and internationally. These questions are considered in the final chapter along with my conclusions on the contributions of my overall findings in answering my central research question.



CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Takawehia te ara poutama, kia whakareia koe ki ngā tohu o mātauranga o te Ao Māori.

Transverse the valued pathways of learning, be transformed by potential enlightenment, through the pursuit of knowledge and wisdoms of Te Ao Māori (Pohatu, 2004, p. 5).

Overview

The journey which began with considering Āta as a potential thesis topic and then developed into a serious research topic that examined the possibility of developing a teaching theory of practice based on the philosophy has been long, challenging, and even difficult at times, but I did not realise that it would be so life-changing and personally rewarding. Major concerns at the outset were my ability and my right to work with this kaupapa. Taina Pohatu, the person who not only introduced me to the philosophy of Āta but also congratulated me on my courage for choosing this topic and was there in the beginning to give guidance. That seems such a long time ago now, yet his words remain strong in my ears. Pohatu was clear that Āta did not belong to him, or to any one person or to a collective of people. None of us can ‘own’ Āta, we can only be kaitiaki to it, and it is for each of us as individuals to find which form of kaitiaki is applicable to us (Pohatu, 2004). Āta has its own mauri, a life force of its own, and each of us who work with it are adding to that life force, creating multiple layers of whakapapa.

This final chapter will discuss the conclusions reached from the research findings, make suggested recommendations to various groups, discuss some question arising from the study and possible future research directions. The focus of this chapter will be on my own reflections of the study and my journey to complete this thesis.

Research conclusions

The findings have shown that the students in the study felt respectful relationships within the teaching/learning environment were perhaps the most important factor in allowing them to feel valued, accepted, and welcome.

One of the central themes to emerge throughout has been that of relationships, and I would define those as respectful relationships as seen through the reflective lens of Āta.

However, another interesting finding of this thesis is perhaps not what appears to be the most obvious. Considering applying the philosophy of Āta as a theory for teaching practice has shown me that it is possible to develop new theories of teaching practice, and such a task is not limited to philosophers and highly accomplished academics. As Whitehead (1989) suggests:

In order to construct an educational theory for professional practice I believe we will have to face the practical and theoretical implications of asking ourselves questions of the kind “how do I improve my practice?” (p. 54).

I have asked this question many times and will continue to do so as long as I am responsible for sharing knowledge with students. My motivation has always been to strive constantly to be the best I can for the students. I believe this to be true of all caring educators, yet many are overly preoccupied with the tools and the techniques that they feel will enhance their teaching practice. Many teachers work very hard to create an environment in their classrooms they believe will assist the learning of the students and many spend long hours considering such things as lesson content and context. Yet while these may help I do not believe they are the answer to improving teaching practice and this belief is supported by Kottler and Zehm (2000) who inform us:

The best teachers are those who are able to translate their knowledge, wisdom and experience into a form of communication that is compelling and interesting. Although teachers know that content is important, students could not care less what teachers are teaching; what matters most is the style in which such knowledge and wisdom is imparted (p. xii).

While it still remains questionable as to how, by whom, and to whom knowledge of the philosophy is made available, the philosophy of Āta offers teaching professionals a sound theoretical base for developing a teaching practice that surpasses the need for

environmental considerations, content, and even class size. A theory of teaching practice based on the philosophy of Āta reflects human values that can expand a teacher's critical and emotional capacity, allowing for effective teaching/learning relationships to develop. The philosophy of Āta offers a new aspect to education philosophy and teaching theory which answers the call from academics, teacher educators, teachers, and the wider education community to find ways of meeting the needs of all students especially those in minority groups.

Carpenter et al. (2001, p. 7) tell us that:

Teacher education is in a period of great challenge and debate. There is worldwide concern about what should be taught in initial teacher education programmes and, indeed, how it should be taught.

And, there is also a strong call for educators to be more involved in research that contributes to the development of new theories of teaching and education philosophies (Handal & Lauvas, 1987). When this research began, I asked myself the question, who is my research audience? I now identify that audience as educators who have a genuine desire to construct change. Change in themselves as educators and change in the system that disadvantages so many. Ultimately though, my primary research audience are Te Iwi Māori. It is my belief that the research must benefit Māori, as the basis for the study is a philosophy that is part of Mātauranga Māori and I adhere to the belief that sharing of Māori knowledge, skills, and philosophies should result in empowerment for Māori²⁶. This in my opinion is the only legitimate reason for undertaking research involving Māori and Māori knowledge and is central to Kaupapa Māori research.

To achieve this, to promote ideas that are outside the dominant pedagogical paradigm, there is a need for education researchers and educators to become more 'activist' in their approach (Sachs, 2003), to be brave enough to take on new ideas, and to search in new directions. However, activism for its own sake is not the answer, there is a need for reflection within the action. Crotty (1998, p. 151) reminds us that "action and reflection are indissolubly united. Reflection without action is sheer verbalism, philosophical musing." Likewise action without reflection is just activism without any direction or

²⁶ Researcher comment: The researcher does not wish to suggest that Māori are not teaching with respectful relationships, but rather to suggest that Māori in mainstream institutions could benefit from Māori pedagogical practices, such as Āta, being included into mainstream into teaching practices.

purpose. The art of reflection is strongly imbedded within the philosophy of Āta and Āta offers a way forward for an activist approach that is both balanced and respectful. This is the potential of Āta within the wider education community.

However, this study was based on developing Āta as a teaching theory and the findings of the study have indicated strongly that this can be done. That is not to say adopting Āta into our teaching practice is a simple feat as may have been intimated in this research. On the contrary, Āta demands constant self-reflection and analysis and continuous effort is required to adhere to the principles. Āta incorporates the notions of planning and strategising and requires reflection and critical analysis.

Teaching under the principles of the philosophy of Āta requires of us courage, dedication, and commitment, and these must be actioned with honesty and the utmost integrity. Integrity in this context refers to focuses on the character of the teacher.

There is a need for knowledge and appreciation of tikanga and for this to be applied in all interactions involving the philosophy of Āta. I believe that adopting Āta into teaching practice requires a foundation of actions of cultural integrity and a strong desire to validate and acknowledge all aspects of Mātauranga Māori. To embrace the philosophy of Āta and incorporate it into teaching practice demands acting with integrity, assuring our actions align with our deepest beliefs and values. As Intrator (2002) informs us:

When our actions align with what we care about and emanate from the source of our moral commitments, we act with integrity (p.xii).

It is with integrity that I have approached this thesis. It is with the utmost respect and cultural integrity that I suggest the philosophy of Āta can be developed as a base theory for teaching practice. I have carried out the research and written this thesis under the philosophy of Āta. Āta-tuhituhi, writing with care and deliberation, has guided my choice of words, and I ask of you, the reader that you approach your consideration of what is written with Āta-panui, to read with care and deliberation, to be respectful of the mauri of Āta present on these pages.

Questions arising

Some questions arising from the study require further consideration. The first is: Can teaching under the philosophy of Āta be taught? I believe it can in essence. Āta is a living philosophy that is grounded in what I consider universal truths²⁷. Āta can be demonstrated by living the philosophy, by incorporating the concepts into teaching practice, and by actioning the principles of the philosophy in the classroom. The research showed that the students in the case study began actioning the principles of Āta in their learning through being taught under the philosophy long before they were introduced to the philosophy. In their reflections many students commented that they have taken Āta into their own teaching practice when out in the teaching environment. This strongly suggests that teaching under the philosophy can be taught, thereby enhancing the mauri of Āta and building on its whakapapa as it moves into the wider education community.

Again, there rises the issue of ‘guardianship’ surrounding the dispersion of knowledge that is intrinsic to Te Iwi Māori and how to proceed forward with developing the philosophy of Āta in education in a way that is culturally acceptable to Te Iwi Māori.

One leading question surrounding the philosophy of Āta that I have already been asked many times is this: If Āta has been around for a long time, and if it is so great then why are we just hearing about it now? You as the reader may like to answer that for yourself. My answer has been reflective of my understanding that in Te Ao Māori everything has its own time and place, ma te wa (in its own time) and now is the time Āta has chosen to move forward into education.

Future research directions

While this study has in most ways achieved what it set out to do, and has answered the central questions, it has also posed many new questions and opened areas for potential future research.

²⁷ Researcher comment: I am aware as a qualitative researcher of the paradox of what I have written here, as truth seeking is principally associated with quantitative research. However, I am speaking from the perspective of the inter-connectedness of te Ao Māori which would align the notion of universal truth with Māori epistemology as articulated by Pohatu (2004).

My future directions: My own initial direction of further research will be to investigate deeper the origins of the philosophy of Āta. I intend to seek out Māori elders and leading academics, discuss where Āta sits within the paradigm of Mātauranga Māori, and consider this in context to individual Iwi. I would also like to investigate the existence of a similar philosophy within the knowledge base of other indigenous cultures.

Fellow researchers: I believe there is also now a need to consider the potential of teaching under the philosophy of Āta in a variety of situations with a variety of disciplines and student bases and again consider the question of how and by whom this should be done. I believe there is much still to do in developing a framework for a teaching theory based on the philosophy of Āta.

Māori researchers: A potential significance of this study is that the findings indicate new and innovative teaching theories can be considered and that these theories need not come from within the dominant pedagogical paradigms. Therefore, I challenge Māori researchers to consider researching the development of other theories from within their own knowledge base and to consider how to move the philosophy of Āta forward.

Institutions and education providers: The wider academic and research community have an obligation now to further investigate the potential benefits to the education arena of developing and instigating a teaching theory based on the philosophy of Āta. Other researchers may wish to further explore the theme of relational teaching and its significance to student learning and there is scope from within the study for researchers from both the dominant culture and from Tangata Whenua to follow various avenues of further inquiry.

What contribution can this thesis and the study into teaching under the philosophy of Āta make to education and educational research in Aotearoa/New Zealand and internationally? The development of an educational theory of practice that is not a theory of learning but is in effect a theory of the relationship of teaching/learning could potentially have enormous impact on the field of education. There is a distinct lack of literature available on theories of teaching as opposed to theories of learning and I believe the study has shown that Āta can be one such theory. For a theory of teaching to enhance professionalism within the field of education yet fully embrace holistic relational teaching practices is something that has previously been lacking. For that reason the potential of Āta as it rests in education may be treated somewhat skeptically, yet I will demonstrate my courage here and state that I believe Āta can achieve what has previously been considered impossible. That is to say, a theory of teaching based on the philosophy of Āta can enhance professional practice and embrace holistic inter-relational teaching practices. However as stated earlier, I also believe it is essential that further research is undertaken to consider the potential of Āta and in particular how, by whom, and to who, this knowledge should be transmitted.

I trust there will be intense critique of my belief that the philosophy of Āta offers new and valuable insights into the theory of teaching practice. I ask for critique, and I welcome it, for it is only through critique and further research that theory and practice can become aligned. I challenge you the reader, to test the theory, to develop it for your own teaching practice, to research it further. The philosophy of Āta sits poised to enter education in a way that will fundamentally challenge and potentially change how many of us as professional educators perceive our teaching practice. Perhaps for me the biggest potential of the philosophy of Āta in education comes from acknowledging its origins within Mātauranga Māori, because the development of a theory of teaching practice based on the philosophy of Āta has huge political implications. I have a hope that the theory of teaching under the philosophy of Āta may become part of the curriculum for teacher educators in pre-service education.

If so, it would be perhaps the first truly bi-cultural²⁸ model of teaching practice to enter the education sector. I believe the most significant contribution developing a teaching theory based on the philosophy of Āta will make to the education community is to empower both learners and educators to construct new and respectful ways of inter-relating.

In my study, I have found for me, that the philosophy of Āta completely addressed power imbalances within both the classroom in particular, and the institution, and therefore I believe Āta could potentially dissolve the banking system in education (see Freire, 1970, and Crotty, 1998, p. 153). The philosophy of Āta is about growing respectful relationships. Relationships give us interconnectedness and interconnectedness dissolves power. Findings of the study have shown that teaching/learning under the philosophy of Āta helped empower the students and create power-balancing relationships in the teaching/learning environment.

Recommendations

The findings of this study are of importance to many people. There are several areas where the findings of this study may contribute to the education arena. There are some suggested recommendations to the following specific groups.

²⁸ Researcher comment: I use the phrase bi-cultural here in the context of a theory of teaching based on a concept intrinsic to Mātauranga Māori and used in mainstream education.

Institutions and education providers: This study indicates that there are possible new theories to be explored in teaching and teacher education and that Te Iwi Māori have a valuable intrinsic knowledge base, which can contribute to developing our education system. There is an obligation on government in honouring the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi to provide funds, resources, and opportunities for development, and integration of this knowledge into education in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Institutions and education providers should partition government to this end but always ensure in all actions that they maintain the cultural integrity of Mātauranga Māori.

Te Iwi Māori: Kia kaha koutou, mau tonu ki o koutou mātauranga i roto i te pono, i te tika, i te maramatanga, me te aroha hoki o tetahi ki tetahi. Koia ra te ara ma tataua katoa i ngā ra e heke mai nei. *Be steadfast and utilise the knowledge of ions, for in that is the truth, the righteousness, and the enlightenment coupled with the sharing of love for each other. That for us all is the future direction.*

Researchers and teaching practitioners: This study has opened many possible future research directions and has identified some gaps in the literature on teaching theory. There is a need for both researchers and academic practitioners to investigate and contribute in this area. The study indicated many possible positive benefits of teaching under the philosophy of Āta but also that there is a need to research this further in a variety of situations. There is opportunity from this to further consider not just the philosophy of Āta but also to look to other areas for new and innovative approaches to teaching and learning.

Teacher educators: One of the main points to emerge from the study is that striving to improve one's teaching practice is paramount to the well being of the learner. I recommend all teaching practitioners consider alternative philosophies and theories of practice and always work towards creating a teaching/learning environment that enhances student learning.

I further recommend that teacher educators develop a deeper understanding of reflection and self-analysis and encourage the same in their students.

My overall recommendations would be for all academics to consider ways in which we might strive to improve our practice, ways we can enhance the learning, and constantly acknowledge and validate the knowledge of Tangata Whenua. I would suggest the philosophy of Āta could be a guide, a pathway of respect to follow toward that end.

Researcher reflections

There were times during this research process when I felt lost and alone, times when I considered I was not worthy of this kaupapa, and it was all just too big for me. During the times of despair, I looked to the philosophy itself for my answers and was both informed and guided by that. In writing these words, I allow Āta to direct me, for although in this thesis I have introduced you to some of the aspects of Āta, there are many more that have not been discussed. The philosophy of Āta is a living philosophy

and as such is constantly growing and transforming. When we choose to adopt it into our practice, into ourselves, we give it life and it becomes a part of who we are. This for me is the very heart of the philosophy, this is what will allow the philosophy of Āta to be developed into a theory of teaching practice. This is my hope and personal goal to move the philosophy forward.

The road ahead will not be without difficulties. While the study has indicated that there are important positive effects to be gained from integrating the philosophy of Āta into teaching practice, there are also many perceived difficulties associated with this. Difficulties like trying to maintain the cultural integrity of a concept intrinsic to one culture while attempting to integrate it into a dominant pedagogical area of another culture, such as education.

The initial concept of this thesis was based on developing a theory of relational teaching practice that embraced the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi that acknowledged and legitimised Māori knowledge, and would help move education in this country towards a more bi-cultural approach to teaching and learning. The case study researching teaching under the philosophy of Āta has produced findings that indicate Āta, a valuable and acknowledged part of Mātauranga Māori, has the potential to alter how best practice in teaching is defined in the future. The study indicated that it may be possible to develop a theory of teaching based on the philosophy of Āta.

That is where my journey began and along the way I have met and discussed reasons why I believe this is both possible and also desirable. Through a review of the literature, I considered where Āta might sit within the realms of education theory and philosophy. Relational teaching and professionalism in teaching practice were examined, and it was found that the philosophy of Āta not only enhances both it also offers teachers a way of incorporating both into their teaching practice. The research findings also indicated that the philosophy of Āta can be applied as a theory of teaching practice and that teaching under the philosophy may enhance the teaching/ learning that takes place. However, I must reiterate I believe strongly that there is need for further research in the area before initiating widespread dispersion of the philosophy.

There is also a need to address the question of ‘ownership’ of knowledge such as this and where, by whom, and how that knowledge should be dispersed. As commented on

earlier there is an issue of ‘guardianship’ involved in this. I do not believe I have the authority to make those decisions and that the authority ultimately this rests with the people the knowledge has come from, Te Iwi Māori. This is not only a requirement of my undertaking Kaupapa Māori research but is also demanded of me through following the principles of the philosophy of Āta and acknowledging the initial intent of the philosophy, to grow respectful relationships.

The key problematic throughout this thesis has been considering a concept intrinsic to Te Iwi Māori within the paradigm of the dominant Western pedagogy. This action in itself somehow seems to negate my original intent, to validate Mātauranga Māori and promote the philosophy of Āta as an alternative education theory. My personal dilemma in this is that I can see the potential benefits of a theory of teaching practice based on the philosophy of Āta yet I am unsure if using this is culturally appropriate.

From the findings of the study and my own feelings in the classroom I would like to see future teachers informed in how to develop these respectful relationships to enhance the teaching/learning environment. Part of me wants to shout about the greatness of the philosophy of Āta, to extol its virtues to all and sundry, and to promote it at every opportunity. Yet another part of me says this is Māori knowledge, and it may not be appropriate to open it to the world, it may not be culturally acceptable to Te Iwi Māori to move something intrinsic to their culture into the paradigms of the Western education system.

I feel I have not fully resolved this issue either in the course of writing or in my own mind, however, I do believe that some things are so valuable that we should pursue them no matter how difficult that may be, provided we do so with integrity and cultural consideration. I acknowledge here that not all will agree with or support me in this but I trust that all will recognise the sincerity of my intent. I believe that to move forward as a bi-cultural nation there is a need for us to develop relationships that have the potential to change and grow as required and that the philosophy of Āta gives us all a way of achieving that. Pohatu (2004, p. 14) encourages us to realise that “As we become more secure and respectful in our relationships, so does our engagements in activities with others hold the options of transformative moments”. There is a need in this country for us to find ways of including valuable indigenous knowledge into our lives in general and into the education arena in particular. However, that must be done in such a way as

not to change, or nullify that knowledge in any way in an attempt to make it fit Western paradigms. The knowledge must be acknowledged as part of indigenous knowledge and treated with respect at all times in order to maintain the cultural integrity of its origins.

Conclusion

I began each chapter of this thesis with a whakatauki, or a quote. These were carefully selected to reflect the content of the chapter and to align with the central themes of this work. The quote from Pohatu that began the concluding chapter was motivated out of a deep respect for him and as an act of reciprocity as is consistent with the philosophy of Āta. The chapter and work, ends with a poem. This was written for me by my eldest son some years ago and was completed by one of my undergraduate lecturers for whom I have the utmost respect and gratitude. I wanted to use it here for two reasons. It is my way of acknowledging how supportive my family and especially my eldest son have been during the writing of this thesis. I also chose to use it because I believe it draws the overall concepts of the thesis together and explains why I set out on this journey.

In striving to improve my practice, it becomes clear that as an academic involved in both the theory and practice of teaching, I must constantly seek to further my knowledge and that quest, although difficult at times, is the ultimate challenge faced. I would like conclude by re-visiting the philosophy of Āta from the perspective of its origin, a take pu, an intrinsic principle of Te Ao Māori.

Many of the words and terminology throughout this work are acknowledged as not completely aligning with the concept of Āta as I understand it. As was discussed in the opening chapter, and has been reiterated throughout this thesis, it is difficult to consider a belief intrinsic to one culture within the paradigms of another culture. There are many who will say this should not even be attempted, and will claim Āta is Māori knowledge therefore, it belongs to Te Iwi Māori. I have already addressed my position regarding 'ownership' of this philosophy and I acknowledge the cultural integrity of such a statement, however, to me some forms of knowledge are part of the universe. They are clearly identified and recognisable within all cultures and I believe this is true of the philosophy of Āta. Āta has its own mauri and cannot be owned, but it must be protected. I acknowledge respectfully the origins of Āta and the tapu of Māori knowledge and say that introducing the philosophy of Āta to the education arena should

not be seen as an opening of the floodgates to all Māori knowledge. I see it as the legitimatising, and validating of Māori knowledge. For me personally, it is seen as the gift of a precious taonga that will benefit all, especially Māori students, and has the potential to change the way we view education in this country.

Therefore, I end with the poem written by my son and an explanation of its significance. At times during the process of researching and writing, this thesis I have felt like a very small ship on a very large sea, and in effect still feel that way having concluded the work. There have been times of rough seas and times of calm seas. Times when I had to seek ways of moving forward. Some of the ways of moving forward came from within, some from external sources such as my supervisors and my family, and others from within the philosophy of Āta itself. My quest has been for knowledge, knowledge that will make me a better teacher, knowledge that will benefit Māori students and teachers dedicated to improving the achievement levels of minority group students. Knowledge that is part of the cultural heritage of this country and that will benefit education both nationally and internationally. Within the philosophy of Āta is immeasurable knowledge, ancient knowledge that has stood the test of time. Knowledge that is swelling like a huge wave and begging us to ride it to where ever it is going. I found the courage to cling onto the crest of that wave and ride it. Now, I challenge you to do the same.

Neke mai, neke atu mau, hei whakataka te hau i uru mai i te ra.
Neke ki mua tuara kia mai Tawhirimatea.
Na te kaha ake o te hau, kia tere, kia wawe, kia wawā to hīkoi atu,
kia kaha, kia mau tonu.
Kia pupuri kaha i roto i te amuamu, kia whakatoa i runga i te marino,
ā, mau mahara tonu ake, te rongo o Tawhiri,
te ahūa o te wai o Tangaroa, i runga i ou ngutu.
Kakea te tihi o te ngaru mātauranga, ā, eketia!
Tihe mauri ora

If you want to move, you need wind in your sails. To move forward keep the wind at your back and remember in times of storm, no matter how rough it gets hold on tight, be strong, you can rest when it gets calm. And always remember to feel the wind on your face and taste the salt on your lips. Seize the crest of the wave of knowledge, and ride it! Breath of life.

References

- Alton-Lee, A. (2003). *Quality teaching for diverse students in schooling: Best evidence synthesis*. Wellington: New Zealand Ministry of Education.
- Anderson, G., & Arsenault, N. (1998). *Fundamentals of education research*. (2nd ed.). London: Falmer Press.
- Bishop, R. (1996). *Collaborative research stories: Whakawhanaungatanga*. Palmerston North: The Dunmore Press Ltd.
- Bishop, R. (2001). Changing power relations in Education: Kaupapa Māori messages for mainstream institutions. In C McGee & D. Fraser (Eds.), *The professional practice of teaching* (2nd ed.), (pp. 201-219). Palmerston North: Dunmore Press Ltd.
- Bishop, R. & Fraser, D. (1994). Changing power relations in Education: Kaupapa Māori messages for mainstream institutions. In C McGee & D. Fraser (Eds.), *The professional practice of teaching* (2nd ed.). Palmerston North: Dunmore Press Ltd.
- Bishop, R., & Glynn, T. (1999). *Culture counts: Changing power relations in education*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press Ltd.
- Burnham, D. (2003). *Get set for philosophy*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd.
- Burns, T. (2000). *Introduction to research methods*. (4th ed.). Frenchs Forrest: Pearson Education Australia.
- Bushe, G. R. (1999). *Advances in Appreciative Inquiry as an organisation development intervention*. Organisation Development, 17(2).
- Bushe, G. R., & Coetzer, G. (1995). Appreciative Inquiry as a team development intervention: A controlled experiment. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 31(1).
- Carel, H., & Gamez, D. (2004). *What philosophy is*. New York: Biddles Ltd.
- Carpenter, V., Dixon, H., Rata, E., & Rawlinson, C. (Eds). (2001). *Theory in practice for educators*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press.
- Carpenter, V., McMurchy-Pilkington, C., & Sutherland, S. (2002). Kaiako toa: Highly successful teachers in low decile schools. *SET: Information for Teachers*, 1, 4-8.
- Clair, S. (2004). *Paua: Ideas for today and tomorrow*. Unpublished manuscript.
- Cleave, P. (1997). *Rangahau pae iti kahurangi: Research in a small world of light and shade*. Palmerston North: Campus Press.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2000). *Research methods in education* (5 ed.). New York: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Collins, M. (1992). *Ordinary children, extraordinary teachers*. Norfolk: Hampton Roads.
- Cram, F. (2001). Rangahau Māori: tona tika tona pono- the validity and integrity of Māori research. In M.Tolich (Ed.). *Research Ethics in Aotearoa New Zealand*. (pp. 35-52). Auckland: Pearson Education New Zealand Ltd.
- Cranton, P. (2001). *Becoming an authentic teacher in higher education*. Malabar: Krieger Publishing Company.
- Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research*. St. Leonards: Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd.
- Darder, A. (2002). *Reinventing Paolo Freire: A pedagogy of love*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Davidson, C., & Tolich, M. (2003). *Social science research in New Zealand* (2nd ed.). Auckland: Pearson Education New Zealand Ltd.
- Denzin, N. (1971). *The research act in sociology*. London: Butterworths.
- Denzin, N. (1978). Strategies of multiple triangulation. In N. Denzin (Ed.). *The research act in sociology*. (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. London: Penguin Books.
- Forsyth, H., & Kung, N. (2004, December). *Āta: A philosophy for relational teaching*. "He Tirohanga Karearea" Māori research conference paper. December 1-4. Hawkes Bay: Eastern Institute of Technology.
- Frost, R. (1969). *The poetry of Robert Frost*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC.
- Gardner, J. W. (1984). *Excellence: Can we be equal and excellent too?* New York: Norton.
- Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally responsive teaching*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Giovannelli, M. (2003). Relationship between reflective disposition toward teaching and effective teaching. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 96(5).
- Gordon, G., & White, J. (1979). *Philosophers as educational reformers*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Gutek, G. L. (1974). *Philosophical alternatives in education*. Columbus: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company.
- Gutek, G. L. (2004). *Philosophical and ideological voices in education*. Boston: Pearson Education.
- Hall, A. (2001). Professionalism and teacher ethics. In C. McGee & D. Fraser (Eds.). (2001). *The professional practice of teaching*. (2nd ed.), (pp. 273-300. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press.
- Hampton, E. (1986). Toward a redefinition of American Indian/Alaskan Native Education. *Journal of Native Education*, 20(2), 226-23
- Handal, G., & Lauvas, P. (1987). *Promoting reflective teaching: Supervision in action*. Milton Keynes: Open University Educational Enterprises Limited.
- Hansen, D. (2001). *Exploring the moral heart of teaching*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Hattie, J. (2002). What are the attributes of excellent teachers. In B Webber (Ed.), *Teachers make a difference: What is the research evidence?* (pp. 3-26) Wellington: New Zealand Council for Education Research.
- Hawk, K., Cowley, E. T., Hill, J., & Sutherland, S. (2002). The importance of the teacher/student relationship for Māori and Pasifika students. *SET Information for Teachers*, 3. 42-49.
- Hemara, W. (2000) *Māori pedagogies: A view from the literature*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Education Research.
- Heta-Lensen, Y. (2005). *The kaupapa of whānau: An approach to mainstream educational management*. Master of Educational Management. Unpublished Thesis. Auckland: Unitec.
- Hinds, D. (2003). Research instruments. In D. Wilkinson (Ed.). *The researcher's toolkit*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Intrator, S. M. (2002). *Stories of the courage to teach: Honoring the teacher's heart*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Jay, J. K. (2003). *Quality teaching: Reflection as the heart of practice*. Oxford: The Scarecrow Press Inc.
- Jenkins, K., & Jones, A. (2000). Māori education policy: A state promise. In J. Marshall, E. Coxon, K. Jenkins & A. Jones (Eds.) *Politics, policy pedagogy, Education in Aotearoa/New Zealand*, (pp. 139-156). Palmerston North: Dunmore Press Ltd.
- Jenkins, P. (1999). *Surveys and questionnaires*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Education Research.
- Keeves, J. (1997). Methods and processes in education research. In J. Keeves (Ed.). *Educational research, methodology and measurement: An international handbook* (pp. 277-285). Oxford: Pergamon.

- Kottler, J. A., & Zehm, S. J. (2000). *On being a teacher*. (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press.
- MacFarlane, A. H. (2004). *Kia hiwa ra! Listen to culture*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Education Research.
- MacFarlane, B. (2004). *Teaching with integrity*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Martin, N., McMurchy-Pilkington, C., & Martin, R. (2004). *Te Rito: Centering Māori pedagogy in teacher education*. Paper presented to TEFANZ Conference, Auckland, 5-7 July 2004.
- May, T. (1997). *Social research: Issues, methods and process*. Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- McGee, C., & Fraser, D. (Eds.). (2001). *The professional practice of teaching*. (2nd ed.). Palmerston North: Dunmore Press.
- McMillan, J., & Wergin, J. (1998). *Understanding and evaluating research*. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall/Merrill.
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc.
- Newman, W. (2003). *Social research methods*. (5th ed). Boston: Pearson Education Inc.
- Oakley, J., & Cocking, D. (2001). *Virtue ethics and professional roles*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- O'Regan, H. (2001). *Ko Tahu, ko au*. Christchurch: Printlink.
- Palmer, P. (1998). *The courage to teach: Exploring the inner landscape of a teacher's life*. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Pere, R. (1983). *Ako: Concepts and learning in the Māori tradition*. Wellington: Astra Print Ltd.
- Pere, R. R. (1988). Te Wheke: Whaia te maramatanga me te aroha. In S Middleton (Ed.), *Women and Education in Aotearoa* (Vol. 1.). Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
- Pohatu, T. (1994). *I tipu ai tatau i nga turi o o tatau matua tipuna*. Unpublished Master of Arts Thesis. Auckland: University of Auckland.
- Pohatu, T. (2004). Maori worldviews: Source of innovative social work choices. *He Komako*, pp. 1-4.
- Pohatua, T. (2004). Āta: Growing respectful relationship. *He Pukenga Kōrero*, 8 (1),: 1-8.
- Rangihau, J. (1992). Being Māori. In M. King (Ed.) *Te ao hurihuri*. Auckland: Reed Publishing.
- Roberts, P. (Ed). (1999). *Paolo Freire, politics and pedagogy: Reflections from Aotearoa-New Zealand*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press Ltd.
- Ryan, F. J., Soven, M., Smither, J. S., William, M., & Vanbuskirk, W. R. (1999). *Appreciative Inquiry using personal narratives for school reform*. Clearing House, 72 (3).
- Sachs, J. (2003). *The activist teaching profession*. New York: Open University Press.
- Schön, D. (1987). *Education and the reflective practitioner*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Smith, G. (1997). *Te toi huarewa tipuna*. Unpublished PhD Thesis. Auckland: University of Auckland.
- Smith, L. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. Dunedin: University of Otago Press.
- Smith, R. (2002). *Accountability in education: Reviewing the reviewers : A policy study of the Education Review Office*. Unpublished PhD. Thesis. Christchurch: University of Canterbury.
- Smith, R. & Jesson, J. (2005, December). 'Shaping academic identity: The politics and 'performativity' of research under government accountability frameworks: Lessons from New Zealand'. In J. Barbara, M. Leach & L. Walsh (Eds.).

- Conference Proceedings of *The politics of recognition: Identity, respect and justice*, conference, Deakin University, Melbourne, 30-31 July 2005, (pp. 220-244). Melbourne: Deakin University Press.
- Snook, I. (2003). *The ethical teacher*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press.
- Soltis, J. F. (1981). *Philosophy and education*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Stake, R. (1996). Case studies. In N. Denzin, & Y Lincoln (Eds.). *Handbook of qualitative research*: (pp. 236-247). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Stenhouse, L. (1985) A note on case study and educational practice. In R. G. Burgess (Ed.) *The research process in educational settings: Ten case studies*, (pp 263-271). Lewes: Falmer Press.
- Tolich, M. (Ed.). (2001). *Research ethics in Aotearoa New Zealand*. Auckland: Pearson Education New Zealand Ltd.
- Trifonas, P. (Ed.). (2003). *Pedagogies of difference: Rethinking education for social change*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Webber, B. (Ed.). (1996). *He paepae korero; Research perspectives in Māori education*. Wellington: New Zealand Council For Education Research.
- Wellington, J. (2000). *Education research: Contemporary issues and practical approaches*. London: Continuum.
- Whitehead, J. (1989). Creating a living educational theory from questions of the kind, 'how do I improve my practice? *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 19 (1): 41-52)
- Wilkie, M. A. (2001). *Matauranga motuhake*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.
- Wilkinson, D. (Ed). (2003). Using research instruments: A guide for researchers. In D. Wilkinson (Ed). *The researchers toolkit*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Williams, M. (2003). *The cultural interface of the Kaupapa Māori Praxis: It's not a wananga phenomena*. Paper presented at the NZARE/AARE Joint Conference, Hyatt Hotel, December. Auckland.
- Winch, C., & Gingell, J. (1999). *Key concepts in the philosophy of education*. New York: Routledge.

Participant Information Sheet

For members of the B.Ed, ECE/Primary

Mātauranga Māori class, July intake

2005.

Date Information Sheet Produced: 12/05/05

Project Title An investigation into teaching under the principles of the philosophy of Āta.

Invitation

As new students on the Mātauranga Māori paper, you are being asked for your permission for a case study to be undertaken at the School of Education Te Kura Mātauranga during the first six weeks of your mātauranga Māori class.

What is the purpose of the study?

The study is an investigation into the effectiveness of integrating the principles of the philosophy of Āta into teaching practice.

How are people chosen to be asked to be part of the study?

As the study will be during class time, all members of class will be asked for permission for the study to take place. At the end of the study participants will be asked to take part in supplying data for the study on a voluntary basis. From the volunteers a small group will be selected which reflects a cross section of students studying on the mātauranga Māori paper from the July 2005 intake on the B.Ed, ECE/Primary programme. Participants will need to have been present in class for all six weeks of the study.

What happens in the study?

There will be two observers present during the first six weeks of class time to gather data for the study. They will be observing the teacher not the students and notes taken will be about the delivery of lessons. The lecturer will also keep notes and a reflective journal about her own delivery style. At the end of the study these notes and the reflective journal will be analysed and findings will be related to all interested parties.

A group of students from the class will be asked to participate in further data collection. This will be in the form of discussions relating to their observations of the lectures during the six weeks of the study.

What are the discomforts and risks?

You may feel uncomfortable having observers present during class time. You may also potentially feel uncomfortable being involved in a study where new teaching/learning techniques are being applied.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

The observers will be introduced to you and your permission for them to be present during class time will be required before the study will begin. You will have the right to withdraw your consent at anytime during the study if you suffer any discomfort or believe your learning is being compromised.

What are the benefits ?

The study will help to identify the best ways of teaching large groups of students from various backgrounds and ethnicities. The study will also assist in developing frame works for teachers that are more culturally aware.

How will my privacy be protected?

The study will focus on the teacher not the students. You will remain anonymous at all times.

Opportunity to consider invitation

You will be asked to consider giving your permission for the study to take place and asked for a decision at the beginning of the second lecture.

Opportunity to receive feedback on results of research

Findings of the study will be made available to you in the form of a written summary and a class presentation.

Participant Concerns

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTECH, Madeline Banda, madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz , 917 9999 ext 8044.

Researcher Contact Details: Huhana Forsyth,

Lecturer
The School of Education Te Kura Mātauranga
A.U.T
Tel. 09 917 9999 ext 7928
E Mail huhana.forsyth@aut.ac.nz

Project Supervisor Contact Details: Dr. Richard J M Smith, M.Ed and Ed.D.

Programme Leader Postgraduate Programmes
Senior Lecturer
School of Education Te Kura Matauranga
Auckland University of Technology
Ph. (+64) (0) 9 917-9999 ext 7935
Email: richard.smith@aut.ac.nz

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 28/07/2005 AUTECH
Reference number 05/136

Consent to Participation in Research

Title of Project: An investigation into teaching under the principles of the philosophy of Āta

Project Supervisor: Richard Smith

Researcher: Huhana Forsyth

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project (Information Sheet dated 22/06/2005.)
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that the interview will be audio-taped and transcribed.
- I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- I agree to take part in this research.
- I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research: tick one: Yes ☐ No ☐

Participant signature:

Participant name:

Participant Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....
.....
.....
.....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on <click here and type the date ethics approval was granted> **AUTEC Reference number** <click here and type the AUTEC reference number>

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

Student questionnaire.

Project Title An investigation into teaching under the principles of the philosophy of Āta.

Name.....

Date.....

1. Can you relate a time in class when you think the learning experience was exceptional? Just describe the experience please.

2. What do you think made this an exceptional experience?

- 3. What would we need to do to make this sort of experience part of our learning all the time?**

- 4. Is there any difference between how you feel in this class compared to your other classes? If so, can you describe the difference?**

- 5. Can you explain why you feel different in this class?**

Student Consent to Participation in Data Collection

Title of Project: An investigation into teaching under the principles of the philosophy of Āta

Project Supervisor: Richard Smith

Researcher: Huhana Forsyth

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project (Information Sheet dated 22/06/2005.)
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that I am consenting to participate in the collection of data for research purposes.
- I understand that the research will in no way effect my grades in this class.
- I agree to participate in a discussion on the teaching/learning experiences of the Mātauranga Māori class, that this discussion will be audio taped and transcribed and that I will have the right to view the transcript and make alterations if I chose.
- I understand that I will have the right to withdraw my contribution to the data collection process at any stage prior to the completion of the study.
- I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research: tick one: Yes ☐ No ☐

Participant signature:

Participant name:

Participant Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....
.....
.....
.....

Date:

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 28/07/2005 AUTEC
Reference number 05/136**

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

Interview questions for student group interview participants.

Project Title An investigation into teaching under the principles of the philosophy of Āta.

Have students state name before speaking. (False names are to be used.)

Encourage students to discuss their experience in the class over the last six weeks through the following questions.

- 1. How do you feel in this class?**
- 2. What do you think made this an exceptional experience?**
- 3. What would we need to do to make this sort of experience part of our learning all the time?**
- 4. Is there any difference between how you feel in this class compared to your other classes? If so, can you describe the difference?**
- 5. Can you explain the ways you feel different in this class?**